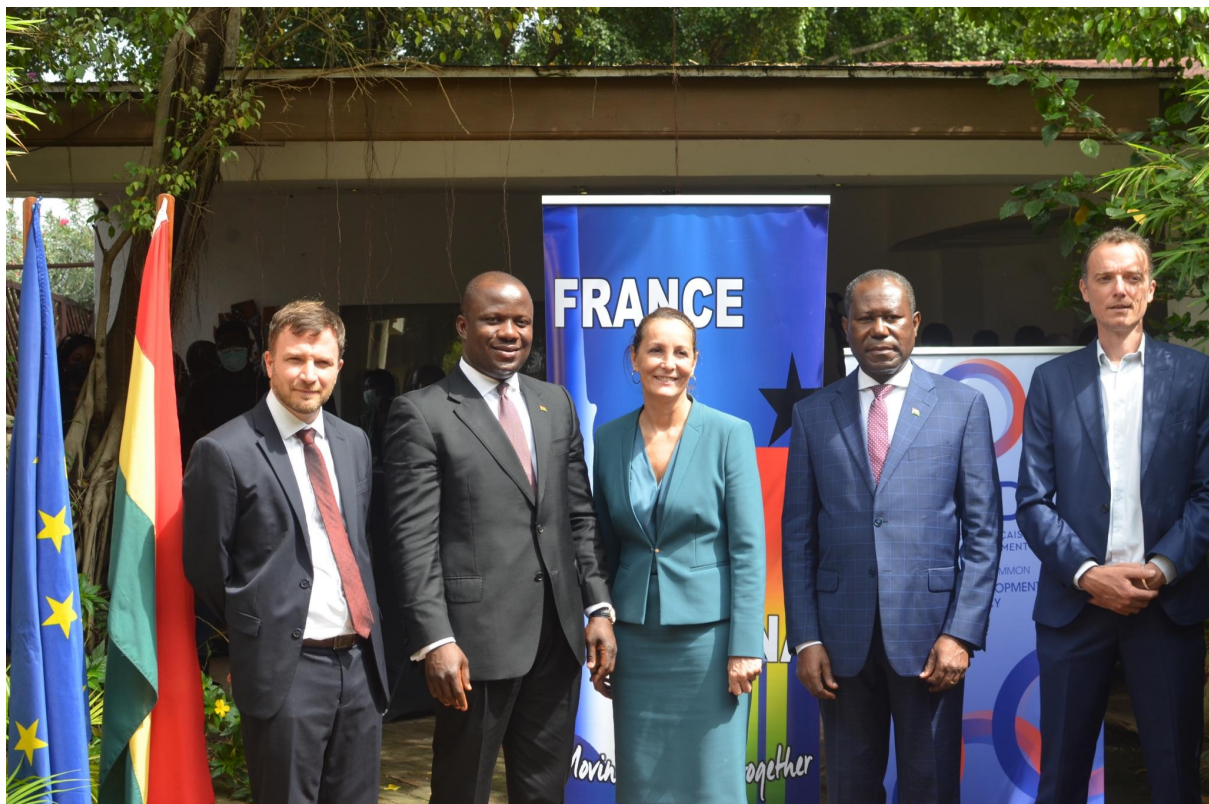


## Preserving Ghana's biodiversity and boosting the economy – ECONOBIO II project launched

**Over 300,000 hectares of forest lands in Ghana need restoration and maintenance. Phase II of the ECONOBIO program looks to involve 5,500 producers/farmers, local communities, and NGOs to preserve Ghana's resources, and boost the economic sector.**

Accra - Ghana, 24 June 2021 -- On Thursday, the French Embassy in Ghana and NGO Noé launched ECONOBIO II, the second phase of Noé Conservation's flagship program supported by the AFD (Agence Française De Développement). The event, graced by the French Ambassador H. E. Anne Sophie Avé and Ghana's Minister for Lands and Natural Resources Hon. Samuel Abu Jinapor, marked the official start of the program and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Ghana and France and Noé was signed.



Phase I of the project was completed between January 2018 and March 2021, a period during which 4,900 producers and farmers (with approximately half of them being women) were empowered. It also contributed to the development of five

sustainable value chains, namely: shea butter, organic virgin coconut oil, honey, organic and climate smart cocoa, and kombo nut.

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) were created, strengthened, and used to help conserve biodiversity by giving local communities the right and authority to manage their natural resources. As of now, the Wildlife Resources Management Bill is yet to be submitted to Parliament. Should it be passed into a law, it would allow for the necessary legal support for the development of CREMAs.

The Minister at the Ministry for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Samuel A. Jinapor, applauded the CREMA concept and underlined:

**“The project we launched today is another important intervention to protect our forests and biodiversity, while at the same time improving the lives and livelihoods of our people.”**

Aligned with the French government's will to improve Ghana's forest cover and economic sector, ECONOBIO II will engage four local NGOs: A Rocha Ghana, West Africa Primate Conservation Action (WAPCA), Northcode, and Organization for Indigenous Initiatives and Sustainability (ORGIIS).

The French Ambassador to Ghana, Her Excellency Anne Sophie Avé, expressed her enthusiasm towards supporting sustainability. She noted:

**“This project empowers communities, creates sustainable activities and jobs by preserving the environment: I would say it is a win-win win-win achievement!”**

With this grant of 1.8 million euros, the programme will look to improve the lives of local populations living on the outskirts of biodiversity-rich areas. Atop the priority list is the maintenance of the following four Protected Areas: The Mole National Park, Atewa Range Forest, Ankasa-Tano Rainforest, and the Western Wildlife Corridor. Other objectives include developing sustainable economic sectors in and around these Protected Areas; improving the conservation of biodiversity and getting locals to use natural resources sustainably; and finally, disseminating the ECONOBIO model and keeping it sustainable.

Programme Manager, Natacha Cayre, explained:

**“It will contribute to restoration and sustainable management of over 300,000 hectares of forest lands with 150,000 local trees planted and reduce illegal logging and poaching through strengthening of 10 CREMAs with over 500 elected executives and 200 patrollers. It will further invest over €200,000 in the construction of processing facilities and equipment supply and empower 5,500 producers/farmers (50% women) with improved livelihood and increased income. This is expected to boost Ghana's economic sector and contribute to its overall growth and development agenda.”**

ECONOBIO II is funded by AFD, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, and the Sofi Tucker Foundation. The project, which is set to run for the next four years, looks to upscale the first phase and replicate the programme model across concerned areas in Ghana.

## Press contact

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## About Noé

Noé is a non-profit association for the protection of nature, created in 2001 by Arnaud Greth, its President and Founder. It deploys actions in France and internationally to safeguard biodiversity for the benefit of all living species, including the human species. To this end, Noé implements programmes for the conservation of endangered species, the management of protected natural areas, the restoration of ordinary biodiversity and natural environments, the reconnection of Man with nature, and support for economic activities and civil society organisations that favour biodiversity.

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