

STAKEHOLDERS FORUM ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANAGING COCONUT RESIDUE IN ACCRA AND TEMA



COMPLETION REPORT

January 2019

Preface

This report discusses the planning process, activities conducted and achievements of the Stakeholders Forum on Opportunities for Managing Coconut Residue in Accra and Tema. The stakeholders' forum was implemented with the objective of providing a platform for discussing and formulating an executable road map for managing the waste generated from the sale of coconuts. It was also aimed at starting a conversation about the potentials and opportunities from this emerging business that would provide impetus for building a sector to manage all the processes associated with the coconut trade.

The project started in September 2018 and was completed in January 2019. Participants included representative from the Danish Embassy, representatives from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, DAN-G members, coconut sellers, coconut waste processing companies and the general public.

Introduction

The aim of this stakeholder forum was to provide a platform for discussing and formulating an executable road map for managing the waste generated from the sale of coconuts. Coconut water/flesh is currently sold as a sport drink/snack in many parts of Accra and Tema. The fruit has gained prominence due to the health benefits associated with its consumption. There appears to be no organized agency regulating the sale of the coconut fruit. It is therefore an informal business for many young men, in particular. In recent times however, the husk, shell and coir of the coconut fruit have become a nuisance as they are heaped by the road side or disposed of improperly into gutters or burnt in the open air. The forum has started a conversation about the potentials and opportunities from this emerging business that will provide impetus for building a sector to manage all the processes associated with the trade.

Planning Process

With half of the team based outside of Ghana, communications and meeting were held via video conference calls. In coordination with DAN-G, letters of invitation were drafted and delivered to the various stakeholders. A poster for the event was designed and distributed especially to the coconut sellers also as a form of invitation. The venue and caterers for the event were booked as well. Media coverage – both traditional news outlets and facebook – as well as photography for the event was organized. In order to incorporate the coconut in the theme, a coconut break was included in the program which featured coconut delicacies from Ghana (polo and kubecake) and Denmark (drømme kage).

Team Members

Nana Efua Asaam --Fund Manager and lead researcher for project

Nana Afua Omari -- Outreach and Stakeholders Coordinator

Eugene Dela Sestoafia -- Publicity Coordinator

Blissbern Owusu Peprah -- Process Engineer and Resource person

Eugene Jojo Arthur -- Process Engineer and Ideas curator

Expected Output

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1. A clear and actionable term for organizing coconut sellers will be developed

 2. Efforts and plans by Government to organize coconut trade will be brought to the fore.

 3. Opportunities for managing the wastes will be determined and program for initiation and execution developed.

 4. An awareness will be created amongst stakeholders of the need and benefits that could accrue from a more organized coconut trade industry.

 5. Concepts developed for the waste management will be discussed and the most feasible option selected for onward development of appropriate processes for initiation.

 6. This forum will start a national conversation on the way forward for this category of waste that is fast becoming a nuisance.
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Achievements

Output 1:

The coconut sellers expressed interest in being better organized and grouped into association. Informally, this was observable in the way they had come together for the program. AMA also expressed that it would help facilitate the process and took the information of the sellers for further interaction.

Output 2:

Unfortunately, none of the invitees from the governmental bodies were able to make it for the event. The only available public institution was the AMA. They spoke about the need for organization and registration of the coconut sellers.

Output 3:

It was determined that there already existed avenues for processing coconut waste. However, one of the major problems was the connection between the waste processors and

the waste producers (coconut sellers). In addition, the transportation/ transfer of waste from the source of production to processing also was a bit problematic.

Output 4:

The coconut waste processing companies provided insight into the products they made from the coconut waste. This was eye-opening for all stakeholders present.

Output 5:

The event was also attended by the Deputy Ambassador of Denmark to Ghana, the Head of Trade at the Denmark Embassy in Ghana as well as other staff of the embassy. The Deputy Ambassador, Peter Eilshow Olesen, stated how Denmark has been a leading country in the area of circular economy and initiatives to protect the environment. He also pointed out that, Denmark was the first country in the world to implement comprehensive environmental regulation in 1973. He added how important the municipalities played a major in waste management in Denmark.

The Head of Trade, Søren Roben Hagen, during his presentation, also expressed that the Denmark Embassy is willing to support the development of waste management systems in Ghana...*'With support from the Investment Fund for Developing Countries(IFU), a Danish government-owned investment fund, we can invest in large-scale projects that use Danish technology. And with Denmark's Export Credit Agency (EKF), we can help secure affordable loans for companies wishing to invest in Danish technology. These initiatives can help make the initial investments required to set up the waste management system more affordable'* - Søren.

Output 6:

The event was covered by various media journalists and articles were published on a number of news outlets. The links are attached below:

<http://www.ghananewsagency.org/economics/danida-alumni-network-ghana-holds-workshop-for-coconut-entrepreneurs-144548>

<http://starrfmonline.com/2019/01/ghanaian-company-turning-coconut-husk-into-usable-products/>

Output 7:

The companies who gave presented at the event also raised the issue of the lack of funding

and investments in the sector. To this, the Head of Trade, Søren, and Enoch Agyapong (President, DAN-G), recommended they apply to the Ghana Climate fund which is managed by the Ghana Climate Innovation Centre and also supported by the Embassy of Denmark in Ghana.

NEXT STEPS

- We plan to do a follow-up on the various stakeholders and carry out an evaluation of the programme through questionnaires and phone calls.
- The team was approached by an investor from India who is interested in the waste processing solutions for coconut waste and liaising with the various stakeholders. Further discussions have been scheduled to plan how we can help him achieve this.
- We also plan on assisting the coconut sellers in forming unions/cooperatives with the necessary technical support. This is to help the Accra Metropolitan Assembly formalise the collection of coconut waste in the metropolis.
- We are also recommending that, the AMA provides logistical support for the transfer of the coconut waste from the various sites of generation to the processing companies.
- Finally, we hope to drive the discussion further by including other bio waste products generated in households and market places, and highlighting how this waste stream can be turned into valuable resources for sustainable development.