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Stakeholder Participation in Flood-Related Disaster Risk Management in Ghana

Fafali Roy Ziga-Abortta¹, Sylvia Kruse², Britta Höllermann³, and Joshua Ntajal⁴

¹University of Freiburg, Chair of Forest and Environmental Policy, Freiburg, Germany (fafali.ziga-abortta@ifp.uni-freiburg.de)

²University of Freiburg, Chair of Forest and Environmental Policy, Freiburg, Germany (sylvia.kruse@ifp.uni-freiburg.de)

³University of Bonn, Department of Geography, Bonn-Germany (bhoellermann@uni-bonn.de)

⁴University of Bonn, Department of Geography, Bonn-Germany (joshuantajal@uni-bonn.de)

Stakeholder Participation is recognized in both flood risk governance research and praxis. It is argued to emphasize empowerment, equity, learning and trust among actors. Projects that fail to adequately understand stakeholder dynamics turn to have undesired results. We take a normative and instrumental approach to stakeholder analysis by categorizing and investigating stakeholder relationships. With the wide array of roles that different stakeholders play, it is important to adopt holistic approaches in engaging them. Our approach is three-tiered, aimed at integrating and enhancing stakeholder participation and involvement.

We present research on stakeholder identification, categorization and mapping within the ongoing PARADeS project on participatory assessment of flood-related disaster prevention in Ghana. We define stakeholders to include all formal governance institutions, NGOs, Public and Private Research Institutions as well as civil society and their organizations. As the general motivation of the project constitutes a combination of research, development, and institutional strengthening activities, the objective is to engage with the relevant stakeholders of flood-related disaster management in Ghana, collaboratively identify weaknesses in the flood risk management system and starting points for improving these systems. We thus, 1) undertook a network-based stakeholder analysis, and 2) developed a strategy for stakeholder integration and participation within the PARADeS project.

We elaborate a three-tiered aim of participation concept to be used within our Project where subsets of identified stakeholders serve different purposes: 1) To provide and coordinate access to other stakeholders for project work packages/partners, 2) To analyze stakeholder networks and their role for FRM in Ghana, and 3) To create co-ownership between project collaborators and target capacity building and multiplier effects to ensure long-lasting project output implementation and transfer of responsibility from the project to respective institutions in Ghana. First, we developed a matrix that helped us to identify and preliminarily categorize all stakeholders from a variety of sources following a multi-level governance approach. The categorization included but not limited to sectors of operation, political level, main functions of the stakeholders, and whether they were state/non-state or otherwise identified, their corresponding contact persons

and different approaches in contacting them. Based on this, we performed a stakeholder mapping exercise which forms a basis for a Social Network Analysis to be done at a later time. The mapping exercise offers a vivid visualization of the stakeholders identified, their affiliations, sector and political level of operation, and is discussed and revalidated collaboratively with practitioners and policy actors.

In the further course of the project, the three-tiered approach to participation builds grounds for collaboration not only amongst scientists/researchers across disciplines but also among practitioners in the field of flood-related disaster risk management.