BEE KEEPING FEASIBILITY REPORT

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**Brief:** To find out if ATE support for Top Bar Beekeeping would be desirable and financially viable in Lawra District.

**INTRODUCTION:**

In many parts of the world, Apiculture or Beekeeping is a source of livelihood for many families. Africa most especially Sub-Saharan Africa has the same opportunity, and Lawra District is not exempted.

Apiculture is concerned with the practical management of the social species of honey bees which is a lucrative and easy way one can make life better in Lawra District. Furthermore beekeeping products generate income, with a high profit rate at the same time it is not very time consuming. A beekeeper needs a suitable site, Top Bar Hive, Swarm of honeybees, water, Nectar and pollen from plants, honey harvesting equipment and protective wears to be a great beekeeper.

Globally poverty can be reduced if beekeeping is taken seriously. Aside honey which is the main product of beekeeping, not many people know that honey has other by-products some of which are vital inputs in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries. Besides those, beeswax, a major by-product of honey making is also used by textile industries as a major raw material, and for candles and polish too.

There can be many barriers to a successful bee keeping. The most common issues identified are bush burning, termites destroying hives and unauthorized harvesting.

This report will examine the feasibility of beekeeping as an intervention for poverty alleviation and improving life of the people in Lawra District. It will examine the current apiculture situation in the District, challenges, beekeepers’ perception of the way forward, key development institution already working in apiculture and related fields, and finally will provide general recommendations to ATE secretariat.

**Current situation of Beekeeping in Lawra District**

Lawra is geographically located at the North western part of the region. It is bounded to the North by the tributary of the Black Volta River and a vast area of cultivatable land. By virtue of location, Lawra District is agriculturally endowed.

Beekeeping in Lawra has been practiced alongside other Agricultural activities. Based on the study, there were no any bee keepers who base their livelihood only on beekeeping.

Beekeeping is historically prominent, especially in the surrounding villages.
Few people venture into beekeeping due to the risk in it despite the fact that they know it is important as food and medicine.

Through the research, those that are really into beekeeping and established beehives are few, but a lot of people have the interest in it but don’t venture due to lack of funds to make their own hives and protective clothes during harvesting because they fear bee stings.

According to Mr Kaliebu Eric who is with the Lawra District Climate Change Platform and one of the well-known and successful beekeepers in the District, they were able to stop bush burning in over 20 communities within the District which makes those communities conducive for beekeeping but out of this number of communities, only few can boast of beekeepers. Some of these communities include Zagkpee, Tuori, Yagtuuri, Zinkaa, Kalsagri, Dowine, Tongoh and Orbili.

Locally produced hive
As indicated by the survey findings, beekeepers in Lawra produce hives from local pots, roofing sheets and wood, then they use soap with sweet scent to rob inside or burn cow dung to give it some scent to attract bees into it. Some are hanged on trees in forest and cool places or hanged by a tree but 3 feet away from the ground. Some hang a container with water by a beehive to help bees get asses to water.

!*Locally produced hive!*
Notwithstanding the above findings, some people look for trees that already have bees and continue to monitor the bee activities until they know they have honey and they go at night to harvest the honey.

The research shows that to get better outputs because of the nature of our rain pattern, honey should be harvested in April/May and October but due to the urgent need to survive most beekeepers harvest it every four to five months.

During harvesting, those that are within town use the smoker to make bees weak in other to make their harvest easy while those in the villages use fire to chase bees to the other end of the hive. According to Mr. Muogangee Dery, a bee keeper at Dowine, honey is harvested mostly in the evening or night which does not have any effect on the community. The survey shows that beekeepers don’t have fixed prices for sale of honey but 1 litre is between GHC20 and GHC25 while 5 litres is between GHC100 and GHC150.
Honey sold in bottles and gallons
CHALLENGES

Bee keeping is lucrative but there are a lot of challenges that makes beekeepers not to prosper, these include lack of funds to set proper bee hives. Some people that are already into the business cannot expand because they do not have the needed fund to expand and acquire needed equipment.

Bush fires also affect them a lot during the dry season. Since some of them use zinc to make hives, when there is fire, it heats the hives and kills the bees. It also burns the wooden hives that are set in the woods.

Beekeepers don’t have associations where they meet to plan on how to sell honey and no organized market for honey hence no fixed price for honey. They sell it for any amount they can get to survive.

Also, the survey shows that most beekeepers don’t have or know the proper methods of extracting honey from honey comb and they end up melting and mixing honey with other propolis.

According to the research most beekeepers don’t wear protective clothes during harvesting which make them suffer from bee stings a lot. Most beekeepers use bunch of fire to chase bees to the other end of the hive but mostly end up killing bees before harvesting. Beekeepers also suffer from termites attack since they use wood to make bee hives.
Since hives are in the bush, beekeepers suffer from intruders harvesting honey without their notice.

**Other Supporters of Agriculture and Beekeeping**

There are government and Non-governmental organizations within the Region and the District that directly and indirectly support Beekeeping. These include the District Assembly, the Songtaa Foundation, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana Environmental Management Project (GEMP) and Lawra District Climate Change Platform (LDCCP). Most of these organizations, especially the NGOs are using beekeeping as poverty alleviation.

**Summary of Findings**

- Beekeeping is a lucrative but less expensive business which can change people’s lives and help alleviate poverty in Lawra District.
- There is lack of technical and financial support from central/local government in Lawra District for beekeeping.
- Beekeeping can help the rate of youth migrating to the south for greener pastures if they are being supported.
- The major constraints to exploit the untapped potential of beekeeping activity in the District are lack of beekeeping equipment, lack of knowledge regarding beekeeping and its impact on the environment.
- Most of the beekeepers follow traditional method of harvesting and processing to produce honey.
- Despite all the constraints and challenges currently facing beekeeping, there are still enormous opportunities and potentials to boost the production and quality of honey production in the District.
- Usefulness of the support for bee keeping.

Based on the above findings, support with proper monitoring and supervision will yield useful results for both the organization and beekeeper.
Recommendations to the ATE Secretariat

For those that are already into beekeeping, more knowledge and technical training on beekeeping will help them to progress in this area.

Training in business management, bee hive setting, honey harvesting, marketing and more, will help beekeepers in the District.

If beekeepers are able to get support for protective wears and beekeeping equipment such as Beehives with metal stands, pairs of hand gloves, pairs of wellington boots, and sets of head veils, it will help improve their work.

Also better and more efficient method of harvesting and extracting honey should be introduced to enable beekeepers to be able to extract quality honey.

From the survey, an amount of GHC300 can be enough to start beekeeping. This will help reduce the rate of migration by the youth.

Wooden bee hive
Source of water for bees

Forest where hives are mounted