

EUCALYPT INSECT PEST SURVEY IN GHANA AND SIERRA LEONE

FABI Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Mesfin Gossa recently visited MIRO Forestry Company in Ghana and Sierra Leone, as part of the Eucalyptus Insect Pest Project in Africa (EIPPA). This project is led by Proff Brett Hurley, Bernard Slippers and Dr Gossa, and currently covers more than 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.



Despite its significant socio-economic role, *Eucalyptus* production is heavily challenged by non-native and locally adapted insect pests throughout its introduced range. These include many eucalypt-feeding insects recently introduced in sub-Saharan Africa and pose a serious threat to the sustainability of *Eucalyptus* forestry in the region. The aim of Dr Gossa's visit was to understand the presence, distribution, prevalence, genetic

diversity and patterns of host utilisation of eucalypt insect pests and their natural enemies in Ghana and Sierra Leone.



A total of 33 sites across the two countries were assessed for presence and prevalence of eucalypt insect pests. Insect specimens were collected to confirm species identification and examine genetic diversity, and to determine the presence of natural enemies of these pests.

During his stay in Ghana, Dr Gossa visited the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) where he met entomologist Prof. Paul Bosu and plant pathologist Dr Mary Apetorgbor, where he had a tour of the Institute's entomology, pathology and biotechnology laboratories and other facilities. Data from this and other similar surveys conducted in various sub-Saharan Africa countries will be useful to inform management strategies of eucalypt insect pests in the region.