

of monthly allowances further exacerbated the beneficiary attrition. By December 2018, the total number had dropped to approximately 35,000. This trend continued and as of the last payment of allowances for August 2023 (Paid in November 2024), the total number of active beneficiaries had dropped to less than 10,000. As of the end of February 2025, beneficiary allowances arrears stood at 18 months.

The unpaid allowances resulted in low work output, absenteeism and strike actions across the country, leading to the non-achievement of set targets. On many occasions, beneficiaries besieged the offices of the Forestry Commission across the country, demanding the payment of outstanding allowances, and issuing threats and insults. Additionally, non-payment of seedlings suppliers also compounded the challenges facing the Project. This occasioned the then Ministry of National Security to issue prompts to FC on impending breaches of peace or agitations concerning delays in payment of YAP beneficiary allowances and seedling suppliers.

### **Causes for Outstanding Allowances Arrears**

The key causes for the delay in the payment of allowances include:

- i. Inadequate budgetary allocation for the YAP.
- ii. Delays in the release of allocated funds by the Ministry of Finance (MoF).
- iii. Further delays in payment by the Controller & Accountant General's Department after MoF releases.

### **Scope of Work Under the YAP**

Over the past seven years of implementation, beneficiaries were engaged in seedling production at the various Forestry Commission tree nurseries, establishment and maintenance of forest plantations; enrichment planting in degraded forest reserves, timber stock survey and provision of support for forest protection.