

PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

- ✓ Policy statements pertinent to PFM
- ✓ Enabling environment /Legislation
- ✓ PFM implementation challenges
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INTRODUCTION

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is a strategy to achieve sustainable forest management by encouraging the management or co-management of forest and woodland resources by the communities living closest to the resources themselves.

PFM can contribute to improving rural livelihoods whilst protecting the environment and promoting gender-equality.

- The vision of the Government of Tanzania (GoT) is to alleviate the widespread poverty in the Tanzanian civil society by improving socio-economic opportunities, decentralising the functions of government and improving the delivery of public services.

POLICIES AND LAWS SUPPORTING PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT

- A number of new policies, legislation and reform programmes have contributed to the emergence of an enabling environment for Participatory Forest Management and other community-based natural resource management activities in Tanzania

The Land Policy, Land Act and Village Land Act

- Land tenure issues are crucial to PFM. The National Land Policy (1995) set the direction for land reform and the new land legislation includes significant changes to the way land can be acquired, held and transferred.

- The land reform distinguishes between land under the authority of central government and land now under the authority of village governments. Elected village councils are now the managers of village communal land and charged with the supervision and registration of Village Land within their respective village spheres, including forests and woodlands.

- **Consistent with the National Land Policy (1995), the provisions of the Land Act (1999) and the Village Land Act (1999) and related regulations recognize existing customary rights in land and allows for registration of these rights.**
- **The Land Acts also acknowledges that customary land rights are practiced in different ways by different ethnic groups all over Tanzania (Village Land Act, 1999, Section 20: 97-98).**
- **Customary rights as provided for in the new laws specifically include the right of households, groups, or communities to hold commons (such as forests) as registered common property.**

The Land Policy also specifically addresses the question of gender,

- *"The right of every woman to acquire, hold, use and deal with land shall to the same extent and subject to the same restriction be treated as the right of any man". (The Land Act, 1999: 26)*

The Forest Policy and Forest Act

- **The GoT approved the National Forest Policy in 1998. It contains a number of statements in support of PFM.**
- **The National Forest Policy aims to create an enabling environment for the development of the forestry sector by decentralising responsibilities for forest management to local communities and district councils**

POLICY STATEMENTS

- PS 3: To enable participation of all stakeholders in forest management and conservation, joint management agreements, with appropriate user rights and benefits, will be established. The agreement will be between the central government, specialised executive agencies, private sector or local governments as appropriate in each case and organised local communities or other organisations of people living adjacent to the forest.

- PS 5: To enable sustainable management of forests on public lands, clear ownership for all forests and trees on those lands will be defined. The allocation of forests and their management responsibility to villages, private individuals or to the government will be promoted. Central, local and village governments may demarcate and establish new forest reserves.

- PS 6: Village forest reserves will be managed by the village governments or other entities designated by village governments for this purpose. They will be managed for production and/or protection based on sustainable management objectives defined for each forest reserve. The management will be based on forest management plans.

- PS 7: Private and community forestry activities will be supported through harmonised extension service and financial incentives. The extension package and incentives will be designed in a gender sensitive manner. Extension services and financial incentives will be provided in support of “forestry activities” *per se*.

FOREST LEGISLATION

- The Forest Act (No. 7, June 2002) provides the legal framework to implement the National Forest Policy.

- The Forest Act supports PFM by enabling local communities to declare – and ultimately gazette – Village, Group or Private Forest Reserves

The Act provides for three categories of community-based Forest Management (CBFM):

- Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFR) managed by the entire community,
- Community Forest Reserves (CFR) managed by a particular designated group in the community, and
- Private Forests (PF) managed by individual designated households.

- The Forest Act also provides for registration and other procedures through which villages, groups or individuals may secure local jurisdiction over forests or take on management functions in Central and Local Government Forest Reserves through the establishment of Joint Forest Management (JFM) Agreements with the appropriate government authority.

Objectives of the Forest Act

- encourage and facilitate the active citizen involvement in the sustainable planning, management, use and conservation of forest resources through the development of individual and community rights;
- ensure ecosystem stability through conservation of forest biodiversity, water catchments and soil fertility;
- delegate responsibility for the management of forest resources to the lowest possible level of local management consistent with national policies;
- ensure the sustainable supply of forest products and services by maintaining sufficient forest area under efficient, effective and economical management;

- enhance the quality and improve the marketability of forest products and regulate their export;
- promote coordination and cooperation between the forest sector and other agencies and bodies in the public and private sectors;
- facilitate greater public awareness of the cultural, economic and social benefits of conserving and increasing sustainable forest cover by developing programs in training, research and public education; and
- enable Tanzania to play a full part in contributing towards and benefiting from international efforts and measures to protect and enhance global biodiversity.

Gender Concern under the Forest Policy Of 1998

- *“Private and community forestry activities will be separated through harmonized extension services and financial incentives. The extension package and incentives will be designed in a gender sensitive manner” (PS 7) and*
- *“Local communities will be encouraged to participate in forest activities. Clearly defined forest land and tree tenure rights will be instituted for local communities including both men and women.” (PS 39)*

Related policy and legislative frameworks

CROSS SECTORAL AREAS

- In addition to the Forest, Land and Village Land Acts, the implementation of PFM activities is also influenced by other related policy and legislative frameworks. These include i.a. the National Wildlife Policy and Wildlife Management Area Regulations, the new Beekeeping Act, the Public Procurement Act (No. 3, 2001) and relevant legislation from the agricultural sector.
- Furthermore, the drafting of an environmental management bill (ILFEMP) provide a crucial instrument to ensure vertical and horizontal integration of forestry activities into overall framework for environmental management in Tanzania.

PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

- PFM is a strategy to achieve sustainable forest management by promoting the management or co-management of forest and woodland resources by the communities living closest to the resources.
- It is characterised by the forest-local communities “sharing power” (devolution) instead of just benefits, and assuming owner/user rights and management of the forest resources.
- The term PFM is synonymous with the generic term Community-based Forest Management (CBFM)
- However, ‘CBFM’ is used to denote community management of still unreserved forests in Village or General Lands while the term ‘Joint Forest Management (JFM)’ is used to denote co-management regimes in respect of government forest reserves (National Forest Reserves and/or Local Authority Forest Reserves).

- There is no exact definition of PFM but it is conceptually part of an overall rural development strategy which aims to improve rural livelihoods and thereby help to reduce poverty whilst at the same time protecting the environment and promoting gender-equality and democracy.

The Statutory Basis for Participatory Forest Management

- Community-based management of forest resources is founded on the authority of village governments to set aside areas for forestry within their village land.
- The legal status of the management plan vis à vis exclusion of external interests in the forest as well as internal compliance with management rules and regulations can be enhanced through passing a related Village by-law and the forest may eventually be gazetted as a Village Land Forest Reserve (VLFR).
- Subject to approval by the Village Council, smaller groups including sub-villages, women groups, ethnic groups, etc. may manage forest resources on village lands, being part of or separate from village land forests, as Community Forests.
- On request, or if considered to be in the public interest, the Director of forestry may assist such groups in forming themselves with the purpose of applying to manage a forest as a community forest reserve (Forest Act 2002, s. 42-45). Two or more villages may decide to jointly manage a forest resource that covers parts of their respective territory (Forest Act 2002, s. 38).

- Joint forest management is based on the authority of the National and Local Governments to share management rights and responsibilities over their forest reserves and plantations with forest adjacent communities. The division of rights and responsibilities, including sharing of costs and benefits, is subject to negotiations in each specific case and detailed in a written joint forest management agreement (Forest Act 2002, s.16). Accordingly, JFM represents a contractual relationship between the relevant government institutions and local communities.

Objectives of Participatory Forest Management

- PFM has a dual objective of improving rural livelihoods and forest conservation through a strategy of power sharing between local communities and statutory agencies vis á vis the management of forest resources. Backed by the legal framework provided by the Forest Act (2002)

PFM aims to address the following two main “problems” as identified in the Forest Policy (1998, s. 4.1.1 and s. 4.4.11):

- **1. The low capacity of government institutions to manage central and local government forest reserves to meet the growing demands for forest products and services, which has resulted in destruction, degradation and conversion to other unsustainable land uses of these forest resources**
- **2. Conversion of unreserved forests on communal and public lands (mostly on village lands) to other land uses due to previously unclear land and tree tenure, particularly for indigenous trees. This has undermined economic incentives for sustainable forest management by local communities and, hence, resulted in poor motivation to plant and care for forests and trees.**

- Socially, economically and environmentally sound forest management plans are considered the main vehicle to secure sustainable protection and utilisation of forest resources. With the exception of private forests smaller than 50 ha, management plans are compulsory for all forest types irrespective of management arrangements (Forest Act, 2002, s. 11-16).

- Like in most other countries where PFM is practised, it is against this trade off that the national and local governments share authority over forest resources with local communities. Accordingly, the Director of forestry or local governments may for a specified period take over the management of forests that are under JFM or CBFM, if these are deemed to be mismanaged (Forest Act 2002, s. 8 and 41-48).

Experiences with Participatory Forest Management in Tanzania

- Over the past two decades ‘community forestry’ and ‘participatory forest management’ activities have been tried and tested in different parts of Tanzania. These activities have been almost exclusively donor-supported projects in discrete areas and to date, little effort has been made to co-ordinate and summarise lessons learned.

The following observations constitute some provisional generic lessons learned from approaches to PFM.

- The local and central government institutions do not presently have the capacity, financial means or implementation mechanisms to adequately support PFM at a larger scale. Particularly at district and village level, decentralisation without devolution of power to manage forest resources is a risk unless revenues can be increased and/or external funds can be mobilised.

- In many cases, the most important effect of PFM has, this far, not been improved forest management per se, but rather community empowerment during the process of acquiring legal authority over land designated for forestry.
- External support is generally needed to realise the opportunities of PFM in promoting community empowerment and rural development, as the number of professionals with adequate skills to facilitate the process in the field is low.

- The official establishment of village boundaries may play a crucial role in preventing and managing conflicts over village land and village land forests.
- At village and district level, PFM should form part of an overall land-use planning to prevent conflicts over land and to ensure that each sector can contribute to improve rural livelihoods.

- Limited knowledge at village level about their “new” legal rights and responsibilities hampers land-use planning, which results in opportunities foregone and conflicts.
- The Community-Based Forest Management Guidelines (2001) form a good basis for facilitating PFM, but more detailed guidelines are needed on developing concrete participatory forest management plans and forest management related by-laws.

- Local communities require long-term external support to facilitate PFM, e.g. the preparation of CBFM and JFM management plans has in many cases taken years to accomplish.
- The economic net benefits of PFM to local communities are often limited, especially in the initial stage and especially under JFM, but the net benefits to the state and society in terms of reduced management costs, increased effectiveness of forest protection and securing environmental services are often substantial and immediate.

- Rules and arrangements for cost and benefit sharing between government institutions and local communities must result in tangible and concrete benefits to local communities, if community participation is to be sustained.
- Rural households often derive more than 50% of their cash income from forest resources, with honey, beeswax, charcoal and pit sawn timber being the most important products.

- PFM activities based on traditional management systems enhance the likelihood of success.
- Communities' demand for PFM is strongest where the forest resource has been depleted and/or where external interests are already exploiting or attempting to exploit it.

- Time and effort is required to ensure accountability and transparency of the PFM process at village level. Village government structures must be closely involved and the whole village population kept informed.
- In most areas, communities do not rank PFM among their top priorities, like health and education. This has resulted in PFM activities often being supply/donor driven.

Participatory Forest Management in the National Forestry Programme

- In November 2001 the GoT approved a National Forest Programme (NFP) as the key instrument for implementation of the National Forest Policy.

- The NFP provides the framework for forest sector planning during the period 2001 – 2010, and has four main programme areas
 - a) Forest Resources Conservation and Management,
 - b) Institutions and Human Resources Development
 - c) Legal and Regulatory Framework, and
 - d) Forestry Based Industries and Sustainable Livelihoods.

- All four programmes are relevant to PFM although the Forest Resources Conservation and Management Programme specifically aims to promote gender balanced stakeholders' participation in the management of natural forests, woodlands and plantations.

The NFP outlines the general principles for PFM.

PFM activities should build on existing experiences and follow a number of key guiding principles cited in the NFP including *i.a.*

- Sustainable management of forests on Village Lands should focus on the development of clear rights of ownership, access and use for all forests and trees on those lands.
- Devolving management to specialized executive agencies, rural communities and the private sector should be based on the use of simple, low-cost and replicable forest management plans.

- Increased attention should be given to poverty reduction and gender-related issues related to the income generation opportunities from timber, fuelwood and non-wood forest products.
- Demarcation of protective buffer zones around gazetted forest reserves with biodiversity and other amenity values should provide tangible benefits for local communities.
- Inter-sectoral co-ordination and stakeholder consultation should be strengthened.

Tanzania Forest Conservation and Management Project

- TFCMP is assisting the GoT to design and establish the Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) as a specialised 'executive agency' in accordance with the Executive Agencies Act (1997). It is envisaged that the TFS will, among other things, have responsibility for bringing about improvements in the protection and management of natural forests and the development and management of industrial plantations. The TFS will be the future focal point for PFM activities in Tanzania.

Opportunities for geographical expansion

- The implementation of PFM activities in Tanzania has covered less than 1% of the total forest and woodland areas in the country.
- In addition, PFM activities are scattered and regionally concentrated. For example, out of 594 Village Forest Reserves, 432 were in Mwanza Region alone.
- There is a generic lack of interest in Joint Forest Management (JFM) activities due to the limited benefits to be gained, especially in relation to the conservation of catchment forests.
- The promotion and implementation of PFM should focus on economic and social incentive structures for the communities.

- There are more than 600 government forest reserves in Tanzania covering approximately 14 million ha or 13% of the total land area. In principle, JFM is an option for all these forests, but due to remoteness there will be forests with no obvious local communities to participate in JFM and in places where forest resources are still abundant, local communities' motivation for PFM will be too low.

Opportunities for coordinated support

Distinct opportunities exist to strengthen support for PFM activities in Tanzania, such as;

- The (eventual) establishment of a basket fund to finance the forest sector is envisaged in the National Forest Programme (NFP). A basket fund would enable donors to contribute to a more coordinated support to PFM, thereby making national PFM coverage feasible.

- Danida support to the PFM Component forms part of the larger Tanzania Forest Conservation and Management Project (TFCMP) – itself being implemented as an important part of the National Forest Programme. Linkages to both TFCMP and NFP will provide opportunities for synergy, improved co-ordination of activities, joint reviews, exchange of experience and lessons learned and the anticipated benefits of institutional and fiscal reform processes in the sector.

- The planned linkages with the Agricultural Sector Support Programme (ASPS) in certain regions/districts will also provide opportunities for synergy, for example, in terms of developing multidisciplinary extension services, capacity building and financial management.

Generic obstacles

- PFM is a development strategy that is being empirically tested in Tanzania and many other countries in Africa. The approach centres on the reconstitution of incentives at the local level. It ensures that the people who are closest to the resource are given a greater stake in its long-run viability and are directly involved in the effective use, management and protection of the resources.
- No studies have yet clearly demonstrated a correlation between PFM and improvements in rural income and livelihoods.
- However, there are many indications that such correlations may exist and also that PFM has a positive impact on local democracy and participation and that it, through devolution, transfers control of decision-making to local communities

- The "promise" of PFM rests on the assumption that if the "right" incentives are established at grass root level, then local people will take active part in (or take full responsibility for) the protection and management of local forest resources. This should counteract forest loss at the national level and contribute to sustainable socio-economic development at the local level, i.e. serve the dual objective of forest protection and rural development.

SPECIFIC LIMITS TO AND CHALLENGES OF EXPANDING PFM IN TANZANIA

- The limited knowledge at all levels about legal aspects of PFM. This poses a bottleneck to local demand for and official supply of PFM services. It also constitutes a risk of “elite capture” at village level whereby vulnerable sub-groups (the poor, the landless, women, ethnic minorities, etc.) could be further marginalised.
- The limited land-use planning capacity in many districts and villages. This might result in confusion and conflict over which areas should and should not be set aside for forestry.

Opportunities for promoting a more gender-balanced approach to PFM include:

- Empowerment of women in management. This can take place through women groups' involvement in decision making and access to resources;
- Gender sensitive training, which recognises the specific needs of both men and women in terms of timing, form and venue;

Democratisation and conflict resolution

- PFM is in principle a democratisation of the forest management regime. Usually committees responsible for PFM in the Villages are elected by the Village Assembly, and therefore (in theory, at least) directly accountable to the electorate rather than to the elected Village Council. However, some user groups such as the agro-pastoralists/pastoralists are often marginalized and do not participate fully in the democratic processes in the society.
- Therefore, whilst PFM should ideally help solve conflicts it may also create or aggravate conflicts. It is of great importance that PFM include and consider modalities for resolving such conflicts over resources. Conflicts occur within and between villages, and between groups within a village over access to and use of resources, as well as between villages and districts, e.g. on distribution of revenue from forest reserves.

INSTRUMENTS TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT

- The National Forest Policy of March 1998 provides the policy framework for the delegation of many forest management and conservation tasks to local government authorities, NGOs, CBOs and resource users at the community level

- The GoT subsequently developed and approved the National Forest Programme in 2001 as the strategic planning instrument to implement the policy, to enhance sustainable forest management and to improve the design, implementation and coordination of projects and programmes within the forestry sector.

- The Forest Act (No. 7, 2002) complements earlier legislation in providing an enabling environment to facilitate the devolved and collaborative management of forest and woodland resources in Tanzania. Additional reforms are envisaged for forestry and other sectors which may influence the management of forests and woodlands.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Tanzania is developing a number of guidelines for
 - Facilitating Participatory Forest Management
 - Assessing Participatory Forest Management
 - Monitoring & Evaluating PFM Contribution to poverty alleviation in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSP)

THE END