



Incentives to preserve forests in REDD projects

One of the main ways to combat climate change is by conserving forests. In Tanzania, where forest resources are so important to communities, how can we ensure that communities can afford to keep the forests intact? In Kilosa and Singida districts a research project is looking into which local structures and incentives are needed to make the management of forests sustainable.

The changes in climate during the last few decades have resulted in increasingly severe negative impacts on nature and communities in Tanzania and at the global level. If the release of greenhouse gases continues, climate changes will become increasingly severe and result in negative impacts on people and nature.

Forests are a defence against climate change as they absorb greenhouse gases. But deforestation and forest degradation is a big problem in many places of the world. To ensure that forests are conserved, a global mechanism called REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) has been established to pay for forest conservation. This mechanism provides developed countries and private actors the opportunity of compensating local communities in developing countries to preserve their forests. This mechanism is new and many countries, including Tanzania, are trying to find out how to create and implement projects that will ensure that forest degradation stops. To do this, the Tanzanian government is working together with NGOs and research institutions, amongst others.

One of the collaborating initiatives is the three-year research project called "Governance, Incentive and Monitoring in REDD – GIM REDD". The project is a

collaboration between Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) and Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG). The project falls under the research programme Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation (CCIAM). The project started in 2010 and will run until September 2013.



Forest in Kilosa. Photo: Dr. Abdallah.

The project aims to find out what the actual role of governance is in such projects and what people believe the role is. Also, it tries to look at the incentives for preserving the forest and the incentives for using the forest in an unsustainable way. Thirdly, it looks at how the implementation of REDD through Participatory Forest Management (PFM) can be monitored.

Forests are a valuable natural resource and are used for many different purposes: from firewood and charcoal production to house construction and electricity poles. They provide a range of livelihood options to communities surrounding them. At the same time, the land on which the forests are standing is valuable for agriculture and expansion of settlements. As the population grows, available land becomes less and forests disappear. So how can we ensure that forests are managed in a sustainable way, including a way which is good for communities and for the environment and climate?



Meeting in Kilosa District. Photo: Dr. Abdallah

One way of managing forests is by the Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach. This means the local communities take part in deciding the use and management of their forests. The Tanzanian government has helped in this and during the last 15 years Tanzania has focused on decentralization and delegation of forest management rights and responsibilities to local communities. The results have been good and research has found that the forests have improved with PMF. However, preserving forests also comes with costs for all those who use the forest, as they cannot make a living by unsustainable use of the forest. To ensure that the management practices set in place are sustainable, it is vital to understand who is benefiting from the PFM and to understand the local stakeholder's incentives.

The project is looking at these issues in communities living next to forests, namely in Kilosa and Singida Districts. These districts present two very different situations.

In Kilosa district, the NGOs Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) and Community Forest Conservation Network of Tanzania (MJUMITA) have been working together with six villages on forest management, through a REDD pilot project. TFCG is using several ways to motivate people and ensure that the forest is conserved. As part of the trial payment for piloting the institutional capacity to implement REDD, villagers have already been paid an average of about 7000 TZS per household member as incentive to manage the forest. Part of the money was committed by villagers to support developmental activities like schools and health facilities while the remaining portion was used to meet household demands. In addition, villagers get training in alternative livelihood opportunities. The researchers in the project teach the farmers how to intensify agricultural production so they will need less land to get the same output. The farmers are also trained in how to monitor forest conditions, to make sure the forest is being preserved. At the village level the NGO has built a hospital and a local government office. All these initiatives help to increase the incentive to keep the forest intact.

“When I visited the communities in November 2011 they told me that the incentives provided by TFCG are working and the villagers are positive to REDD” said Dr. Abdallah, a project member at SUA.

But not everyone in the village is in favour of REDD. This is because the different forest user groups benefit differently from the forest. Making charcoal gives a villager a higher income than for the

neighbour who gets some branches of firewood in their homes.

In Singida, the District and Regional forest authorities wish to have a REDD pilot project in the Mgori forest. The research project has been looking into what kinds of incentives would be needed to make the forest users change their use of the forest. To find out, they have focused on Ngimu and Pohama villages which both have communities depending heavily on the forest.

Forest users get a good income from Mgori forest. Clearing it for agricultural production, beekeeping, charcoal production and hunting all generate good income for the villagers. Other villagers are keeping livestock, which is also taking its toll on forest regeneration. All these sources represent a major part of the income of these households. Another argument against forest conservation is the presence of wildlife. Farmers struggle a lot with elephants and monkeys damaging their crops. The easiest way to avoid this problem is to clear the forest. In Singida, if one intends to change the behaviour of the villagers who benefit from the use of forest resources, the alternative must bring in a substantial income to compensate the change of source of income.

The research areas presented above give valuable information on how communities value their forest and what is needed to change behaviour. As the climate is changing and we need both to be ready for these changes as well as try to mitigate them, it is very important that we understand what is needed to change behaviour. Lessons learned from this project will help Tanzania develop more sustainable projects for the future.

Project title: Governance, Incentive and Monitoring in REDD – GIM REDD

For more information go to <http://www.suanet.ac.tz/cciam/>

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