



6.2 Pro-poor forest governance in Burkina Faso and Tanzania

JULIA PAULSON, GEMMA SALT, TONY HILL, LUDOVIC CONDITAMDE, DÉSIÉ OUEDRAOGO and JOANNA WAIN

Introduction

This paper discusses initiatives in pro-poor forest governance in two African countries: Burkina Faso and Tanzania. The term “pro-poor forest governance” means equitable, decentralized decision-making that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of the local forest users and communities who depend on forests for their livelihoods. This aligns with the Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG)¹ definition of good forest governance, which “reflects the decisions and actions that remove barriers and install policy and institutional systems which spread local forestry success.”² Key features include participation, accountability, equity, fairness, transparency, local control and management.



SUCCESSES IN PRO-POOR GOVERNANCE AND IN COMMUNITY DECISIONS ABOUT FOREST RESOURCES

NEED TO BE CONNECTED WITH OTHER PROCESSES WITHIN THE FOREST SECTOR.

Africa is the only continent where rates of deforestation continue to worsen,³ and forests are tightly linked to the livelihoods of poor rural African households.⁴ Pro-poor forest governance — which puts decision-making power in the hands of poor forest users — offers the potential to both secure livelihoods and protect forests. The following factors have enabled the successes in Burkina Faso and Tanzania:

- enabling policy frameworks;
- working in multi-level collaborative networks;
- connecting local enterprise and forest management;
- a learning-by-doing approach; and
- facilitating learning exchanges.

Burkina Faso and Tanzania

This article draws on evidence from two very different countries. Burkina Faso, in West Africa, has a total forest cover of approximately 26% or 7.1 million hectares (ha), 67,000 ha of which is planted forest. Natural forests are by and large non-reserve (75%) and

Julia Paulson **Tony Hill**, **Ludovic Conditamde** and **Désiré Ouedraogo** work for TREE AID; **Gemma Salt** is Development Manager, EdUkAid, UK; and **Joanna Wain** is a volunteer for TREE AID.

there is a high rate of deforestation, about 15,000 ha per annum, or 0.2%. There is very little closed forest; forest is approximately 50% open/fragmented forest and 50% other wooded land. Despite the comparatively small forest resource, forestry is an important sector for the national economy, accounting for around 16% of GDP.⁵

In Tanzania, in East Africa, forests and woodlands cover approximately 40% (33.5 million ha) of total land area and are primarily classed as Wet Seasonal Miombo Woodland (62%). Of this, 16.0 million ha are forest reserves; 2.2 million ha are national parks and 17.3 million ha are unprotected forests on general land that is not publicly owned or managed. There is a high rate of deforestation: Tanzania lost an average of 412,300 of forest per year between 1990 and 2000 (a deforestation rate of 0.99%).⁶

The experience of the two countries provides lessons about pro-poor forest governance in different regions of the continent (West Africa and East Africa). Types of forest, policy regimes and levels of aid investment in the decentralization of forest management differ in the two regions.

The lessons presented here are drawn from several sources. In Burkina Faso, the primary source is TREE AID's experience promoting pro-poor forest governance through its Trees for Change project, now in its fifth year.⁷ The project works in eight communes in Burkina Faso, home to approximately 26,500 people. It brings together relevant stakeholders at the community, local government, traditional authority and state level.

The project works to enable the development of Forest Management Agreements, agreed to by local communities and adopted by commune authorities, which meet local needs and protect tree resources. It works closely with the national government through a central government working group on decentralization and through an FGLG-style group to connect actors at different levels. It also works to ensure that lessons learned in the pilot communes can be scaled up and that legislative changes match progress on the ground.

The information provided for Tanzania draws on research commissioned by TREE AID into best practice in participatory forest management (PFM).^{8,9} The Tanzanian case is often presented in literature as one of the most successful examples of PFM; the research was designed to understand more about this experience and to consider what lessons it offered to TREE AID's work in Burkina Faso. The research draws together the experiences of a variety of actors over several decades in order to consolidate lessons that might be learned from the Tanzanian experience.

Successes up close

Burkina Faso

In Gompsonsom Commune in northern Burkina Faso, families are unable to feed themselves entirely on the harvests from the agricultural crops that form the backbone of their livelihoods. To make up the shortfall, they depend on trees and forests, both for wild foods that they collect, such as fruit and leaves, and for products they can sell to generate income, such as shea nuts, honey, tamarind and baobab. Villagers also collect fuelwood

and timber from the forest. Prior to project intervention, this collection was largely unregulated and occasionally was punished harshly by local Forest Service Officers. Relationships between villagers and the Forest Service were strained and traditional norms governing forest use tended to be enforced locally. Neither community members nor village and commune authorities were familiar with the provisions for community-managed forest governance that became available through decentralization processes initiated by central government.

With support from TREE AID and its partners, community members have come together to discuss their forest use, learn about opportunities presented by the decentralization legislation and agree on a Local Forest Management Convention (LFMC). The LFMC establishes rules and demarcates specific areas of forest to meet a range of stakeholder needs, including conservation, income generation, firewood collection and grazing. Tree-planting plans are laid out to ensure the long-term sustainability of wood for fuel and timber. Women in Gomponsom have been very involved in the LFMC process; it has given them a voice in forest management for the first time. This is particularly important, since it is women who use the forest most for collecting food, income generating products and firewood.

A Village Forest Management Committee (VFMC) enforces the convention that villagers developed. The convention is in the process of being ratified by local commune authorities, who received capacity-building assistance from the project. Commune authorities are aware of their new responsibilities under the decentralization policy and are beginning to enforce them locally. Along with colleagues from the Forest Service, they are developing more mutually respectful relationships with communities, who now better understand and welcome their forest management efforts.

Tanzania

In Tanzania many examples of PFM have been praised for successes and good practice. One significant example is the pioneering Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) approaches in the Duru Haitemba forest in Babati District, which provided communities with secure ownership rights and responsibility for forest protection. This reversed the trend of deforestation, and villages were able to implement and enforce management plans that prohibited uncontrolled use.¹⁰ The *Hifardhi Ardhi Shinyanga* (HASHI) project empowered local stakeholders in forest restoration and revived local indigenous practices by placing them in a modern legal context.¹¹ The *Matumizi Endelevu ya Misitu ya Asili* (MEMA) project increased village forest revenues under CBFM. Villagers were designated as both owners and managers of the forest resource through a Village Natural Resource Committee (VNRC); the owners incur the costs but also accrue the profits generated.¹²

The most significant improvements — in both social and conservation outcomes — have been made in the Nou catchment forest in the southern part of Babati and Mbulu district of Northern Tanzania. The forest suffered extensive exploitation from timber production since the early 1950s and was closed in 1989 due to extreme deterioration.¹³ In 2004 the UK-based NGO, Farm Africa, with local- and national-level support, implemented the

Nou Joint Forest Management Project (NOU JFM). It took a dual approach, establishing a community-based forest management system, and adopting improved livelihood systems through complementary natural resource interventions to generate income alternatives to deforestation.¹⁴ Current developments include the Tanzania Participatory Forest Management Project (TPFMP), which commenced in 2009 and ends in 2012. The project places a strong emphasis on the inclusion of women and youth and demonstrates an innovative design and preparation approach based on local knowledge and institutions, development of strong partnerships, collaboration, and capacity building.¹⁵

Lessons learned: Reflecting on successes and challenges

Enabling policy frameworks and multi-level collaborative networks

In both Burkina Faso and Tanzania the national policy context is favourable. It enables decentralized forest management, which, when implemented with participation by local people and with pro-poor objectives, can support pro-poor forest governance. Decentralization to the regional and village levels has been in process in both countries since the mid-1970s and legislation introduced in the 1990s formally mandated processes to decentralize forest management. In Tanzania, significant donor support for PFM from Scandinavian countries in the 1990s led to many projects within the country and to the development of a strong policy base and institutional framework for decentralization and pro-poor forest management.¹⁶

In Burkina Faso, there has been less donor support for the formal legislation that puts decentralized forest management — including the 1996 *Forestry Code* — into place. This is changing. Donors are increasingly supporting development in the forestry sector as the country begins work on a REDD+ readiness plan.

Capacity, will and resources at the central government level remain major challenges, however. Decentralization has been slow and in some cases opportunistic, benefiting business or individual interests rather than those of communities; as in other countries, elite capture¹⁷ at the regional and local level is an issue. As in Gompsonsom Commune, smallholder farmers are often unsure or distrustful of the process and local authorities are uncertain of their roles and new responsibilities and lack the resources and support to implement them.

In Burkina Faso, therefore, it has been important to work with policy-makers at the national, regional and local level and within the Forest Service, which inherits new responsibilities under the decentralization legislation. The working groups established by TREE AID's Trees for Change project have enabled practical policy support for decentralized forest management from the highest levels of central government. They have also built the capacity of regional and local actors to take up new responsibilities and to facilitate and eventually ratify and enforce forest management plans developed by communities. Crucially, these multi-stakeholder networks have fostered dialogue, included forest users and supported local community capacity to make decisions about forest use and management.

The project followed the FGLG model in its first phase and has supported the development of a bylaw framework and capacity training for commune level authorities to approve and implement agreements around LFMCs. In its second phase the project accompanied these earlier efforts with a high-level working group that brought together central government actors to support the implementation of decentralization policy within the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. A primary goal of this group is to pass the necessary subsidiary legislation to implement the Forestry Code. The group will also address contradictions between customary and statutory law on land tenure, which present challenges to the decentralization of forest governance. They are currently finalizing an Act that will establish a permanent section within the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development to support decentralization in the forestry sector.

In Tanzania, research highlights the importance of multi-actor networks and the engagement of a variety of stakeholders as key factors in the success of these initiatives. Multi-actor networks have been particularly important in terms of preventing corruption and elite capture, building the capacity of local actors (especially within Village Councils/Assemblies) and sharing lessons learned. Elite capture of decentralization processes is a major challenge in the forestry sector; it may be addressed by support for multi-level collaborative networks with decision-making authority. The TPFM implemented by Farm Africa in Babati and Mbulu district has been successful in engaging District and Local Council actors, community organizations, and women and youth. Their commitment to the project — and to the alternative livelihoods it promotes — has been important for its success.

Connecting local enterprise and forest management

The TPFM project includes alternative livelihood strategies as a part of its approach to PFM. It supports income-generating activities such as beekeeping, tree planting, mushroom cultivation, butterfly farming, fish farming, medicinal plant commercialization and the development of ecotourism and cultural tourism. This alternative income has reduced the pressure on forest resources and provided an additional stake in forest protection for villagers-turned-forest entrepreneurs. In some cases, however, endeavours have not generated a steady source of income for participants. This may be due to a lack of sound market analysis and resource base assessment and a lack of support for the development of small businesses. There are lessons to be learned from TREE AID's experience using the Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach to support poor smallholder farmers to develop sustainable businesses selling tree products.

In Burkina Faso, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are an important component of the rural economy, especially to women, who are those most engaged in harvesting, processing and, increasingly, commercializing products such as shea nuts, forest honey and baobab leaves. The MA&D approach enables poor, often illiterate would-be entrepreneurs to identify locally available natural resources, to ensure sustainable supply (through, for instance, controlled harvesting and planting built into business plans) and understand local and regional markets for these products before beginning to develop their

enterprises. To date in Burkina Faso several hundred small enterprises have been established, supplementing household income and security. Many of these entrepreneurs, the majority of whom are women, have become involved in VFMCs and have been influential in developing management plans that ensure secure access for entrepreneurs to the tree products they are commercializing (Box 1).

Box 1. Participating in CFMCs

Salamata Nanema, age 35 (shown here), is one of the many female entrepreneurs who have been motivated to participate in the agreement of CFMCs. Secure tree tenure is crucial to the success of her business. Since beginning to sell liana fruit she has been able to send her daughter to school and to buy additional food for her family during the lean season. She explains her motivation for joining the VFMC in Gomponsom, *“I’m a member of an enterprise group that sells liana fruit. I chose to participate in the committee that elaborated the Local Forest Management Convention and to represent Village Tree Enterprise groups there because I depend on forest products. My role was to be sure that the rules that we developed would protect and facilitate access to the trees that we use for our enterprises.”*



Learning by doing and learning exchange for local actors

In Burkina Faso the introductory nature of the project — and its work in eight different communes — has enabled a flexible, learning-by-doing approach. For instance, when early project work revealed the degree to which commune authorities were unfamiliar with central government legislation, planned activities were revised to support the transfer of knowledge and technical capacity. This included seconding partner NGO staff to work as forest governance advisors at the commune level. The project design considers the process of learning, sharing and building capacity as one of the indicators of its success. TREE AID learns about what is and isn’t working well through regular project review and evaluation, engagement with project stakeholders at all levels and by sharing its experience in international networks such as the FGLGs and the Forest Dialogue.¹⁸

Sharing among a range of actors and across experiences in the eight communes allows the lessons learned to be replicated. It also allows for the gradual development of a flexible model of support that can be shared with government and potentially scaled up. The central government working group created the necessary time, practical support and range of participation necessary to plan for the development and implementation of secondary legislation. This will facilitate decentralized pro-poor forest governance around the country, and is an important step in that direction.

Local actors, including forest users and village and commune authorities, have been able to visit each other to discuss progress and learn from their peers. The project has also facilitated exchange visits to share experiences of decentralization and pro-poor forest governance in neighbouring Mali (Box 2).

Box 2. Decentralization in Mali

Policy and legislation on decentralization in Mali are similar to those in Burkina Faso, but Mali has had elected local government structures in place considerably longer than has Burkina Faso and during the project they shared this history of commune-led natural resource management with their Burkinabe counterparts. The Burkinabe Forest Service has been more receptive to community needs when changing its legislation, which was of interest to Malian participants.

Further opportunities for learning have arisen from linking the project to broader international dialogues such as discussions around REDD+ readiness taking place within the framework of the Forest Investment Programme in Burkina Faso.

In Tanzania, the Farm Africa TPFM project is designed according to a learning-by-doing approach, and is built on previous experience gained through the Nou Joint Forest Management Project (2004–07). A 2008 report on the TPFM project found that the design process — which included investigation and negotiation stages before the project implementation — had been important to the eventual success of the project.¹⁹ A Project Coordinating Unit, which regularly brings together Farm Africa and partner organization representatives, has also been important in sharing experiences, learning lessons, strategic planning and replication of successful initiatives. According to one report, the Farm Africa project is “based on an ethos of genuine collegiality and ongoing review and adjustment.”²⁰ This was seen as crucial to understanding the project’s success in equitably altering the balance of power in forest resource management in the communities (the project ends in 2012).

Conclusion

Successes have been achieved in pro-poor forest governance in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. TREE AID has had considerable experience with these issues in Burkina Faso (and the Sahel more broadly) and is interested in sharing with and learning from colleagues working in this field in East Africa.

It is noteworthy that despite contextual differences, there are many common features of the experience in Burkina Faso and the results of the research commissioned in Tanzania. In both cases, there is a need to connect successes in pro-poor governance and in decisions of communities about their forest resources with other processes within the forestry sector. This will help ensure that efforts in a diverse range of initiatives — from climate protection to enhanced timber legislation — include and benefit those who depend on forests for their livelihoods and are best placed to protect them.

Endnotes

1. The Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG) is an informal alliance of in-country groups and international partners active in eight African and three Asian countries. FGLG aims to connect those marginalized from forest governance to those controlling it, and to help both do things better. FGLG networks are active in Cameroon, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam. For more info see: www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/forestry/forest-governance-learning-group.
2. See Mayers, J., A. Bila, S. Khaukha, K. Opoku and W. Simwela. 2006. "Forest governance and social justice: Practical tactics from a learning group approach." *International Forestry Review* 8(3): 101–109.
3. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation). 2011. *State of the World's Forests*. Rome: FAO.
4. See, among others: Cavendish, W. 2000. "Empirical regularities in the poverty-environment relationship in rural households: Evidence from Zimbabwe." *World Development* 28: 1979–2003.
5. Forest Governance Learning Group. 2008. *Burkina Faso West Africa Presentation*. Contact authors for a copy.
6. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation). 2010. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010. Country Reports: United Republic of Tanzania*. Rome: FAO.
7. TREE AID's Trees for Change project is funded for an initial five years by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and now enters a second stage, with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).
8. See Salt, G. 2011. *Forest Governance and Participatory Forest Management in Tanzania: Past, Present and Future Approaches – A literature and best practices review*. Prepared for TREE AID in October 2011.
9. The term "participatory forest management" is used more broadly in Tanzania and East Africa. Its goals and values resonate with those of the process described here as "pro-poor forest governance" in West Africa.
10. See among others: Wiley, L.A. 1998. *Villagers as forest managers and governments "learning to let go." The case of Duru Haitemba and Mgori Forests in Tanzania*. Forest Participation Series, No 9. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
11. See MNRT. 2005. *A Study on the Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts of Forest Landscape Restoration in Shinyanga Region*. Tanzania. Unpublished report. IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Eastern Africa Regional Office.
12. See Blomley, T. and S. Iddi. 2009. *Participatory Forest Management in Tanzania: 1993–2009. Lessons Learned and Experiences to Date*. Dar Es Salaam: United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Forestry and Beekeeping Division.
13. See Leminih, M. and M. Bekele. 2008. *Participatory Forest Management: Best Practices, Lessons Learnt and Challenges Encountered – The Ethiopian and Tanzanian Experiences*. FARM –Africa/SOS Sahel Report produced March 2008.
14. See Sangeda, A. and S. Mosha. 2011. *FARM Africa Tanzania Participatory Forest Management Project (TPFMP). Mid-term Evaluation*, January 2011.
15. See Sangeda, A. and S. Mosha. 2011. *FARM Africa*.
16. See Blomley, T. and S. Iddi. 2009. *Participatory Forest Management*.
17. Elite capture is the ability of elite groups to take advantage of government initiatives intended to distribute resources or funds to the general public in such a way that it primarily benefits themselves.
18. The Forest Dialogue was formed in 2000 as an ongoing civil-society-driven, multi-stakeholder dialogue platform and process to forge relationships and spur collaborative action on the highest priority issues facing the world's forests. For more information, see <http://environment.yale.edu/tfd/about/history>.
19. See Leminih, M. and M. Bekele. 2008. *Participatory Forest Management*.
20. See Salt, G. 2011. *Forest Governance*.