Hidden Harvest: Unlocking The Economic Potential Of Community Based Forest Management In Tanzania

Tom Blomley, Hadija Ramadhani, Yassin Mkwizu and Andreas Böhringer
Outline of presentation

1. Participatory Forest Management and decentralisation in Tanzania
2. Implementation Progress to date
3. Contribution from CBFM to village and household incomes
4. Challenges to enhancing local benefits from CBFM
5. Addressing the challenges – some possible ways forward
6. Conclusions
PFM and decentralisation in Tanzania

Local Government Act (1982)
Decentralised powers of Village Councils and confers power to make legally binding bylaws

Village Land Act (1997)
Responsibility over management of land and natural resources vested in village council

Forest Act (2002)
Provides legal mechanism for villagers to become owner/managers and co-managers of forest resources
Participatory Forest Management (PFM)

The law recognises two broad types of PFM in Tanzania:

- Community Based Forest Management (CBFM)
- Joint Forest Management (JFM)
Community Based Forest Management (CBFM)

Village Councils can “declare” forest areas on “village land” as Village Land Forest Reserves or Community Forest Reserves.

This entitles them to assume full management responsibility, undertake patrols, levy fines for illegal forest users, issue licenses for forest products, retain forest revenues, set rules and regulations regarding forest management and use.

Forest revenues are collected by Village Natural Resource Management Committees and allocated to forest management and village development.
Joint Forest Management (JFM)

This is a collaborative approach to forest management, where forest adjacent communities enter into management agreements with the forest owner (government or private sector) over the management of forest resources.

Ownership of forest land remains with the government, but benefits such as timber, firewood, grazing can be transferred to local communities depending on the status of the reserve (protection or production).
## PFM and decentralisation in Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Community Based Forest Management</th>
<th>Joint Forest Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is the forest “owner”?</strong></td>
<td>Village Government, or a Community Group</td>
<td>Central government or local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who has the primary responsibility for forest protection and management?</strong></td>
<td>Village Government, or a Community Group</td>
<td>Village Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is transfer of rights recognised in law and how is it endorsed?</strong></td>
<td>Through a village assembly declaring an area of forest as a reserve and the district council registering it</td>
<td>Through the signing of a Joint Management Agreement between a village council and a higher level of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who has rights to forest products and how are they shared?</strong></td>
<td>Village Government, or a Community Group</td>
<td>Legal grey area. Law recognises sharing of forest goods and services but no legal mechanism exists for determining in what relative share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does the law view the community and the benefits obtained?</strong></td>
<td>Actor, partner Manager Decision maker Rule Maker Citizen Centred about the sharing of power</td>
<td>Beneficiary Forest User Consultee Rule follower Subject Centred around the sharing of benefits (NFTPs and sometimes income)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the overall intention of the management approach?</strong></td>
<td>To decentralise rights and responsibilities of forest management</td>
<td>To reduce forest management costs of government through benefit sharing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the past five years, there has been an increasing gap opening up between these two forms of PFM.

JFM has been widely promoted but criticised for not devolving sufficient rights and benefits to make it viable in the long term.

CBFM is increasingly being demanded and spreading rapidly.

Given its greater potential for economic empowerment, this paper will focus only on the second form of PFM - CBFM.
Spread and Adoption of CBFM to date

Current status of PFM in Tanzania:

- Overall, 3.6 Million Ha under some form of PFM in 1800 villages
- Approximately 1.9 million hectares under village management (CBFM) in around 1500 villages
Spread and Adoption of CBFM to date

No. of Villages in CBFM

1999 2002 2006

Ha under CBFM

No. of Villages

No. of Villages:

1999: 500
2002: 800
2006: 2000

Ha under CBFM:

1999: 1000
2002: 1500
2006: 2200

Graph showing the increase in the number of villages and hectares under CBFM from 1999 to 2006.
Spread and Adoption: CBFM

Distribution of CBFM across different forest types

- Montane
- Mangrove
- Miombo
- Coastal
- Acacia
Impact of CBFM on Local Incomes

• Surprisingly little data on village income from CBFM despite its wide spread.

• One study in southern Tanzania pointed to modest incomes of between 540 – 720 USD per village per year

• These sites are rather small – around 1-2000 ha per village

• Large areas of unreserved forest still exist (greater than 15 M ha) with significant potential to generate higher incomes

• Growing market for timber and wood products that could provide valuable revenue streams for poor and remote communities
Delivering on Livelihoods?

Why is it that despite its huge potential and apparent spread – CBFM has yet to deliver on reducing poverty?

1. Institutional Failures and governance shortfalls in the Forest Sector

- Limited knowledge on forest condition and extent – estimating sustainable harvests is almost impossible
- Contribution of forest sector to national economy significantly undervalued and underappreciated
- Conflicting roles between central and local government authorities with regard to forest management and revenue collection
- Illegal logging fueled by massive growth in Chinese and south Asian market for timber
Delivering on Livelihoods?

2. Limited capacity and incentives at local government levels

- Local government staff are poorly resourced, lack training and are often unaware of changes in policy and law
- Remoter districts with higher potential for CBFM are often seen as “punishment postings” for staff that have faced disciplinary action in other areas
- Fears from district councils over lost income to CBFM
- Fears from some district staff that transferring forests to village management will break lines of patronage to corrupt traders and reduce personal income from graft
Delivering on Livelihoods?

3. Limited awareness of rights and laws among forest dependent communities

- Logging and timber trade represents an important income for young men in areas with high CBFM potential
- Very limited knowledge among this same population of potential returns from CBFM and true value of timber
4. Focus on conservation or restoration rather than sustainable utilisation

- Early CBFM sites were degraded – areas that government had “given up” and handed over to communities as a “last hope”

- Most common incentive for community action is loss of forest – primary goal is forest restoration – bylaws and management plans tend to stress protection

- Prevailing narrative among government staff at national and local level on conservation. Foresters reluctant to promote utilisation

- Many community members are themselves nervous of “opening up” their own forests – and fear consequences of loss of control
Addressing the challenges

At national level there is a need to:

– Lobby the Tanzanian government to ratify A-FLEG Agreement
– Initiate Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM)
– Build greater voice for local forest users at the national level through forums and advocacy processes
– Making general public, civil society and MPs aware of lost revenue to central, district and village government from illegal logging (estimated to be around $40M/year)
– Encouraging openness in information on forest harvesting – tenders, awards, contracts, licenses
– Improving law enforcement efforts of government
– Developing legal benefit sharing arrangements between different levels of government on forest harvesting
– Supporting public litigation processes for disenfranchised forest users, who have suffered from abuse of power
Addressing the challenges

At the local level there is a need to support communities to claim their rights so that they can:

– defend their resources and preventing “asset stripping” by unscrupulous logging interests
– demand CBFM from leaders at local government levels
– challenge corrupt practices – from their own leaders, district staff, and loggers
– prevent elite capture within the village and transparency of management institutions
– take better decisions on forest management options based on fuller understanding of true values of forest resources on their land
Addressing the challenges

Building incentives for local governments

• Devolving revenue collection on forest royalties does not necessarily lead to reduced incomes to district councils
• Studies undertaken increased efficiency (from around 3% of total revenue when district collect to about 92% of revenue when villages collect)
• Negotiating simple benefit sharing scheme between villages and districts (5-10% of revenues) could build bridges between these two levels of government
• Challenging corrupt practices at Local government level too – by building demands from below
Addressing the challenges

Despite worries of local government, devolving revenue collection to villages may result in increased incomes to district councils...

Annual Forest Revenues Collected by Iringa District Council and 14 villages implementing CBFM

Note: 153 villages in Iringa District
Conclusions

CBFM holds the key to sustainable forest management and livelihood improvements in some of the poorest parts of Tanzania.

Strong policy environment and considerable off-reserve forest areas mean that it has great potential.

Despite its huge potential and spread over the past ten years, little evidence to suggest that titling of forest resources by communities has resulted in increased incomes.

The reasons for this are many – but increasingly governance failures appears to be underlying cause, rather than traditional – “technical” solutions (capacity, guidelines etc)
Conclusions

Need to work at three levels:

**Community Level**: Empowerment, legal literacy and increased awareness of rights and responsibilities

**Local Government Levels**: Reversing incentives (both institutional and individual) that block transfer of forests to community levels

**National level**: challenging illegal logging and focusing spotlight on what illegal logging means to development pathway of the country as a whole – in terms of lost revenues to the country and rural communities