

3.5. Highlighting and Addressing Environmental and Socioeconomic Aspects of Community Based Forest Management

For CBFM to be attractive to stakeholders, it must demonstrate its potential to contribute to livelihood improvement, be it through cash income generation or through use of non-cash benefits from forest goods and services. To enhance the contribution of forests to economic development and livelihoods improvement, many communities have embarked on a wide range of small-scale forest-based enterprises. Whilst the majority of these remain in the informal sector, there is a growing trend of integration of these enterprises into the formal or main stream economy especially where the products and services provided are high value and have broad domestic and international markets. This has also led to the development or emergence of a wide range of community private sector partnerships in different parts of the world in an effort to boost business management and marketing capacity of the enterprises. The development and growth of small-scale forest-based enterprises generate demand for a wide range of business development services such as:

- Enterprise development support services
- Good transport and communication services especially for marketing
- Access to micro-credit and other financial services
- Business management capacity and skills
- Contract and partnership negotiation skills
- Financial management services and skills

Thus the institutionalisation of CBFM has to include the following:

- Policies and regulations that support community-based enterprises
- Guidelines for joint ventures and other partnerships
- Policies that promote the development of micro-finance services to improve the communities' access to relevant and affordable financial services
- Clear guidelines on benefit sharing mechanisms to ensure that benefits do not accrue to one user group only.
- Clear procedures and guidelines for forest use and exploitation of products to prevent over-exploitation
- Development of the capacity of local management institutions to monitor and regulate commercial and other uses of forests and forest products.
- Development of the capacity of local management institutions to facilitate and balance the use of forests and environmental and subsistence needs. This should include platforms for reviewing forest management objectives and practices to take into account changing circumstances and needs of different user groups (platforms for collaborative learning, development of adaptive strategies and consensus building at community level).

Strategies to properly address environmental and socio economic aspects of CBFM should ensure that government and the community jointly:

- Monitor continuously the long term dynamics of the forests under community management and under other management regimes at sentinel sites across ecological and socio economic gradients throughout the region.
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of community forests in the context of broader environmental issues such as climate change, watershed management, biodiversity conservation, land degradation/desertification control, etc.;
- Expand market opportunities for forest communities and small forest operations;
- Develop community-based indicators for monitoring and evaluation of CBFM performance in terms of environmental sustainability, livelihood improvement, and economic growth.

3.6. Enhancing Support Services to Stakeholders

To enable stakeholders contribute effectively and efficiently to the institutionalization and implementation of CBFM in the region, key services required include capacity development and sustainable funding. These are examined below together with potential benefits that can be derived from regional cooperation.

Empowering stakeholders through knowledge by strengthening participatory research and capacity development

The technical back-up to communities involved in CBFM by national institutions, e.g. public forest administrations (PFAs) and research institutions, is often very limited, either because of unclear mandates of these institutions in relation to CBFM or because of lack of resources and personnel with the right knowledge and experience. Due to limited participation of stakeholders in development of curricula and research programmes, research and education programmes in many countries still largely target traditional forestry needs. To strengthen the support of research and capacity development programmes to CBFM, there is need to:

- Promote participatory research to ensure that the needs of communities are mainstreamed into research plans. This can be best achieved by involving community representatives in research planning;
- Develop a capacity development strategy to enhance skills and capacities of both individuals and training institutions;
- Include CBFM concept and strategy in forestry curricula and enhance the capacity of trainers to develop relevant training materials in CBFM;
- Assess capacity needs at all levels (local, national and regional), focusing on

community empowerment as well as re-orientation training for professionals and technical staff, to update their technical skills and skills to deal with communities;

- Document and build on traditional knowledge, technologies and institutional arrangements;
- Learn from (and build on) success stories such as Central Africa's experience with the "*Guide pour la formation en gestion participative des ressources naturelles*", the Sahelian experience with the UNDP/FAO supported training Centre on community capacity development for participatory management of natural forests at Nabilpaga-Yargo in Burkina Faso, and similar experiences in other sub-regions.

Developing and implementing a strategy for sustainable funding

Sustainable community forestry faces serious constraints in today's global markets. Even with progress in the development of small and medium scale forest enterprises, CBFM may not be sufficiently competitive and economically viable. Innovative and sustainable funding mechanisms are needed if CBFM is to successfully compete and prosper to benefit stakeholders.

Sustainable funding to support the promotion of CBFM will require more than simply mobilizing the state's and traditional donors 'financial' resources. In addition to traditional income generation through trade of timber and non-timber forest products, there is need to tap new and emerging financing mechanisms such as compensation for conservation efforts i.e. non-market based financing mechanisms (e.g. GEF, Conservation trust funds, etc.), and market-based mechanisms of payment for ecosystem services (e.g. markets for carbon sequestration including REDD opportunities, watershed services, recreation, biodiversity conservation, etc.). These options are discussed in more details later in the section on emerging issues.

Whatever the actual source of external funding, CBFM implementation should emphasize the need to also establish a Local Forestry Fund for the sustainability of the approach. A good example is the National Forest Fund (NFF) in The Gambia. In this case, any revenue realised from CFM is subject to a 15 percent tax, National Forest Fund. Of the net (post-tax) benefits received by the participating community, 40 percent must be reinvested into CF development activities, and the remaining 60 percent would go to community or village development activities (Camara, 2009).

Capitalizing on growing regional and international cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Several strategies, programmes and projects on CBFM and other forestry-related initiatives exist in sub-Saharan Africa. However, on-going activities take place mostly at local and national levels. Operational mechanisms for information sharing, mutual learning and coordination at sub-regional and continental levels are lacking. The overall coordination role played by FAO in the late 1990s and early 2000s to organize the international workshops on community forestry in The Gambia and Tanzania has been instrumental in raising awareness and support for CBFM in Africa. There is need to establish a regional platform and mechanisms for cooperation on CBFM in Africa. Such a mechanism would help achieve the following objectives:

- Capitalize on the existing rich and diverse country experiences on CBFM to update lessons learnt, enhance visibility and promote cooperation to expand CBFM in future;
- Ensure regional coherence in the understanding and vision of CBFM;
- Examine existing and emerging constraints and opportunities for promoting the use and implementation of this guidelines;
- Raise awareness of the guidelines and promote their dissemination through regional and international fora and mechanisms;
- Develop programmes for disseminating the present guidelines and implementing them at the national and regional levels, where additional support is needed;
- In addition to the NEPAD Action Plan for the Environment, mainstream CBFM into sub-regional forest policies, programmes and projects such as the convergence plan of COMIFAC in Central Africa, the West Africa Dialogue on Forests, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative;
- Mainstream CBFM (and other forestry-related priority issues) into CAADP and in sub-regional agricultural policies and investment programmes.

3.7. Anticipating and Capturing Emerging Issues

New and emerging issues may provide opportunity for CBFM to expand meaningfully in future. An important issue that emerged in the last decade is market for ecosystem services including watershed protection, biodiversity and carbon. There is need to review and align national policies and legal frameworks, and institutions in the forestry sector, with other sectors in order to provide an enabling framework through which CBFM can take advantage of these opportunities. Opportunities for partnership with the private sector are also emerging in connection with trends of increasing interest for certification of forest products.

Governments therefore need to provide a conducive policy framework for private companies to do business with local communities in a socially responsible manner. Although it is clearly too early to offer any detailed guidance on how to incorporate the emerging issues into CBFM, it is important that they be recognized and captured as key issues with the potential to influence future development of CBFM.

In recent years the development of payments for environmental services (PES) as a potential source of revenue from, and funding for, SFM has gained momentum. Payment for the services of forest ecosystems entails providing compensation to the owners of a forest (or other ecosystems) in return for the provision or maintenance of certain environmental services (Wunder, 2005). While such payments have long existed for recreational services, they are being adopted for other services such as watershed protection, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and landscape beauty. Various regulatory, market-based, and other voluntary payment mechanisms for these forest environmental services have been introduced over the last decade. Many such schemes have been developed around the world, and in the best cases, these have resulted in improved resource management and economic development (Wunder *et al.*, 2008).

Unfortunately, in Africa the use of PES is still in its infancy and limited to payments for recreational services and biodiversity conservation being the most developed. Ecotourism can be seen as a kind of voluntary environmental service payment inasmuch as the resource managers receive benefits (in the form of additional income, training, improvement in health and education services, and steady well-paid jobs), in return for protecting the scenic beauty and biodiversity of the forests where they live. In this case, the purchasers of the service are environmental tourists and organizations that provide funds to be invested in infrastructure in these areas or support the creation of community tourist enterprises.

In the last 35 years a number of CBFM projects based on ecotourism and biodiversity conservation have been developed. Examples include the Bwindi Forest project in Uganda where communities are managing a forest area for the conservation of gorillas and benefiting from the ecotourism enterprises they have developed. Payments for other environmental services, especially watershed services and carbon sequestration are a more recent phenomenon and the experience with these in Africa is limited. However, there are already enough examples that have shown that PES has the potential to increase forest values and returns to communities under CBFM. Examples of payments for watershed services are: (i) the Working-for-Water Programme in South Africa that involves the control of invasive alien species in catchments for the protection of water resources and ensuring water supplies and: (ii) the Kimani watershed protection project in

Tanzania (van Wilgen *et al.* 2001). However the development of watershed services payment schemes has been very slow in Africa due to low income levels, small markets and weak institutional capacity. Whilst communities can manage forests for watershed protection services, there is need to develop domestic markets for such services and to integrate this with other forest uses such as harvesting of NTFPs in order to increase returns to the management investments. The situation is similar with carbon sequestration. The high level of global concern about climate change has resulted in forests attracting great attention because of their role as carbon sinks (or as sources of carbon when they are cut down). Payment for carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change is one of the fastest growing environmental services markets in the world. In Africa there are now a number of carbon trading projects involving local communities. Community-based carbon sequestration projects can provide significant economic benefits to local communities in the form of cash incomes as well as through access to NTFPs generated through forestry activities. For instance, in the Nhambita Community Carbon Project in Mozambique (Box 10), local households receive a cash payment of US\$242.60 per ha over seven years for carbon sequestered on their farms.

Box 10: Miombo Community Land Use and Carbon Management – Nhambita Pilot Project (Mozambique)

Nhambita is a small community located near Gorongosa National Park in the Sofala province of Mozambique. The Miombo Community Land-Use and Carbon Management pilot project aims to develop forestry and land-use practices that promote sustainable rural livelihoods in partnership with rural communities in a way that raises living standards and to assess the potential of these activities to generate verifiable carbon emission reductions. The project was launched in 2003 as collaboration between the environmental company Enviro-trade Ltd. and the University of Edinburgh. The project is supported by the European Commission. The project is a collaborative effort between several different organisations which include, the University of Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management, Enviro-trade (UK), International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, and the Park Administration of the Gorongosa National Park (Mozambique).

Local farmers and forest communities manage the planting and tending of trees in return for proceeds from the sale of carbon offsets to customers in the developed world using the Plan Vivo methodology developed by the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management. The Plan Vivo is a carbon management system that was developed for small farmers under the Scolel Te Project in Mexico in 1996. The Plan Vivo is a Trust Fund, which provides technical and financial assistance to local farmers to take up forestry/agroforestry activities and then on their behalf, sell carbon offsets that are generated.

The growing focus on compensation for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has increased the opportunities for countries and local communities to benefit from payments for carbon. However there are still a number of issues that need to be clarified and addressed before communities can benefit from these opportunities under CBFM. These include:

- Uncertainties about how payments for REDD credits can be distributed to local communities and
- What other benefits communities can obtain from REDD schemes
- How to ensure that the majority of payments is not being captured by elites or the state.

- What other forest-based livelihood activities are compatible with REDD and how will REDD affect the overall contribution of forests to community livelihoods.

A number of countries, such as Tanzania, Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo have participated in pilot REDD projects with support from the United Nations and the World Bank. Thus it will be important for countries to share lessons and experiences on how to incorporate REDD in CBFM. This is yet another reason for establishing a regional platform for cooperation on CBFM in Africa.