



Lessons learned from the 'Adding Value to the Arc Project: Forests and Livelihoods in the South Nguru Mountains'



JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT



Joint Forest Management

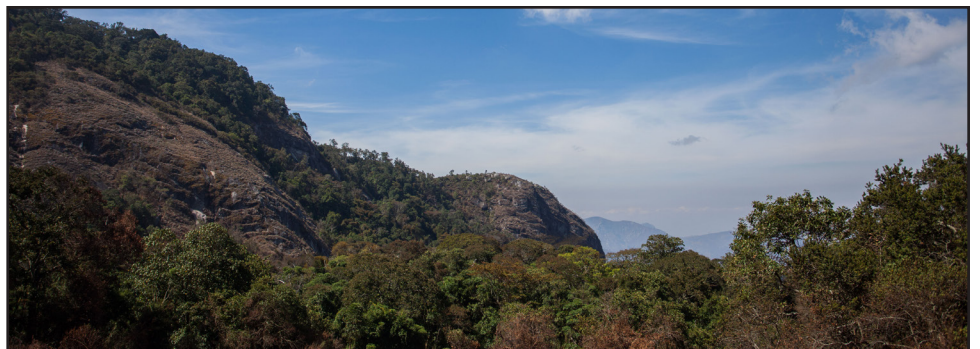
Tanzania's National Forest Policy is supportive of communities and the Government collaborating to manage forest reserves jointly. With funding from the European Union, the Adding Value to the Arc Project aimed to support the establishment of Joint Forest Management for Mkingu Nature Reserve and Kanga Forest Reserve in the South Nguru Mountains.








Funded by the European Union



Tanzania Forest
Conservation Group
Shirika la Kuhifadhi
Misituta ya Asili Tanzania



Key findings:

-  The legal status of the Mkingu forest was upgraded from Forest Reserve to Nature Reserve and a management plan was prepared and approved. The plan includes a commitment to enhance Joint Forest Management (JFM) and to create Village Forest Management Areas for each of the 27 villages adjacent to the reserve. The JFM agreements for Mkingu had not been signed at the close of the project. Procedural uncertainty and unresolved issues related to revenue sharing have delayed the process.
-  Communities are willing to engage in Joint Forest Management. 38 South Nguru villages with a combined population of 109,421 have Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRC) actively engaged in participatory forest management. All have expressed a willingness to work with the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) to improve the management of the two reserves.
-  Joint patrols involving TFS and VNRCs have successfully addressed illegal harvesting and deforestation in the two reserves.
-  JFM revenue sharing guidelines have been published and provide more clarity on how to calculate the division of revenues between JFM partners. A mechanism to pay for community participation in the management of reserves with minimal cash revenues has not been established. This threatens the sustainability and equitability of JFM for low-revenue forests such as Mkingu and Kanga.
-  Procedures for returning revenues to communities have not been established. This challenge has remained unresolved for many years. The intractability of this issue appears to reflect a lack of commitment to making JFM effective and equitable. This highlights the need for a more transparent dialogue on community engagement in the management of economically important, Central Government reserves.



The 'Adding Value to the Arc' Project

The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group in partnership with the Tanzania Forest Services Agency, Mvomero District Council and MJUMITA successfully implemented the project 'Adding Value to the Arc: Forests and Livelihoods in the South Nguru Mountains' between 1 January, 2013 - 31 March 2018. The project was funded by the European Union. The specific objective of the project was to strengthen participatory forest management and sustainable economic development around the South Nguru Mountains.

One of the expected results of the project was for community-level institutions and central government agencies to be exercising legislated rights and responsibilities for co-management of forest resources within central government reserves. In this document, we present achievements and lessons learned in the pursuit of this result.

The South Nguru Mountains

The initiative was implemented in the South Nguru Mountains, a globally important site for biodiversity conservation, and part of the catchment area for the Wami River. The South Nguru Mountains are one of the 12 Eastern Arc Mountain blocks that extend from southern Kenya to southern Tanzania. The Eastern Arc Mountains are recognised globally as a priority area for biodiversity conservation due to the

high concentration of threatened and endemic plant and animal species. The two largest forests in the South Nguru Mountains are Mkingu Nature Reserve (23,347 ha) and Kanga Forest Reserve (10,976 ha). Rapidly increasing pressure on the forests and woodlands of the South Nguru Mountains threatens to undermine rural livelihoods and results in biodiversity and habitat loss. For example, within Mkingu Nature Reserve, the annual rate of deforestation had reached 0.81% between 2010 - 14.

Joint Forest Management

Joint Forest Management happens when communities and government agree to jointly manage a forest reserve and to share the revenue from the forests in a sustainable way. Joint Forest Management is supported by Tanzania's Forest Act and National Forest Policy. It aims to restore forests, improve livelihoods, and strengthen local governance. It is widely viewed that decentralisation conserves resources as well or better than centralised management by government agencies, whilst also strengthening the governance and livelihoods of local populations. This type of Forest Management is viewed by many as a way to address conservation goals, as well as underlying social, economic, and governance challenges that drive unsustainable resource use and habitat loss.

JFM in the South Nguru Mountains

Project partners made progress towards the establishment of Joint Forest Management for the 34,000 ha of high biodiversity forest in the two government reserves. The project facilitated the development of a draft management plan, by-laws and agreements for Kanga FR, whilst the Tanzania Forest Services Agency developed the management plan for Mkingu Nature Reserve.

In preparation for Joint Forest Management being established, the project built the capacity of Village Natural Resources Committees in the communities around the two reserves. By providing training, equipment and technical back-stopping, all 33 communities have VNRCs of which 74% were conducting patrols and holding meetings, independent of the project, by 2017.

Even in the absence of signed community-government agreements, the project facilitated cooperation between the communities and the government resulting in enhanced law enforcement to address illegal activities such as encroachment and illegal harvesting occurring in the reserves.

The project also invested in widespread awareness raising about JFM, in the communities, using meetings, video shows, printed materials and the media. By 2017, 50% of adults in the project villages were familiar with the concept of JFM compared with only 9% in 2014.

The project also facilitated discussions involving TFS, local communities, NGOs and academics on solutions to the challenges that have affected the implementation of Joint Forest Management in Tanzania over the last two decades. TFCG also participated in a nation-wide research project on the impact of JFM. The results and recommendations from the JFM impact study were shared with key stakeholders through the South Nguru project.

In planning for JFM for Kanga Forest Reserve, TFS and the communities agreed to pilot a different JFM model whereby the six communities cooperate in the management of the whole reserve, rather than limiting responsibilities to individual village forest management areas.



Lessons learned

Joint Forest Management improves local level governance. Village Natural Resource Committees have been established in many villages across Tanzania, and where Joint Forest Management is implemented, on average, these committees are empowered and motivated to take on responsibilities, and this has contributed to good governance in the local community.

Under the current system, communities are only entitled to receive negligible revenues from Joint Forest Management of Nature Reserves. This is because the JFM guidelines tie community payments to reserve revenues. As most reserves generate very little income, and communities only receive a fraction of those low incomes, community payments will remain negligible and disproportionate to the value of the management work that is expected of them. This undermines the Joint Forest Management approach as community members, like government staff, expect payment for reserve management activities.

Even if payments to communities were not tied to the incomes generated directly by that reserve, the funds received by the nature reserves from Central Government are insufficient to cover the costs of community engagement. This reflects the low priority given to natural forest management in national budgets, despite the significant value of the ecosystem services that natural forests generate for the economy.

Continued:

Lessons learned Continued





Whilst communities are aware of and value the benefits of natural forests, the additional benefits to communities of entering into joint forest management are less clear, under the current system. TFCG's research showed that the impact of Joint Forest Management on improving livelihoods is negligible. This is particularly true in Nature Reserves and Catchment Forests, where harvesting is not permitted. In these forests, tourism may be the most viable forest-based enterprise. However, tourism has yet to be fully developed in any of the Nature Reserves.

The challenges with communities accessing finance from the government for joint forest management highlight the risks of channelling carbon credit revenues, for example, through existing government funding mechanisms.

Whilst JFM has the potential to offer a win-win-win scenario for communities, the Government and the forests, it requires a re-think and a shift in attitude, if it is to work in ways that benefit all three. There remains considerable mis-trust, on both sides, between communities and TFS. Broken promises about signing agreements, sharing revenues and supporting meaningful participation in resource management, undermine the credibility of all of the stakeholders involved. There is much to gain, by reversing this trend.

Recommendations

In order to capture the potential benefits that JFM offers, we recommend the following.

-  The Tanzania Forest Service should sign the Joint Forest Management agreements for Kanga and Mkingu; return them to the communities; and support their implementation.
-  Establish a transparent and equitable mechanism to pay for and reward communities for their participation in the management of the reserves.
-  Adequate, reliable and accessible finance needs to be made available to communities to support their participation in JFM.
-  More effort is needed to involve the private sector in Nature Reserve tourism. This would help to increase reserve revenues and generate livelihood benefits for adjacent communities.
-  Donors should continue providing financial support to nature reserves, particularly given the reserves' globally important biodiversity values.

ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS

The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) is a Tanzanian Non-Governmental Organisation. TFCG's mission is to conserve and restore the biodiversity of globally important forests in Tanzania for the benefit of the present and future generations.
tfcg@tfcg.or.tz www.tfcg.org

The Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) is a national network of community groups which enables forest adjacent communities to engage more actively in participatory forest management.
mjumita@mjumita.org www.mjumita.org

Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) is a national agency which has been given a mandate to manage national forest reserves and plantations on general lands. mpingo@tfs.go.tz www.tfs.go.tz

Mvomero District Council (MVDC) is one of the six districts of Morogoro Region. dedmvomero@yahoo.com

The European Union The European Union funded the project. More information about the work the EU is doing in Tanzania can be accessed on: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tanzania/2009/about-eu-delegation-tanzania_en

The European Union's support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the EU cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.