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Making REDD work for people and forests in Tanzania

Lessons learnt from
participatory forest
management in Tanzania



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All photos are by Michele Menegon of the Trento Museum of Natural History, Italy.'

Climate change, REDD and Participatory Forest Management

- Deforestation in developing countries accounts for around 15% of emissions of greenhouse gases caused directly by human activity. **Participatory forest management (PFM) has been shown to be an effective forest management strategy** and can significantly reduce emissions of greenhouse gases across the tropics.
- **Tanzania has a strong track record in supporting participatory forest management** – both in policy and practice and currently over 4 million hectares of forest are under some form of community management or co-management.
- Under the Tanzanian Forest Act of 2002, PFM offers a way for communities to secure legal tenure over their forests. As a result of these promising trends, **PFM in Tanzania is increasingly being seen as a strong foundation for developing a national REDD programme.**
- At the international level, if PFM is to be an effective and equitable tool in REDD implementation, **the rights of communities to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of REDD should also be written into an international agreement.** Similarly, safeguards for protecting the rights of local level forest managers should be integrated into the post 2012 international agreement.

Making REDD work for people

- Community-level forest managers implementing PFM provide an invaluable global service by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from deforestation. In recognition of the services **they provide they have the right to be compensated through the sale of forest carbon produced on their land.**
- **Carbon rights should be legally linked to land tenure.** Where communities are both owners and managers of forests, ownership and sale of carbon rights should be at the local level.
- In forest areas that are owned by government, but managed by rural communities (under joint forest management) a clear and legally binding statement by government regarding the ownership or **equitable sharing of carbon rights is an essential pre-condition for embarking on REDD initiatives.**
- **A “nested approach” to carbon payments offers significant benefits to local level forest managers,** including the opportunity to negotiate terms directly with buyers and an increased share of the total price through the efficiency savings offered by this model.
- **Transparent systems are needed at the village level that allow the benefits from REDD to be shared in an equitable and pro-poor manner.** This will avoid the common problem of richer members of the community benefitting from PFM at the expense of poorer community members.

Making REDD work for forests

- **International safeguards are required to ensure that REDD does not threaten biodiversity** and other forest values that are fundamental to people's livelihoods.
- **If REDD is to be economically viable under PFM arrangements, it will be necessary to reduce costs,** through an aggregation of individual forest areas and a collective marketing process using agreed standards and procedures.
- For PFM to be viable benefits gained must equal or exceed the costs associated with management. **REDD financing offers one potential revenue stream that could help cover some of the local level forest management costs** and thereby create local incentives that could sustain PFM over the long term
- **Specific, community-level measures will be needed to reduce the risks of leakage from PFM areas to non-PFM areas.** This could include a range of options that look more holistically at the use and management of forest resources at a landscape level (also known as REDD+) and understand and address the drivers of deforestation.

About this policy brief

This policy brief was prepared by the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG), a national NGO supporting the conservation of Tanzania's forests and the Tanzanian Network of Community Forest Associations (***Shirikisho la Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi Misit***), known as MJUMITA. These two organisations are currently implementing a joint project that aims to demonstrate how communities can benefit from financing under REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), with support from the Norwegian government. The brief has been prepared as a means to bring Tanzania's experience on participatory forest management into the dialogue on how REDD can most effectively be included in a future climate change agreement.

Why are forests important in climate change?

Deforestation in developing countries currently accounts for around 15% of the emissions of carbon dioxide directly caused by human activity. In order to keep the global temperature rise as far below 2 degrees as possible, it will be essential that efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries are part of the post 2012 climate change agreement.

Despite the important role local people play in the management of forests, policies and laws in many countries across Africa ensure that central government has control over forest resources and opportunities for local management are limited. However, in the past two or three decades a number of countries, including Tanzania, have

recognised the important role that forest-dependent communities play in forest management and protection and have introduced a range of legal reforms to devolve forest management rights to rural people.

What is Participatory Forest Management?

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is a strategy that devolves the control and management of forests from central government to local level, community institutions. Participatory Forest Management (PFM) was introduced into law in Tanzania with the passing of the Forest Act of 2002, which provided a clear legal basis for communities, groups or individuals across mainland Tanzania to own, manage or co-manage forests under a wide range of conditions. These radical policy changes mean that Tanzania is widely considered to have one of the most advanced and progressive legal frameworks for participatory forestry in Africa. Tanzanian law recognises two different types of PFM - which:

- enable local communities to declare – and ultimately gazette – Village, Group or Private Forest Reserves (commonly referred to as “Community Based Forest Management”, or CBFM)
- allow communities to sign joint forest management agreements with government and other forest owners (commonly referred to as “Joint Forest Management” or JFM).

A village natural resources committee on patrol at Toni Forest, Lushoto. Photo by Tom Blomley.



Since the law was passed, PFM has spread rapidly across the country, supported strongly by national and local governments, and assisted by a number of bilateral and multi-lateral development partners. By October 2008, the Forestry and Beekeeping Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism estimated that the total area of forest covered by PFM arrangements was just over 4.1 million hectares (representing around 13% of the total forest area). At the same time, over 2,300 villages were involved in some form of PFM in over 63 districts of the country. This is occurring against a back drop of a rate of deforestation of approximately 1.2 % per year with Tanzania losing approximately 412,000 ha of forest per annum mostly from forests on village land. Rates of deforestation in Tanzania's coastal forests, a biodiversity hotspot according to Conservation International, have been calculated at 5 % per annum in some Districts.

Of the two forms of PFM, Community Based Forest Management remains the most widespread – both in terms of the number of participating villages, but also in terms of the total area of forest covered. Its popularity comes mostly from the fact that under CBFM, villagers are both owners and managers of their forests. While they have to bear all the costs related to managing and protecting the forests, all benefits from harvesting and using the forests are retained and shared at the village level. This contrasts heavily with Joint Forest Management where communities manage forests, but are not the owners. Government, who is most often the “owner” under JFM arrangements has been reluctant to provide any clear guidance on how benefits from jointly managed forests can be shared with village-level managers. Consequently, the rights and benefits of communities engaged in JFM are often uncertain or insecure.

What are the benefits of PFM?

Reduced deforestation and forest degradation

A number of studies carried out by independent researchers over the past five years have confirmed that PFM offers improvements in forest management when compared with areas under direct state management. A recent review¹, which brought together and compared a number of individual studies carried out by Tanzanian and international researchers looked at key forest

¹ Blomley, T., Pfliegner, K., Isango, J., Zahabu E., Ahrends, A., N. Burgess (2008) Seeing the Wood for the Trees: Towards an objective assessment of the impact of Participatory Forest Management on forest condition in Tanzania. *Oryx*, 42(3), 380–391

management variables such as changes in basal area, mean annual growth rates, levels of harvesting, presence of trees used for timber and poles, and recorded incidences of forest disturbance through human activity, across a range of forest sites. The data indicates that where these forests were under some form of PFM regime, forest condition was improving. This contrasted with similar measurements taken on land administered solely by government agencies with no community involvement, or on village land under open access arrangements - where forest condition appeared to be declining (see Box 1)

Box 1: JFM as a forest management strategy

A study carried out in the forests in and around the Uluguru Mountains of Eastern Tanzania compared six forests under JFM and six forests under exclusive state management. The study found that the plots in JFM forests had higher numbers of live trees and naturally dead trees and fewer cut timber trees. Plots in JFM forests had 68% fewer incidences of timber trees being freshly cut and had 34% more timber trees than government-managed forests. The incidence of fire was six-times higher in non-JFM forests when compared to JFM forests.

Other studies have attempted to compare forest management effectiveness with the degree of devolution of forest management rights and responsibilities to the community level. In general, these studies have shown a clear link between the devolution of forest management rights and forest condition. In other words, the greater the devolution of forest management responsibilities from the state to local levels, the greater the benefits gained in terms of improvements to forest management. (See Box 2)

Box 2: CBFM compared with JFM as a forest management strategy

A study carried out in the forests of the West Usambara Mountains of north-eastern Tanzania compared indicators of forest structure and disturbance between similar forests under communal management (CBFM), joint management (JFM) and exclusive state management. Greater tenure security and institutional autonomy of the CBFM forest contributed to more effective management and less illegal logging, while overall levels of forest disturbance were higher in the JFM and state-managed forests



Non-timber forest products such as these Allanblackia fruits provide the basis for the livelihoods of many people living adjacent to forests. Photo by Dorthe Friis Pedersen.

Livelihood benefits

PFM was conceived, first and foremost, as a forest management strategy, designed as an alternative to top-down state-managed approaches, which had been shown over the years to be of only limited effectiveness. However, in order to function effectively, PFM must be able to deliver benefits at the local level. A range of benefits have been shown as a result of the introduction of PFM at community level. This includes tangible benefits such as income from the sale of forest products (timber, firewood, charcoal, honey), sustainable supplies of household products (firewood and building poles), the conservation and maintenance of water sources and in some cases additional benefits from eco-tourism.



Many forest dependent communities rely on water sources within forests. Photo by Dorthe Friis Pedersen.

Despite the positive benefits that PFM offers, it is important to recognise the significant costs that communities face when embarking on, and sustaining PFM over the long term. Many of the forests that were handed-over to communities were in a very poor state, with high levels of forest degradation and disturbance. As a result, the primary focus of many communities has been firstly to gain control over their forest (through patrolling and protection) and to restore forests back to a state that could potentially be managed. This takes time and during this period, opportunities for benefiting directly from harvesting of timber products are limited. Furthermore, the high conservation status of many forests being managed under JFM means that extractive use options are severely limited. In such cases, management costs may exceed benefits – which calls into question the viability of PFM in the first place. Finally, with increasing forest protection often comes an increase in wild animal populations. Many communities in Tanzania have encountered increased costs associated with PFM over time, as wild animals (such as monkeys, baboons and antelopes) populations benefit from the increased habitat protection and raid or damage crops planted near to the forest boundary.

Improvements in local governance and accountability

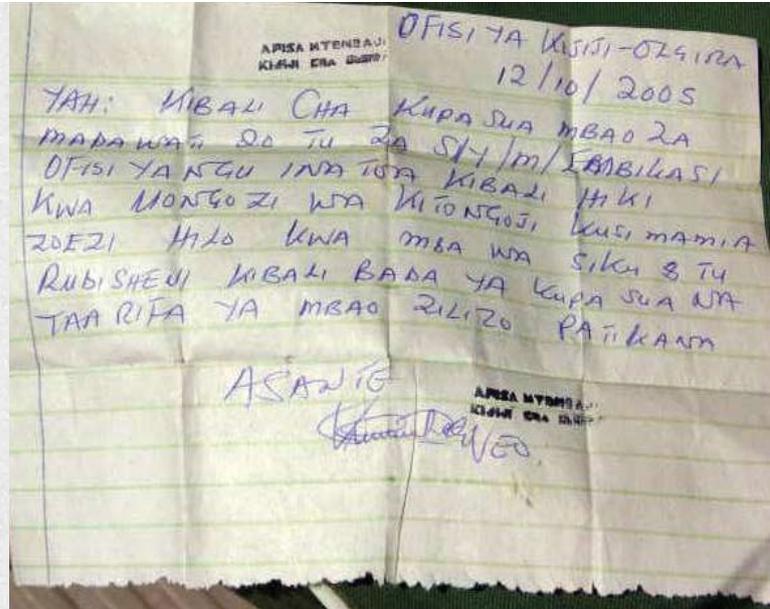
Additional benefits come from the fact that PFM, and in particular, CBFM provides a legally recognised framework for village governments to gain secure tenure over forests on their land. Once the Village Assembly (which is made up of all adult residents within the village) approve the bylaws, forest

boundary, management plan and the membership of the village forest management committee, the village forest is “declared” and becomes a legally recognised entity. A further benefit of PFM that has been observed in many villages is improvements in local governance and accountability. Village forest management committees (often called Village Natural Resource Committees) are elected by the Village Assembly and are responsible for ensuring that the village forest is managed for the benefit of all members of the community. Where powers have been abused (for example by committee members stealing money from the forest account) in many cases they are removed from the committee, fined and in some cases, even jailed. (See Box 3)

Box 3: Villagers challenge their leaders of local-level forest crime

SULEDO forest covers an area of around 140,000 hectares and is managed jointly by seven village governments. While undertaking routine patrols in the forest, village forest guards discovered a local businessman harvesting timber. When challenged by the guards, the businessman presented a “letter of permission”, that had been issued, (illegally) by the Village Executive Officer (VEO) authorising the harvesting. At this time, all seven villages had agreed a total ban on harvesting to allow the forest to recover from heavy harvesting before. The timber and harvesting equipment was impounded by the villagers (and sold at a local auction) and the VEO was arrested, dismissed from his job and was ordered to serve 6 months in prison.

A key lesson learned with regard to promoting good governance within PFM is the necessity of transparency, participation and the sharing of information. PFM processes work best when forest users are able take part in decisions regarding how their forests will be managed and who will be appointed to manage the forests on their behalf. Ensuring that the management committee elected to undertake management is accountable to forest users (through for example public meetings, sharing of information and publication of accounts) is also a crucial element in ensuring that the benefits of PFM are shared equitably across a participating community.



Example of an illegal ‘permit’ to clear forest within a Village Land Forest Reserve.

PFM and REDD

It is increasingly clear that if REDD is to function effectively, it will need to work for both people and forests. Local communities across Africa and the developing world are primary managers of tropical forests and as a result will have to be part of any REDD agreement. Because of the strong and steady progress made in implementing PFM in Tanzania, and the positive impacts that are now being seen at the local level in terms of both impacts on livelihoods as well as in terms of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases caused by deforestation, there is growing interest in using PFM as an institutional framework for REDD in Tanzania.

While REDD financing has the potential to provide even stronger local level incentives for forest management at the local level, a number of obstacles and potential threats exist that will need to be addressed if REDD is to work for both people and forests. These are discussed below and potential solutions offered.

PFM, REDD and local benefits

PFM is a long-term process requiring active management over the long term. In many cases, the condition of the forest when communities gained legal title was such that harvesting was not an option. Furthermore, the conservation status of many high-value forests managed jointly by communities and government mean that

harvesting of high value products such as timber is prohibited. As such, for many communities, the costs of management may exceed the benefits – which calls into question the long-term viability of PFM in the first place. This is particularly a concern because many of the communities that are taking part in PFM live in remote and inaccessible areas, have high levels of poverty and have limited options for generating income. **REDD payments could provide valuable income direct to community level managers that could support long-term forest management and protection.**

Natural forests provide multiple benefits and services to communities including food, energy, soil conservation, medicinal plants, non-timber and timber forest products and water quality protection. Given the definition of forests currently used by the UNFCCC, there is a risk that REDD may lead to the replacement of natural forests with exotic

plantations. This would affect the multiple services that forests provide to rural communities as well as threatening Tanzania's forest biodiversity. ***It is essential that any international agreement on REDD includes safeguards that recognise and protect biodiversity and the multi-purpose function of forests to local people.***

PFM, REDD and governance

A number of different models for REDD financing have been discussed in Tanzania and these discussions mirror those taking place in other countries preparing for REDD. One option being discussed involves the establishment of a national REDD fund, that will oversee the transfer of financing from national to local levels. Experiences gained from other sectors and programmes indicate that systems established to date for the transfer of financing between the national and local levels are often time-consuming, inefficient and costly.



Safeguards to protect biodiversity are an essential element in an international agreement on REDD. Chamaeleo laterispinis is endemic to the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania. Photo by Michele Menegon.

Consequently, an alternative model is being proposed which allows for a “nested approach”, whereby payments could be made directly from the buyer to the seller, (without having to be routed through a national REDD fund), but linking to and informing the national carbon accounting system. This allows sellers to negotiate carbon prices directly with private sector buyers and reduces the likelihood of carbon financing being diverted to expensive or bureaucratic government systems. **A “nested approach” to carbon payments offers significant benefits to local level forest managers, including the opportunity to negotiate terms directly with buyers and an increased share of the total price through the efficiency savings offered by this model.**

When PFM processes are well facilitated, they can result in improvements in village level governance and accountability (see Box 3). However, there are many examples where the process has been rushed and the general public are often not informed or consulted regarding the aims and objectives of the PFM process. In such cases, it becomes easy for the members of a village committee to capture the benefits of forest management at the expense of the other villagers. As the village management committee is often made up of more wealthy and literate members of the community, this has the effect of making the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. REDD is a complicated process that is hard to understand. Without investing the time and resources in ensuring that the bulk of community members understand REDD and the benefits it offers, there is a concern that REDD benefits will also be captured for the benefits of local leaders. **Transparent systems are needed at the village level that allow the benefits from REDD to be shared in an equitable and pro-poor manner**

Carbon ownership rights (and therefore the right to sell and benefit from carbon sales) are generally agreed to follow forest tenure rights. Under CBFM models, where communities own and manage their own forests, there is little doubt that communities have similar rights to sell their own forest carbon under REDD. Where forests are owned by government, but managed by local communities (under JFM), it is unclear how the benefits from the sale of forest carbon will be distributed between government and local managers. **A clear and legally binding statement by government regarding the ownership or equitable sharing of carbon rights in catchment forests is an essential pre-condition for embarking on**

REDD initiatives under JFM arrangements.

Concerns have been raised that the integration of REDD within an international climate agreement will increase the value of forest land, and this could potentially lead to a “land grab” as investors and political elites buy up land in the hope of securing REDD revenues. If this happened, forest-dependent communities may become more vulnerable and less able to cope with and adapt to climate change itself. **It is essential that any international agreement on REDD includes safeguards that will prevent forest-dependent communities losing access to forest that they have customary or traditional rights over.**

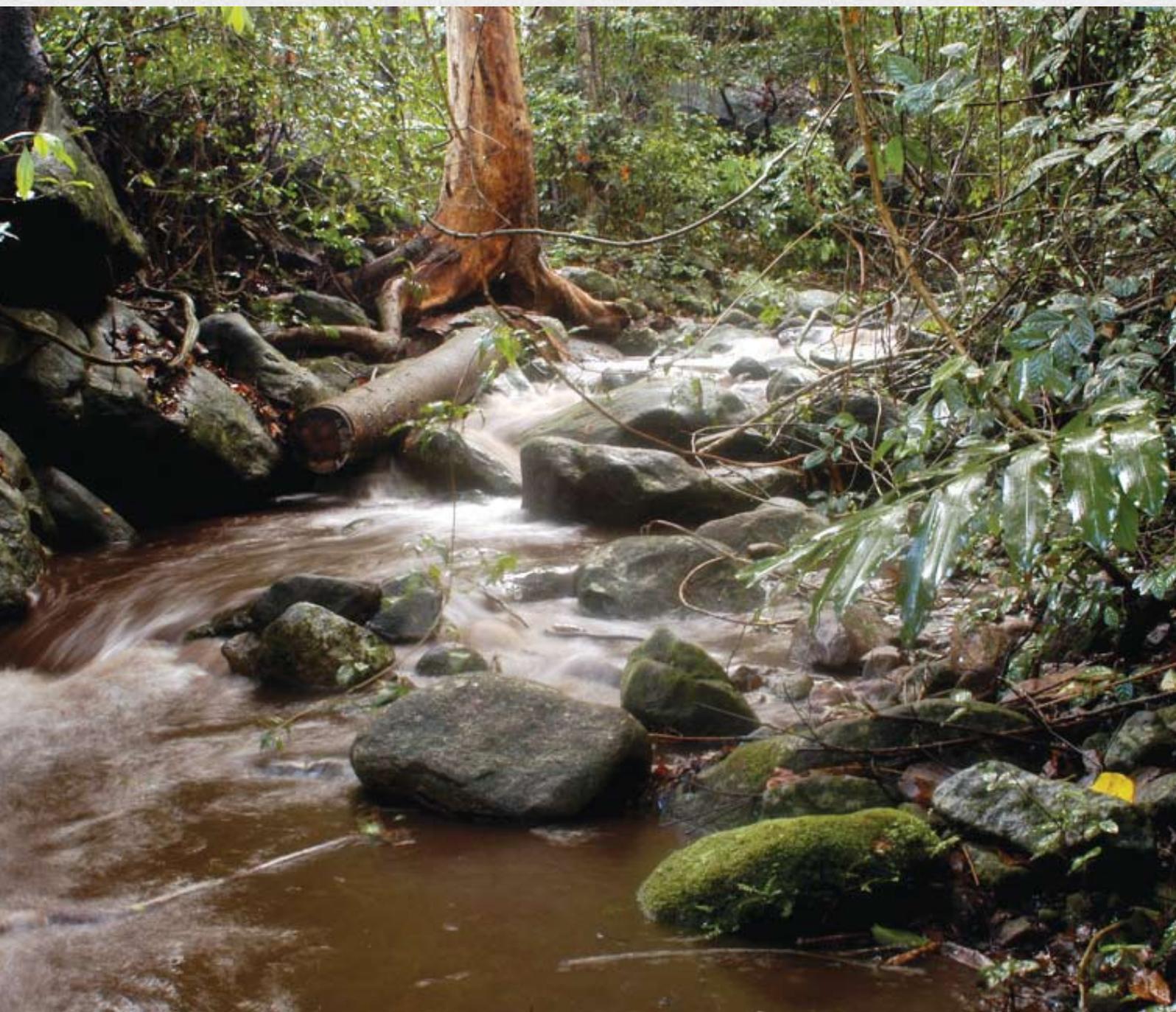
PFM, REDD and climate change

REDD is a strategy that works across large areas of forest. Given the amounts of financing available, it is not economically viable if forest areas are small, patchy and disbursed. Forests managed under PFM tend to be of very different sizes and are very scattered across mainland Tanzania. In many cases, the forests are in rather remote and inaccessible areas. This means that if each forest were to be included in a REDD programme as individually and separate areas, the transaction costs of establishing REDD payments (such as monitoring, verification, marketing and sale of verified emission reductions) would exceed their value, and it would therefore not be a viable venture. Clearly, **if REDD is to be economically viable under PFM arrangements, it will be necessary to reduce unit costs, through an aggregation of individual forest areas and collective marketing process using agreed standards and procedures.** One option currently being explored by the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group and MJUMITA is the establishment of a “carbon-co-operative”. This would function rather like agricultural marketing co-operatives, in that it would be owned by and managed on behalf of its members, which in this case are village level forest managers. Simple standards could be introduced that fulfil REDD financing requirements (including issues relating to assessment, monitoring, verification, additionality and leakage) which could be applied across all qualifying forests.

Additionality remains an important aspect of REDD and one that has generated significant discussion within the Tanzanian context. Some observers have argued that PFM is a process that is generating significant impacts in reducing deforestation and has been well supported by international donors as

well as government. What, then is the added advantage (or additionality) of REDD financing? As discussed earlier, in a number of cases, the benefits that are secured through PFM are insufficient to cover the costs (be they transaction costs or opportunity costs). Furthermore, whilst development partners have been willing to cover the costs of piloting and scaling up PFM, it is unlikely that they will be willing to make up the shortfall experienced in some areas between the ongoing costs and benefits of PFM. Consequently, **REDD financing offers a long-term revenue stream that could cover some of the opportunity costs and the local level forest management costs and thereby create local incentives that could sustain PFM over the long term.**

A second potential constraint to including PFM within a national REDD programme is the problem of leakage – or the displacement of forest harvesting and use from one area (such as the village forest) to another one (such as open –access forests nearby that are not subject to the same level of management). **Specific, community-level measures will be needed to reduce the risks of leakage from PFM areas to non-PFM areas.** This could include reducing overall demands for specific forest products (such as firewood or charcoal), increasing on-farm supplies of these products (through tree planting efforts), establishing village-wide bylaws that are applicable to forests and woodlands across the whole village area and introducing limited and sustainable harvesting into forest areas managed under REDD (known sometimes as REDD+ activities)





About the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group

The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group is a Tanzanian non-governmental organization with 25 years of experience of forest conservation in Tanzania (see website www.tfcg.org). 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 of Tanzanians. Through TFCG's five programmes: advocacy, participatory forest management, environmental education, community development and research, TFCG has succeeded in rolling out innovative and high-impact solutions to the challenges facing Tanzania's forests and the people that depend on them.



About MJUMITA

MJUMITA is a national network of community groups involved in participatory forest management. The network provides a forum for capacity building, advocacy and communication for these groups. MJUMITA currently has 75 affiliated local area networks, which are made up of Village Natural Resource Committees (VNRC) and Environmental User Groups. MJUMITA's members are present in 23 districts, 318 villages and representing around 500 user groups or VNRCs involved in participatory forest management across Tanzania. MJUMITA has been operational since 2000 and was officially registered as an independent NGO in 2007.



Making REDD work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania

This brief was produced as part of the project 'Making REDD work for communities and forest conservation in Tanzania'. The project is a partnership project between the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) and the Tanzanian Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA). The project aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in Tanzania in ways that provide direct and equitable incentives to communities to conserve and manage forests sustainably. The project is being financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of Norway's commitment to assist Tanzania to get ready for REDD (<http://www.tfcg.org/redd>).