Tanzania: Managing Forest Resources

During the 1970s and 1980s in Tanzania, there was a widespread perception, though a somewhat narrow and inaccurate one, that high and accelerating rates of deforestation in some areas was primarily being driven by demand for woodfuel and construction timber. In order to take a more comprehensive and strategic view of the sector, the government launched the Tanzania Forestry Action Plan which covered the period 1990/1-2007/8. The World Bank-assisted Tanzania Forest Resources Management Project (FRMP—1992-99) was formulated to implement the Action Plan and to generally improve forest management in Tanzania. The project aimed, as a first step, to strengthen the institutions responsible for developing forest and land policies, as well as regional and district forestry services in selected areas.

Impact on the ground

- The project-supported Tanzania Natural Resources Information Center fully mapped Tanzania’s vegetation cover. A series of policy studies, including best practices in the forestry sector, an assessment of long-term financing in forestry, and papers on land tenure and administration, were prepared to assist in preparing new land and forest policies. The demand for the Center’s services (e.g., collecting and analyzing data) is increasing, and its business has made it virtually self-supporting.
- The technical competence of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD), especially in monitoring royalty collection, has been enhanced. The new system of royalty collection introduced by the regional forest services has closed several loopholes in the system and resulted in increased revenues. In the four pilot regions of Tabora, Shinyanga, Singida and Mwanza, revenues increased from Tshs. 90.72 million to Tshs. 227.86 million in 1996 and then to Tshs. 299.17 in 1998. The government and the Bank are pressing on with designing an improved system which will build on this good but relatively modest effort.
- The study on best practices led to innovative ideas, such as the involvement of local communities in the management of public lands and of the private sector in the management of plantations. The findings of the study have been incorporated into the new Forest Policy and reflected in the wider policy framework.
- The process of land administration was improved by developing a system of computerized data management. By the end of the project, about 45,000 records or approximately 18 percent of the total, had been computerized.
In the eleven regions where the demarcation, survey and titling of village lands was implemented, 3,560 villages were demarcated (with the involvement of the villagers) and 1,820 villages surveyed. Village councils were provided with an administrative certificate (rather than a title) describing their boundaries, together with the boundary maps, of their respective villages.

- The support provided to Village Extension Agents resulted in 9,600 nurseries being established and 9.6 million seedlings produced (about 104 percent of the appraisal target). The project contacted about 37,600 households and trained over 11,000 farmers and school teachers.

- Two of the relatively unconventional initiatives supported related to (a) building on the traditional practice of setting aside tracts of land for later or emergency use. Originally applied to grazing areas, ngitiri, this was extended to residual pockets of woodlands; and (b) sharing with communities the benefits and responsibilities of managing Government Forest Reserves through joint forest management.

- An important project achievement, and not foreseen at appraisal, was the introduction of improved stoves. Some 10,500 stoves were constructed and installed in homes. The extension method focuses on training women in constructing and installing the stoves—these women then train others. Studies indicate that the stoves save about 50 percent of woodfuel compared to the traditional ones.

Lessons learned

- Working with ground-level clients (the villagers in this instance) as the logical long-term guardians of forest resources at little cost to the government is worth all the effort that goes into assisting that outcome.
- Community involvement can lead to a perceptible improvement in the condition of reserves, and to a sharp reduction in the threats they face. Building on traditional practices helps to anchor the initiative more firmly.
- Community participation in the demarcation and surveying of village lands is cost-effective and results in reduced future litigation.
- Project identification and preparation benefits considerably when it is linked to a longer-term strategic plan, e.g., the Tanzania Forestry Action Plan.
- Having a decentralized institutional structure without adequate mechanisms for technical, administrative and management oversight is counterproductive.
- Packaging consultancies in large packages can often lead to hiring unqualified consultants. The resulting performance is difficult and expensive to rectify.

This Infobrief has been largely excerpted from the Implementation Completion Report No. 19624. For more information, please e-mail pdeweess@worldbank.org

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