



## FOREST CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS IN TANZANIA: LESSONS LEARNED ON GOVERNANCE AND LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS

**PILLY SILVANO (UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM)**  
**METTE FOG OLWIG (ROSKILDE UNIVERSITY)**  
**DAN BROCKINGTON (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD)**  
**ASUBISYE MWAMFUPE (UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM)**

### Summary

Forest conservation in Tanzania has shifted from state-controlled governance to diverse partnerships with multiple actors. Collaborative approaches to forest governance have yielded more local participation in conservation decision making and benefit sharing. Forest revenues are used to renovate dispensaries, repair water supply systems and support educational needs. However, the main challenge remains the need to ensure that sufficient benefits also reach individual households.

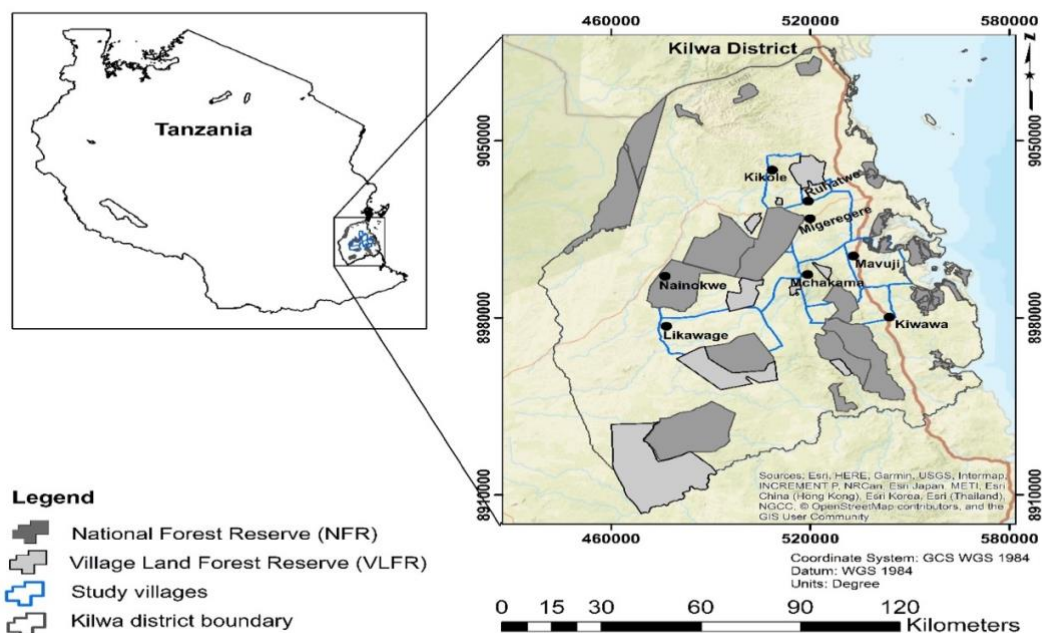
### Changes in Forestry Governance and Partnerships over Time

Over the past five decades state-controlled forest management approaches have dominated forest conservation in Tanzania. Income accrued from forest resources was largely collected by the state. Forests did not offer much to improving the livelihoods of the local population, who therefore had little incentive to conserve them.

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) was then introduced by the Tanzanian government to facilitate more involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in forest management and ensure local benefits. The Forest Act of 2002 provides two main approaches to PFM: Joint Forest Management (JFM) and Community-based Forest management (CBFM). JFM means that villages have a say in government managed reserves adjacent to village lands. CBFM allows local communities to establish Village Land Forest Reserve (VLFRs). Villagers own and manage VLFRs and grant legal rights to control forest revenues from harvested forest products. But the multiple actors (NGOs, local government and village groups) who are involved in PFM are all vested with different interests, a diversity of resources, different levels of commitments, various backgrounds – and they operate at different scales horizontally and vertically.

The New Partnership for Sustainability (NEPSUS) project examined forest partnerships in Kilwa District. The study compared changes in forest management between villages under CBFM where a wide range of stakeholders are involved and those – which are still under state-controlled forest management.

Study area and selected villages



Multiple techniques were adopted to collect and triangulate data for this study. The methods included key informant interviews with local communities, NGOs, business actors and more specifically timber buyers, government authorities, and research institutions; focus group discussions with youth, women, and mixed groups within local communities; a household survey administered to 352 heads of households; participant observation; transect walks in forests; and review of secondary data and documents on forest harvesting requests, permits, forest management plans, as well as audit reports of financial management at village levels.

Data analysis included social network analysis in which data from surveys, interviews and questionnaires were analyzed to assess the interrelationship between actors involved in forest partnerships and the nature of their relationships; environmental data were analyzed using GIS; and quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using SPSS and NVivo software.

## Findings

### *Improved Forest Conditions*

Implementation of CBFM has changed forest management practices. Increased management activities such as forest protection, early burning and patrols have reduced illicit logging and forest fires. Introduction of forest restrictions such as fines and taxes have reduced forest encroachments and illegal harvesting of forest products. These have positively improved forest conditions in villages under CBFM. However, this has increased pressure on the use of forests outside CBFM villages. Forests in non-CBFM villages suffer from less controlled forest use, more fires and more illegal harvesting. Due to lack of incentives, skills and funds in non-CBFM forests, patrols are undertaken only occasionally.

### *Improved Governance*

In villages under CBFM we found increased participation by community members in forest related meetings where management plans, bylaws and rules are made and approved. Also, village meetings are undertaken regularly to allow community members to have access to

## NEPSUS FORESTRY POLICY BRIEF, JANUARY 2022

relevant information and discuss the progress of village development programs, finance and environmental issues. Various actors, such as the Community-based Conservation Networks of Tanzania, have been involved in strengthening village natural resource committees and village councils with training on good governance. In Kilwa District, the Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative (MCDI) has been a focal organization facilitating the configuration of partnerships.



Forest degradation observed in a non-CBFM location. Photo credit: NEPSUS

We also found increased transparency in: the use of the forest revenues derived from the certified village forest reserves; the organization of village council elections; and in planning management activities. Information about forest related issues (regarding meetings, finances, and VNRC elections) seem to be equally shared among members – by using posters and through representatives from the village council. Finally, more than 50% of the respondents in villages under CBFM considered forest rules and regulations regarding forest use, access and benefit sharing mechanism to be fair, acceptable and satisfactory.

### *Improved Local Livelihoods*

Villages under CBFM benefit more from their forests. The majority of surveyed households under CBFM stated that their livelihoods have improved in the past five years. Over 60% of respondents in villages under CBFM claimed that they have benefited from better conservation knowledge, from trainings opportunities on forest related issues and from income generating activities.

Under CBFM arrangements, villages obtain more income from selling certified timber. These revenues are generally used to improve village infrastructure and social services – including health services, medical insurance as well as water services – and are also reinvested in forest management. However, our findings also show that there is a problem of elite capture of forest benefits and that most of the economic benefits are primarily realized at the community level rather than the household level. Over 60% of respondents interviewed in villages under CBFM claimed that their households have not economically benefited from partnerships in forest conservation. Changes in livelihood conditions at the household level are actually determined by the performance of crop farming, especially cash crops such as sesame, rather than conservation activities.

### *Gender Equity in Forest Management*

CBFM initiatives have helped to implement various gendered interventions, such as awareness programs and trainings and economic empowerment programs, and to enforce gender inclusive policies to empower women to participate more actively in conservation activities and enable them to benefit economically. In CBFM villages women are more equally involved in decision making and in management activities and are more equally represented in Village Natural Resource Management Committees. However, men are still dominating in: forest-related activities which are considered to have high economic value, such as log and timber harvesting; forest patrols; timber certification; and beekeeping production. Men are still more likely to hold leadership positions that are considered to be more influential, such as chairpersons and secretaries of committees at the village level.

### **Policy Recommendations**

1. Forest policies should encourage more equitable business along the supply chain of forest products that will increase benefits to local communities.
2. The Government and collaborating actors should support community-based enterprises based on local forest products.
3. Government policies need to attract more actors from all levels to support local forest conservation projects.
4. Investment in forest-based industries needs to produce enterprises which provide valued alternatives to activities based on forest conversion (such as new agricultural crops). They must be robust to changes in the relative prices of agricultural crops.
5. Mechanisms to ensure that forest revenues are distributed evenly should be put in place in order to avoid elite capture.
6. Existing gender-related policies and interventions need to be implemented at the local level to enhance gender equality in participation in CBFM.



Forest degradation observed in non-CBFM village. Photo credit: NEPSUS

The NEPSUS project was financed through a grant by the Advisory Committee for Development Research (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark), Innovation Fund Denmark (project 16-01-CBS). For more information, see [www.nepsus.info](http://www.nepsus.info)

Corresponding author: Pilly Silvano, Department of Geography, University of Dar es Salaam  
[pizol2@yahoo.com](mailto:pizol2@yahoo.com)