



A charcoal kiln in Ulaya Mbuyuni Village using a more efficient kiln structure fitted with a chimney.

Photos: TFCG

Transforming community forestry policy and practice – a case study from Tanzania

Making forest-based enterprises part of community-based forest management can help communities maintain areas of forest within a multi-functional landscape. Our authors present a case study from Tanzania of communities integrating sustainable charcoal production into the management of their village forests. And they describe some of the strategies that can be used to influence stakeholders to adopt innovative models of forest management.

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Demand for land, not trees, is the main driver of deforestation in much of sub-Saharan Africa. Although communities derive multiple benefits from forests, agriculture provides the foundation for rural economies. In the context of these competing demands for land, safeguarding forest values requires governance systems to be in place to retain areas of land as forest over the long term. Community-based forest management (CBFM) is one approach that has been widely adopted to retain community forests, including in Tanzania. However, financial sustainability has been a key challenge for CBFM. Revenues are needed both to pay for the direct costs of managing the forests and to balance the opportunity costs to communities of allocating land to natural forests, rather than agriculture or other land uses.

Charcoal: controversial, but indispensable

Charcoal is a controversial product in Tanzania. It is frequently blamed for widespread

forest loss, although studies consistently show that agriculture supersedes charcoal in driving deforestation. Since the 1990s, Tanzania's national energy policy has sought to transition the country away from firewood and charcoal, i.e. from biomass energy. However, biomass energy remains the source of 85 per cent of total national energy consumption, and there is little evidence of change. Most charcoal comes from Miombo (*Brachystegia boehmii*) woodlands on village land outside of CBFM areas. Many experts agree that Tanzania's urban households will continue to use charcoal for the foreseeable future. In 2012, three national NGOs (see Box on page 28) set out to model a scheme to integrate sustainable charcoal production into CBFM in ways that would reduce deforestation, improve livelihoods and governance, and provide sustainable energy for urban households. By integrating sustainable charcoal production, the NGOs sought to model a CBFM approach in which charcoal would cover the transaction and opportunity costs of CBFM, as well as generating a range of livelihood benefits for the charcoal-producing

communities. The Box on the right shows the model's most important features.

Strategising for change in forestry policy and practice

In promoting sustainable charcoal, the project partners needed to address the technical challenge of establishing a sustainable forest management system while building a political and financial support network for CBFM that is independent of the project. In the following, we describe how the Transforming Tanzania's Charcoal Sector (TTCS) project has forged links between policy dialogue and forest management practice in an iterative way to transform charcoal value chains and CBFM. The project has used five strategies to change stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and practices:

Strategy 1: Capacity building

The project took a broad view of capacity building, taking inspiration from the 'five capabilities model', which covers individual and



THE MJUMITA SUSTAINABLE CHARCOAL MODEL

How does it work?

As a first step, a village prepares a village land use plan that includes a village land forest reserve. The management plan designates 'forest management units' (FMUs) as areas for sustainable charcoal production. Approximately 15 per cent of the area of each village forest reserve is designated for charcoal production. The remaining 85 per cent is for protection and beekeeping. In several villages, communities have diversified the model to include low-impact selective logging,

mainly for *Brachystegia microphylla* and *B. spiciformis*, within sustainable harvesting limits. Logging is only permitted away from sensitive areas such as steep slopes.

The harvesting rotation period is 24 years. This means that up to 1/24 or 4.17 per cent of the harvestable area can be used in any one year for charcoal production. Charcoal producers are only permitted to produce charcoal within the harvesting coupe allocated to them. Importantly, all other coupes are protected in order to allow the woodland to regenerate.

How does the permitting system work?

A prospective charcoal producer agrees with a trader on an amount of charcoal to be sold. The trader will then pay a fee to the Village Natural Resources Committee (VNRC) per bag of charcoal to be produced. The VNRC subsequently issues a permit for the producer to prepare the charcoal, which is then transported to market, accompanied by a transit permit and a production license.

What happens to the money that is paid to the village?

Decisions about how the revenue to the village is spent are made in village assembly meetings. Some of the money is used to cover the costs of managing the village forest reserve. The remainder is invested in community development projects such as constructing classrooms, health facilities and water projects. This improves the livelihood of community members and reduces dependence on limited district development budgets.

Ecological sustainability is achieved by allowing the woodland to regenerate, mainly through coppicing, as well as by financing the protection of the rest of the village land forest reserve. Improved charcoal kiln management improves the efficiency of converting the wood into charcoal. Social and financial sustainability is achieved through the participatory approach of the model, and by generating funds to pay for forest management and community development.

institutional capabilities to perform, sustain and adapt in a dynamic way. Implementation involved two capacity building components. The first component sought to build the capacity of community members and village committees, including the village councils, village land use management committees and village natural resources committees, to implement the model. The second component was a formal programme of practical and theoretical trainings, primarily for government staff. Piloting incorporated a series of trainings events, involving community members and local government, with regular backstopping and technical support, in order to establish and implement both CBFM and sustainable charcoal production. As a result, women and men in 30 communities are managing village land forest reserves and producing sustainable charcoal. By building the capacity of the Morogoro communities and by demonstrating the multiple benefits that can be generated, the project has nurtured a practical example that has informed discussions around policy change. The project's more formal training programme has worked with government staff from local, regional and central government to develop the capabilities needed to sustain and scale up the model. This involved training sessions and field trips. The training has resulted in a cadre of professionals with an in-depth understanding of how to support the model. The formal programme covers the technical side of the production model, as well as ways in which local government can generate finance to pay for their supporting role.

Strategy 2: Research, monitoring and knowledge management

The research and monitoring strategy has included research on ecological, economic, governance and policy issues relating to the CBFM model, with an emphasis on impact evaluation. Monitoring activities have included periodic deforestation studies and annual participatory evaluation exercises involving community members. The research strategy has also channelled research from other forest landscapes to inform the management of the Morogoro forests, including via networks such as the African Forest Forum. Annual research workshops have provided a forum for research findings to inform policy-makers, researchers, local government and other NGOs.

Strategy 3: Communication

At the outset, the project developed a communication strategy building on a knowledge, attitudes and practice survey that mapped stakeholder understanding and interests. Using radio, newspapers, television and online media, meetings and publications, the project has succeeded in increasing awareness of CBFM and sustainable charcoal production. High-level annual workshops involving government ministers have raised the profile of sustainable charcoal and have provided an important forum for channelling experience from the practical piloting of the model, back into the energy and forestry sector policy dialogue. Each workshop has focused on specific policy-related issues and has provided a forum for a broad range of stakeholders to discuss

critical policy issues and agree actions to bring about change.

Strategy 4: Networking

Networking has involved facilitating groups with common interests to work together and / or exchange knowledge and experiences. The project has supported formal and informal networking. Formal networking has included supporting charcoal producers to establish associations as forums for cooperation in charcoal marketing and as a step towards formalising their businesses. Project partner Mjumita has promoted nationwide networking between communities involved in CBFM. The national Mjumita network has advocated successfully for local government to place higher priority on CBFM. Informal networks have also been supported by bringing together stakeholders with common interests and responsibilities, including communication officers from different ministries and local government staff. These formal and informal networks build up a supportive framework for communities involved in CBFM.

Strategy 5: Advocacy

Advocacy involves actions intended to achieve changes in policy and governance. This is a critical strategy in linking policy and practice in a transformational way. The project has used 'outcome mapping' as a tool to guide its advocacy work around CBFM. It involves identifying key stakeholders who have influence over, and interest in, the desired outcomes of an initiative. The tool provides a planning and

monitoring framework for working with those stakeholders, and for monitoring the ways in which stakeholders change over the course of implementing the strategy. Using outcome mapping, the project identified democratically elected leaders at village, district and national level as one of the key stakeholder groups. Activities were then organised to inform and seek the support of those groups. For example, the project organised field visits for District Council members and Members of Parliament to visit villages producing sustainable charcoal, and to learn about the model directly from the communities. Seeing at first hand the ways in which communities operate the system and benefit from the revenues has been a particularly powerful and persuasive approach to building broader political support for transforming charcoal production. Other priority stakeholders identified using outcome mapping include government ministers and senior civil servants in various ministries, among them Energy, Natural Resources, Local Government and Environment. Each year, a Minister from one of these ministries has been the Guest of Honour for the Annual Biomass Energy workshops, hosted by the project in collaboration with Swiss Development Cooperation. These events offer an opportunity to engage with stakeholders from different sectors, with influence over the outcomes of the project. One result of these workshops has been the establishment of a National Charcoal Task Force with a remit to make recommendations on policies and strategies in relation to the charcoal value chain. As with other strategies, the strength of the advocacy strategy has rested on an iterative exchange between policy and practice.

Results and lessons learned

The TTCS project has supported 30 villages to apply the model in village land forest reserves covering 141,610 hectares of woodland. Deforestation rates have been halved in some villages, and the 30 communities cumulatively earn around 20,000 US dollars per month from the royalties. In terms of gender, women's participation has increased in land and forest governance, and in forest-based enterprises.

Introducing changes to CBFM has revealed three key challenges, and the lessons learnt in the project are presented below.

Trust-building between stakeholders is key. Investing in building trust and understanding between stakeholders has been key, particularly between communities, local government and the Tanzania Forest Services

ABOUT THE TTCS PROJECT

The Transforming Tanzania's Charcoal Sector (TTCS) project was launched in the Morogoro Region in Eastern Tanzania in 2012. It is being implemented by three Tanzanian NGOs: the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG), the Community Forestry Network of Tanzania (Mjumita) and the Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organisation (TaTeDo), in close collaboration with local and central government. The project has been financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is in its third and final project phase, which is to last up to 2022.

(TFS) agency. We found that many government staff had profound concerns about devolving authority over forests and harvesting revenues to communities. Trust between government and communities has been built by working together in developing and implementing CBFM, openly discussing challenges and agreeing, in a participatory way, on changes to the underlying model.

Changing the attitudes of those with influence and incentive to block change is difficult. One of the most difficult tasks has been to influence leaders in TFS. While the communities, NGOs and TFS share a common interest in managing natural forests sustainably, the change embodied in the model is perceived to disrupt TFS's role in collecting revenues from charcoal fees. Although communities' right to collect fees from village forests is embedded in the law, it had never been implemented to the degree achieved by the villages involved in the TTCS project. This has brought to the surface tensions between the devolved model of forest management embodied by CBFM and a centralised forest management system with all forests under one authority. These tensions remain and are characteristic of forest management debates ongoing in many countries. The project's networking strategy has helped communities and TFS to discuss and reconcile these different forest management visions.

Policy change takes time and requires flexibility. Advocacy is a continuous process of influencing the different stages in the policy cycle, and each stage can take many years. For example, Tanzania's national forest policy has been under revision for the entire duration of the project. In the meantime, new regulations have come into force at short notice, with profound effects on the model. Advocacy requires long-term engagement in the policy process as well as flexibility to respond rapidly to sudden policy changes.

How to reach economic sustainability?

While the focus of the first two phases of the charcoal project has been on piloting and consolidating the system to operate independently in Morogoro Region, the final phase of the project seeks to nationally scale up the successful model, under the leadership of the President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government. The role of the NGOs will diminish with local and central government taking a lead and using their own resources to scale-up and refine the model, alongside funding from development partners. The third phase is also designed to expand the scope of the project's outreach to engage with practitioners and policy-makers beyond Tanzania through the Africa Forest Forum among others. SDC has put in place provisions that will allow the Tanzanian Government to source international expertise, as input for the formulation of a national forest financing strategy. The strategy will guide future financing for the national forest policy, including CBFM. Such a comprehensive strategy will further ease access to dedicated global funds such as the Green Climate Fund, allowing the scaling-up of the successful model into communities across the country.

CBFM can play an important role in maintaining forests within multi-use landscapes. However, the economic sustainability of CBFM has been a challenge for many communities. Sustainable charcoal production offers a promising potential source of revenues for CBFM areas. Nevertheless, negative perceptions of charcoal, lack of trust of communities to manage forests and revenues themselves as well as contradicting policies create significant barriers to a more widespread application. Using a suite of mutually reinforcing strategies, barriers to change can be removed, a process requiring time, human and financial resources and a commitment to engage with a broad range of stakeholders at different complementary levels reaching from local to sub-national, national and international.

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