



# Community-Based Joint Forest Management in Tanzania



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The strength of this program is its focus on partnerships with local communities to protect the biodiversity of Tanzania's Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Morogoro and Tanga districts. Community participation informs all decisions that are made to protect biodiversity, ensure sustainable land management, and reduce poverty.

## Project Description

Tanzania's 38.8 million hectares of forest, representing 41% of total land area, are under pressure from human settlements and activities such as illegal harvesting. Tanzania's rate of deforestation is estimated to be about 91,000 hectares per year. Forests are closely interlinked with Tanzanians' livelihoods and provide an energy source for close to 90% of Tanzania's population.

In 2002, Tanzania passed the Forest Act, which provided a basis for Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in which communities, groups or individuals manage or co-manage forests. This law recognizes two types of PFMs: Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) and Joint Forest Management (JFM). The main difference between the two types of PFM is that CBFM takes place on a village or privately owned land and all the associated costs and benefits in managing the land are carried by the owner. The land where JFM takes place however is "reserved land" that is owned by government.

Local authorities encourage communities to establish Village Environmental Committees (VECs) that in turn play an active role in monitoring and reporting on improvements in forest condition and patrol and report illegal activity. VECs collaborate closely with local forest reserve authorities who provide technical advice and guidance to the VECs. In return, the villagers get full or partial rights of access to non timber products of forests.

Payments are non monetary and consist of a transfer of user rights from national to local authorities. The Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) provides villagers access rights over a jointly defined forest reserve area. The Forest Act of 2002 defines access levels and these tend to be limited to minor products such as honey, firewood, water, medicines, and grazing.

## Current Status

Forest Area Under JFM	1.6 million hectares
Primary Forest Types	Montane and Mangrove
Total National Forest Reserves with JFM	150
Local Authority Forest Reserves with JFM	60
Primary Regions where JFM implemented	Morogoro, Iringa, Pwani, Tanga, Kilimanjaro
Villages With Signed JMAs	149

The JFM process involves setting up the VECS, training the villagers, surveying the area under agreement, carrying out a resources assessment, agreeing on by-laws of user rights, organizing meetings, and drawing up a village management plan. As a result of involvement in the JFMs, communities have reported improvements in forest condition, including improved water flow and reduced illegal activity.

### Policy Objectives

1. Improved forest quality through sustainable management practices.
2. Improved livelihoods through increased forest revenues and secure supply of subsistence forest products.
3. Improved forest governance at Village and District Levels through effective and accountable natural resource management institutions.

## Challenges

JFMs have been promoted widely both by government and national and international NGOs as a forest conservation strategy in the highly biodiverse Eastern Arc forests (in central Tanzania) and in mangrove forests along Tanzania's coast. There are to date very few examples of JFMs operating in commercial forests. Because commercial lands are not a priority for conservation, the government has little incentive to use royalties from commercial forestry to pay local communities.



*Participatory Meeting With Local Villagers to Manage Local Forest Resources*

This could be one explanation for the fact that only 149 JFM agreements have been signed out of the 719 communities that

have established JFMs. Without signed agreements the equity of the JFMs is questionable. The economic benefits accruing to the villagers in JFM are not clear, as the forests are on reserve land where local use options tend to be limited. Given the limited

potential for tourism it is important to look at other sources of benefits for the communities.

## Looking Forward

JFMs have been effective in addressing biodiversity loss in some areas in Tanzania. It is important to note however that JFMs cover only a small percentage of forest reserves in high biodiversity catchment areas. Devolution of rights and responsibilities from government to communities is essential to ensure project sustainability. This has been particularly slow due to fear that this might further degrade endangered ecosystems.

Evidence from decentralization programs throughout Africa, suggests, however, that enhanced devolution will only improve community benefits and hence enhance sustainable management of the forests overall. The renewed importance

given to reducing deforestation in Conference of the Parties, 14th session in Poznan could be an avenue for more international support and funding for the Government of Tanzania in coming years.

With funding from the Government of Tanzania, supported by bilateral donors, the Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) is developing a national program for the implementation of participatory forest management. Working primarily through district and village governments, but increasingly supported by NGOs and the private sector, the program is currently supporting 53 districts across mainland Tanzania (out of a total of 97).