

South West Forest and Landscape Grouping (SWFLG)

Participatory Forest Management learning paper; reflections on key lessons, challenges and recommendations

Drawing on the experiences of the NTEFP – PFM project in South west Ethiopia

Peter O’Hara



Active Forest Management – Planning how to implement PFM

<http://wetlandsandforests.hud.ac.uk> | www.ewnra.org



SWFLG is an informal grouping of organizations which are interested in the development of an ecologically sound and socio-economically sensitive approach to the management of the south west landscapes of Ethiopia. The members of the grouping to date are: University of Huddersfield (UK), Ethio-Wetlands & Natural Resources Association (EWNRA), and Sustainable Livelihood Action (SLA)/Wetland Action EEIG (the Netherlands). They have been partners in projects funded by the EU and several other international donors since 1996 and have built up specific expertise in the areas outlined above.

Other organizations are encouraged to join the Grouping.
Contact: Prof Adrian Wood: a.p.wood@hud.ac.uk

Contents

Key Acronyms Used	iii
Executive Summary	iv
The evolution and rationale for PFM globally.....	1
PFM evolution in Ethiopia and at the project site.....	5
Key lessons, challenges and recommendations that emerged about PFM from project experiences	11
PFM – when a name means too many things to too many different people.	11
The importance of prioritising incentives for communities: tenure, user rights, sustainable forest management	15
Participatory policy process support	19
PFM agreement – the hinge that devolved forest management is built on is currently too weak.....	22
PFM forest must pay its way	24
Natural forest silviculture	29
Facilitation and responsiveness in PFM	30
Projectization of PFM.....	32
REDD+ friend or foe of PFM	33
Institutionalizing Participatory Forest Management.....	34
References.....	37
Annex 1. About the NTFP-PFM project	41

Key Acronyms Used

BoARD	Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development at Regional level
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FMA	Forest Management Association – Legal PFM forest management groups registered at Woreda level, responsible for forest management and the legal entity that signs the PFM agreement
FMG	PFM forest management group at the Got level – a branch of the Woreda level FMA.
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
NWFP	Non Wood Forest Product
OFWE	Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PC	Project Coordinator
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PFMA	Participatory Forest Management Agreement – in effect the contract/MoU that devolves forest management to local communities in PFM.
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region

Local Names

<i>Got</i>	Not a formal administrative unit, rather a small community group living within a certain area.
<i>Kebele</i>	Administrative sub-unit of the woreda, with a locally elected kebele Administration. Each kebele groups a number of communities (gots)
<i>Woreda</i>	Lowest level of Government Administration and of key importance for implementation of development activities in the context of decentralization; comparable to ‘District’

Executive Summary

Participatory Forest Management Research and Development Project's have been implemented in South-West Ethiopia from 2003 to 2013. The projects were implemented in collaboration with the Bureau of Agriculture in 5 Woredas (equivalent to districts) within 3 zones of the Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. The booklet presents a summary of the challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations; it also includes some reflections from wider PFM experience.

Local, customary forest management was the norm across many countries until state-sanctioned reserving of the forest uncoupled the relationship between local people and their forests. This approach was spread widely during the colonial era, even adopted by non-

colonised countries such as Thailand and Ethiopia. This paradigm of 'saving the forest from the people' is still deeply engrained within many forestry administrations today.

Over the last couple of decades, as the failings of this approach have become clearer, we have seen a devolved forest management approach grow – under the name of “community forestry” or “Participatory Forestry Management (PFM)”. Today it is estimated that 25% of developing world forests are again under some degree of community control. In Ethiopia PFM began with a pilot in Oromia in 1996; the Non-Timber Forest Product-Participatory Forest Management Project (NTFP-PFM) was one of a series of follow on projects bringing PFM into the montane forested south west of the country in 2003.



Photo: Indrias Getachew

Lessons Learnt

1. It is important to prioritise incentives

important to communities: a. Tenure b. User rights c. Sustainable forest management. Successful and resilient PFM is built in a sequenced way in response to the priorities set by community members. If priorities of projects or government are pushed, eg. sustainable forest management, without first delivering on the incentives required by communities, PFM will not work. The foundation of devolved forest management is some degree of tenure security, followed by forest user rights to ensure there are incentives to manage the forest. Then, and only then, will community motivation deliver action on sustainable forest management.

2. Participatory forest policy review process helps reflect local realities, engages government and increases community ownership. Policy-level work

is essential to ensure tenure and user rights for communities undertaking PFM. The NTFP-PFM project discovered that support to such a policy review process was essential and welcomed by the regional government. This resulted in the most affected stakeholders genuinely having their views considered, which led to strong support for devolved forest management and a much higher degree of ownership among stakeholders of the new policy. NGOs can work constructively with government in the realm of support to policy making, if their role is clearly defined as policy process support. Furthermore, a well-constructed policy process, using participatory methods and appropriate facilitation will better reflect local realities. Direct engagement between forest communities and government seemed to be more effective than simply circulating reports and briefing notes.



3. PFM forest must pay its way; use rights under PFM are too weak at present. What is effectively transferred under PFM in SNNPRS at present are primarily the responsibilities for forest management, but not many of the rights for forest use. As compared to those living outside of PFM areas, the PFM communities have many additional burdens with few new benefits. PFM communities are granted rights to sell Non-Wood Forest Products NWFPs (which communities outside PFM also sell and which people can often produce from their back yards) and rights for forest products, including wood products for home consumption (which communities used to harvest informally before PFM). If others outside PFM get the same benefits, why do so much work? Not increasing use rights, especially commercial use rights, effectively lowers the incentives to join PFM and invest in the management of PFM forests. These restrictions also tie the hands of community members for realising the full potential of sustainable off-takes from their forest.

4. Flexibility and responsiveness are key benefits of the PFM process in delivering results. The ability to take decisions and actions for themselves is a big incentive for community participation in PFM. This is in addition to the more

tangible and fundamental tenure and rights incentives. Because PFM is a process, with outcomes often unknown for sure at the beginning, when the NTFP-PFM project met a challenge in the field, rather than simply adhering to a pre-determined work plan, it was responsive to the challenges, enabling it to better meet outcomes. However, it must be noted that responsiveness is often difficult if donor requirements in planning and reporting are rigidly fixed on predetermined activities and outcomes.

Challenges

1. The PFM agreement, the hinge that devolved forest management is built on, is currently too weak and needs strengthening. The contract that devolves control over the forest to local communities is the PFM agreement. The success of devolved forest management rests on the strength of this contract. In Ethiopia this is currently too weak: tenure is not clearly defined; decision making rights are not well articulated; and commercial user rights are too restricted - relating only to non-wood products in the NTFP-PFM project sites. The success of PFM rests on the clarity of power devolution within the PFM agreement as this is where the crucial incentives are for communities.

A promising development, started in Gesha Woreda, has been the granting of communal forest land certificates for PFM forest sites, apparently the first of its kind in Ethiopia. This title finds its legal backing in an interpretation of the Rural Land Administration Proclamation, and offers much stronger tenure rights over the forests for communities. Exploration of its applicability to other sites should be a priority.

2. Understanding of the rationale, principles and practice of natural forest silviculture is extremely weak amongst government staff. This leads to restrictions in PFM forest user rights, limiting stimulation of silviculture (such as removal and sale of old trees to make way for new ones, or the sale of wood from indigenous species to encourage long term investment in native trees). Evidence from around the world shows that disturbance is a key element in forest ecosystems, and that some species even require it to thrive. Managed forest can not only produce more valuable products on a sustainable basis (increasing the chances of forest maintenance), but can also provide more ecological diversity and capture more carbon than an unmanaged forest. Monitored silviculture trials in natural forest under PFM would help

to demonstrate this to sceptical staff. Furthermore, natural forest silviculture should be considered on the curriculum of forestry colleges in Ethiopia to prepare foresters to have relevant skills for PFM.

3. Projectization of PFM threatens the long term perspective. PFM seeks to provide a sustainable arrangement for forest management that operates over decades. Results of PFM are often slow to arrive at because the governance reforms and the change in relationships and associated trust building required for PFM take time. Projects operate over a 3-5 year timeframe, often have objectives related to the current donor fashion, and require tangible results related to those objectives within the project time frame. Such a rigid framework when applied to a complex and responsive process of forest devolution creates tension at field level and mitigates against positive outcomes. Donor education and especially donor coordination are important to ensure PFM is properly understood and that projects with contradictory approaches are not introduced in the same area.

4. REDD+, a friend or foe for PFM? It is important to unpack the premises which underlie both REDD+ and PFM, to explore compatibilities and incompatibilities before rushing to

join them both. REDD+ is based on a premise that maintaining and managing the forest is an opportunity cost for communities, whereas PFM is predicated on a premise that under a conducive governance environment forest value itself can induce forest maintenance and management. PFM provides the incentives (tenure and user rights) for forest management. REDD+ on the other hand provides financial compensation for the assumed opportunity cost of avoided loss – it is a payment whose long term continuation is not guaranteed. To put it simply, PFM assumes that communities see the forest as a benefit. REDD+ assumes communities see the forest as a burden. Merging both potentially conflicting views will need to be negotiated carefully.

Recommendations

1. PFM – when a name means too many different things to too many different people. In practice there is a spectrum of approaches to PFM; from Government Control through to Delegation, Sharing, Devolving (to individuals) and Private Ownership. Different interpretations lead to different paradigms and different outcomes. What PFM aims to be is devolved forest management, handing over power in terms of tenure, user rights and decision making to local

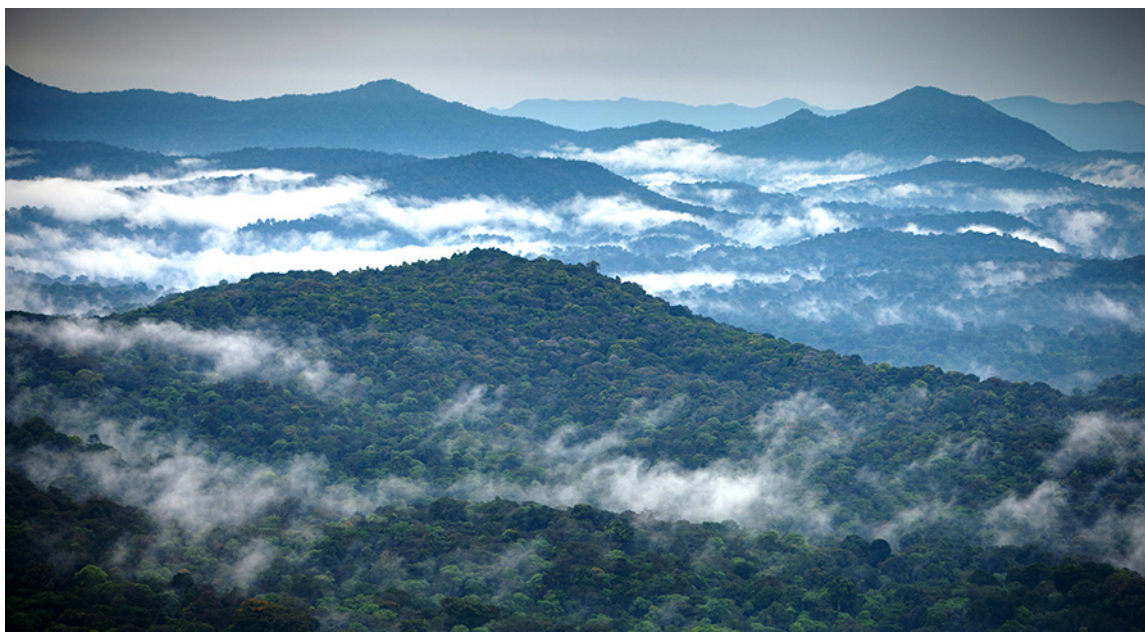
communities for management of their forests. The outcome of this for the NTFP-PFM project is community forestry – collective forest management. Clarity is needed around the intention behind PFM based projects. It is recommended that the term “devolved forest management” be used to clarify the nature of the activities involved.

2. There is a need to realise the potential economic value of the forests and broaden forest product use rights to include some wood products and other sources of forest based income. This provides a defence against conversion to agriculture, the major cause of deforestation in Ethiopia. Direct financial returns from a wider range of forest products are essential to show firstly, the clear advantages of the time, energy and opportunity cost of joining and maintaining PFM and secondly, to encourage the development of a diverse forest. Restricting rights to a few commercial non wood forest products will lead to a forest that is manipulated to deliver those products at the expense of others, while the income from a narrow range of products is insufficient to compensate for the costs communities incur when implementing PFM. Coffee forest is a good example of what happens to forests when only one

commercial product is allowed for sale.

3. PFM needs to be institutionalised within policy and practice. After almost 20 years' experience of PFM in Ethiopia and 10 years' experience of the NTFP-PFM project, the biggest barrier to institutionalising PFM still seems to be related to acceptance of the paradigm itself within a broad enough range of key decision makers within government. The response from the government towards accepting PFM has been very slow. In Ethiopia the question still remains as to how we turn the corner from a 'save the forest from the people' paradigm to a 'give the forest to the people to save it' paradigm. PFM has not yet managed to become internalised and ingrained within government policy, legislation

and institutions. It has been lagging far behind parallel reform processes in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, PFM is still dependent on NGOs and largely funded by donors. If PFM is to be institutionalised, there needs to be a focus on internalising PFM within government (which the new Ministry of Environment and Forests is exploring). Devolved forest management requires clear policy, regulatory backing, institutional belief and support in the process and trust in the outcome. Policy pilots might help, as may more innovative support to policy processes. Otherwise there is a real danger that when the donor funds dry up for field PFM projects, what remains may be too fragile to self-sustain.





The evolution and rationale for PFM globally

Participatory Forest Management, in effect the formal engagement of local people in the management of forests, is a response to a relatively recent phenomenon of state control and exclusionary reserve approaches to natural forest resources. To put PFM in context it is important to understand the historical origins of state control of natural forest resources, and understand that community, not state control, has been the norm throughout most of history.

Customary management, especially communal management of forests by local people was the norm in most countries. Many principles, silviculture practices, spiritual associations and in some places natural laws evolved which in effect helped guarantee wise stewardship of natural forests by local people.

One of the origins of the state enforced separation of people from their forests which still resonates today can be traced back to the establishment of Royal Forests in Europe by the Normans during the medieval period. Forests were demarcated as wild reserves, for the protection of fauna and supporting flora for the exclusive use of aristocracy and elites, mainly for hunting. Inhabitants

in the demarcated forests were forcibly evicted and Forest Law enforced which laid out harsh punishments for the continuation of most customary use rights.

The reserve approach immediately fostered resentment as the local inhabitants were restricted in the use of forests they had previously relied upon for their livelihoods. The customary link between people and their forests began to break and the dichotomy of local people being allowed to manage their agricultural land but with natural forests reserved for government became established.

The delinking of people from the forests certainly helped the government in the UK in later centuries sponsor massive clearance of forests for agriculture, tanning, barrel staves and ship building when the need arose. The natural forest in Britain was decimated to one of the lowest rates of forest cover in Europe. Another interesting difference between Britain and the continent - which impacted on the development of forestry laws and policies during Britain's colonial expansion - was that Britain did not develop state led systems of silviculture/ forest management until the beginning of the 20th century; whereas silviculture

and economic forest management were mainstreamed into government practices from the 17th century in many continental European countries.

After the clearances of forests, those remaining were largely preserved for aesthetic or wildlife reasons in the UK, to a much lesser extent for use for wood production. A large proportion of the population had been weaned off local natural resource use through urbanization and industrialization. The British Government and many landowners did not feel the necessity to increase timber production and introduce modern formalised forestry practices from the continent because the British had direct access to the large timber reserves of their Empire and of Scandinavia and the Baltic states. Likewise the largely urban populations could purchase coal for their heating and cooking needs.

Although the policies in Britain had left the country with the lowest natural forest cover in Europe and with the most 'delinked' population from natural forests, during colonial expansion the strategy of reserving the natural forests for the Crown/State by enforcing strict controls on local use were rolled out with fervour across the globe. The origins of

many of the first reserves in the empire had some interesting parallels with the Royal Forests with the British aristocracy and elites pursuing hunting for sport in their colonies for 'trophy' animals.

In countries like India as the population of such animals noticeably reduced due to trophy hunting, many of these elites were then instrumental in setting up reserves that effectively protected the remaining fauna and flora from the local people – even though the local people had not been primarily responsible for the decimation of the large animals. The hunter turned conservationist, and a system of far removed elites imposing reserves on local people to protect flora and fauna was born, spread with fervour and infiltrated most colonial forest policies and even those of non-colonised countries like Ethiopia and Thailand.

This approach of ignoring customary rights, undermining the incentives for local people to manage the forest by imposing centralised control, creating de facto open access and then blaming local people for forest destruction has been a depressingly familiar pattern around the world. Post-independence forest services continued the approach.

Social forestry in the 1970s and 1980s was typified by the woodlot

and village forestry projects. However with the application of increasingly participatory approaches projects enabled the aspirations of local people to be increasingly considered in project design. Community and joint forest management since the 1990s has as a result evolved to tackle the root causes of local peoples' rational reluctance to invest in forest management, notably lack of tenure and legal user rights. Most forest policies in Asia and Africa have been reformed over the last 20 years to provide opportunity for some degree of devolution of forest management back to local people; although almost without exception they are pushing against a still dominant reserve-based paradigm that forests must be saved from local people, not saved by them.

To some extent PFM is part of a larger movement of land and political reform towards devolution over natural resources that has gathered pace in many African and Asian countries over the last few decades, since independence from colonial rule. And today, British and USA community forestry movements are claiming back state forest under more local control.

Some academics suggest that PFM is part of a larger grassroots political

response to imperial agendas built upon attempts to command, control and ensure decision making on natural resources was subsumed into 'rational' scientific spheres. This view of being part of a grassroots political movement would certainly have some merit, as it does appear that interventions related to PFM are almost universally liked by forest communities because they are built upon the reasoning and aspirations of local people. PFM is a political solution to a political problem around power distribution; in the past technical solutions have been tried to address this political problem and – understandably – failed.

A report from Forest Trends (White and Martin, 2002) suggests that the forest area under some degree of local control is now approaching 25% in the developing world. However the degree of devolution varies greatly and even the objectives of Participatory Forest Management are hotly debated in many countries around the world. Communities often cite economic and historical justice aspirations for why they are interested in PFM, such as the rightful return of their ancestral forests (India, Philippines). Governments often cite the cost effectiveness of community control compared to government

control. Other actors such as Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) are often attracted to PFM because of poverty alleviation and social justice aspects, increasing access to forest based assets for poor communities. Conservationist organisations are excited by the conservation outcomes and popularity of the approach among local people in contrast to the dislike of reserve based approaches. As witnessed by the author at a recent international workshop on forest conservation, conservationists are rebranding reserve based approaches (the very approaches that devolved forest management is a response to) as PFM approaches, whilst the conservation/reserve paradigm and practice is still contrary to the principles of meaningful devolution of forest management.

There is thus a high degree of diversity of PFM approaches, shaped by donors, development, government, NGO and community aspirations, combined with the legacy of command and control approaches which still permeates most forestry administrations in the developing world. As a result there are often disconnects: for example PFM is still restricted to a pilot scale without a supportive policy environment (Laos and Pakistan); or as is more often the case, PFM is allowed to some degree in policy, but lacks the clearly defined teeth it requires in legislation and operates within an institutional orientation still in the command and control mould (India). PFM in the context of Ethiopia is explained in more detail in the following section.



PFM evolution in Ethiopia and at the project site

In Ethiopia pilots in PFM started in 1996 with support of GTZ in Adaba-Dodola and in Chilimo with support from Farm Africa. PFM was originally initiated with an emphasis on integrated development (land husbandry, alternative livelihoods etc.), but as lessons have been learned it has evolved to focus much more on increasing the value of the forest for

local people through more secure access rights and supporting forest based enterprises in PFM (albeit restricted to mainly Non Wood Forest Products due to current forest regulation restrictions). The approach has induced enhanced forest regeneration, improved forest protection, and regulated access (Lemenih and Woldemarian, 2010).

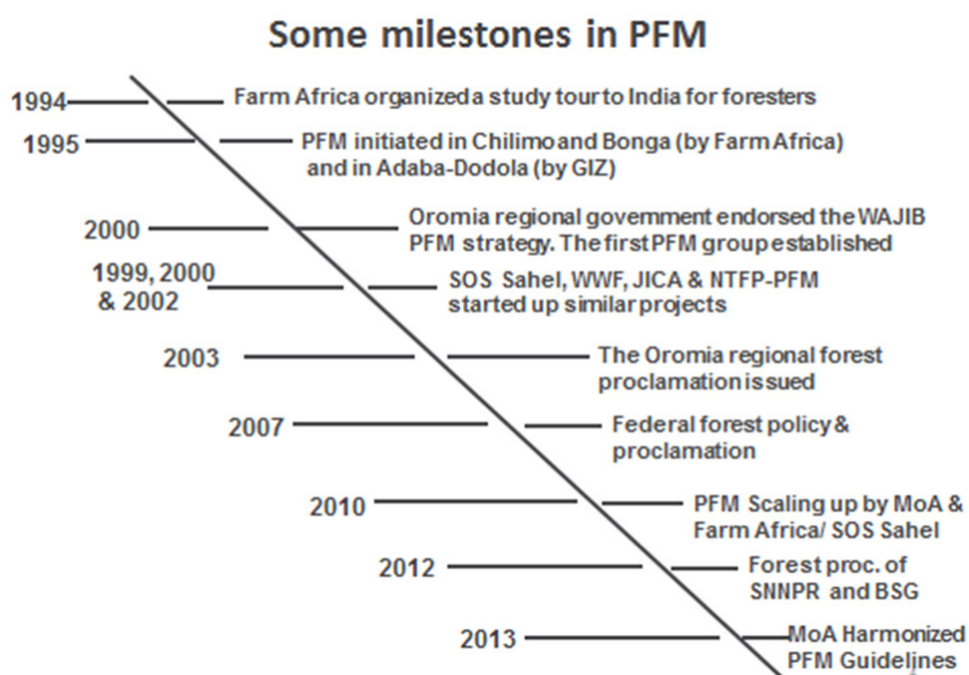


Figure 1. Milestones in PFM in Ethiopia (Tadesse 2013, unpublished)

In 2010 PFM covered 314,309 ha (approx. 2.5% of forest) (Tadesse, 2010, unpublished) but this has been increasing rapidly with major expansion of PFM coverage through several mainly EU/EDF supported projects. It is currently strongest in Oromia and SNNPRS but

is currently being scaled up to other regions, notably Beneshangul and Amhara.

PFM in Ethiopia has proven successful in undermining an ‘open access’ mentality to natural forest and has demonstrated the benefits of increasing the value

of forests for local people through increased local control and user rights, as opposed to trying to delink people and forests. It has been recognised widely by professionals that PFM is the most promising approach for motivating communities to engage in forest management in Ethiopia since it was established in the late 1990s (Lemenih, 2010).

There are two important parallel processes associated with PFM in the country: the first one is scaling up the establishment of PFM (i.e. getting to the point of management plans and agreements). The model has been largely developed to this stage, although further streamlining of overly complicated steps could still take place as well as continuing to adapt the approach to different ecological contexts such as the dry rangelands that make up so much of the country. The second one is making the approach more sustainable so that it can be maintained in the absence of donor/project subsidization.

In addition, consolidation needs to take place, in particular making PFM more attractive through stronger and clearer community tenure and user rights so that the benefits from the forest are more commensurate with the

responsibilities. In general the 'model' for this consolidation has not been achieved, and would require more emphasis on silviculture and forest enterprise support to communities.

The reason that some parts of PFM have been achieved (such as steps to management planning) whereas more fundamental enabling environment changes related to devolving power have not, might reveal different views on the essential ingredients of PFM and fundamentally different views on what the principles are. This is discussed in more detail later in the paper.

PFM, devolved forest management has found some but not always clearly articulated backing in Federal and Regional policies and regulations. The Federal Forest Proclamation N° 542/2007 Article 9(3) states that: 'Forest development, conservation and utilization plans shall be formulated to allow the participation of local communities in the development and conservation and also in the sharing of benefits from the development of state forests'. (See page 11. for a discussion on the problem with the term 'participation'). Within some regional forestry proclamations and regulations the provisions for PFM have been

elaborated and strengthened, notably in Oromia and SNNPRS.

The two key complaints from community members about PFM in Ethiopia revolve around currently insufficiently secure forest tenure and that as yet the programme has been skewed too much towards conservation and insufficiently towards commercial forestry. Numerous researchers and NGOs have pointed out that at present PFM is still reliant on outside subsidy and that the legislative and institutional environment in particular are not conducive enough to drive a self-sustaining programme. Consequently, it would seem that PFM principles and practice are not sufficiently internalised with government structures.

The “Non-Timber Forest Products–Participatory Forest Management (NTFP–PFM) Research and Development Project in South-West Ethiopia began in July 2003. Its first phase ran until July 2007 and a second phase for six years immediately after that, until mid-2013. The project itself also mimicked the evolution of PFM in the country with an early focus on integrated development, based on assumptions that addressing poverty would relieve pressure on the forest.

The focus on Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), or rather in practice Non Wood Forest Products (NWFPs) in the project had a different mixture of assumptions to support it depending whom in the project it was discussed with. Some viewed the focus on NWFPs as a starting point to build from to eventually work towards utilisation of a broader range of forest products to increase the value of the forest. For others it was an extension of the ‘take the pressure off’ theme, with the idea that if people got enough from non- wood products they would leave the trees alone. From those in the project with more PFM experience, tenure and use rights for local people was the key to avoid deforestation, for others poverty alleviation. This poverty alleviation focus was a key part of many early social forestry programmes; however the evidence largely debunks the correlation between poverty and deforestation and even shows a reverse correlation.

Getachew Mamo’s MSC thesis (2004) looked at the effects of wealth and poverty on deforestation in Ethiopia and found that “This [empirical finding] indicates that the richest households utilize a greater quantity of forest resources than the poorest households. This is because utilization of some forest resource requires assets that

the poor households do not possess. For instance, poor households without livestock could not benefit from fodder resources (grazing tree seedlings in the forest). Likewise, those who do not have investment capital may not attempt to accumulate wealth in the form of better house construction. Hence, the poverty-environment theory that often criticizes the poor for deforestation and rangeland degradation lacks a clear understanding on how forest resource utilization is biased towards well off households’.

Through working closely with communities the NTFP-PFM project developed a more astute understanding of what motivates communities to invest in forest management - notably secure forest tenure, user rights and increased forest value – not distraction from forest use.

In Phase II of the project after a more thorough probing of the underlying causes of deforestation from the perspective of community members (See problem analysis in Figure 2) and much (often heated) paradigm discussions, a re-emphasis of the project strategy included:

- a focus on policy;
- streamlining PFM;
- scaling up to provide the tenure

security communities craved;

- a more solid focus on forest management and forest based enterprise development;
- a downplaying of activities that had a limited contribution to increasing the value of the forest.

After the strategy refinement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Regional Government was agreed to support the development of a new Proclamation and Regulations, to be developed following a participatory process. This aimed to influence the enabling environment to provide an enhanced legal basis for PFM.

There was also a restructuring of the project implementation away from a compartmentalised approach to a more integrated development approach focussing on PFM as the overall umbrella approach with teams organised according to PFM implementation in Woredas, rather than according to specialisation.

Figure 2 shows a problem analysis which reflects the interpretation of the problem environment in the forest sector based on numerous participatory analysis exercises with local forest stakeholders. As a result of this analysis the NTFP-PFM project more explicitly focussed

to a greater extent on more deep-rooted causes related to the enabling environment.

Figure 3 highlights the evolution of project strategy approaches to ward off the threat of conversion of forest to

agriculture, starting with a 'baseline' scenario before the NTFP-PFM project introduced PFM. This highlights the current situation and also demonstrates the goal of PFM in this area over the following years.

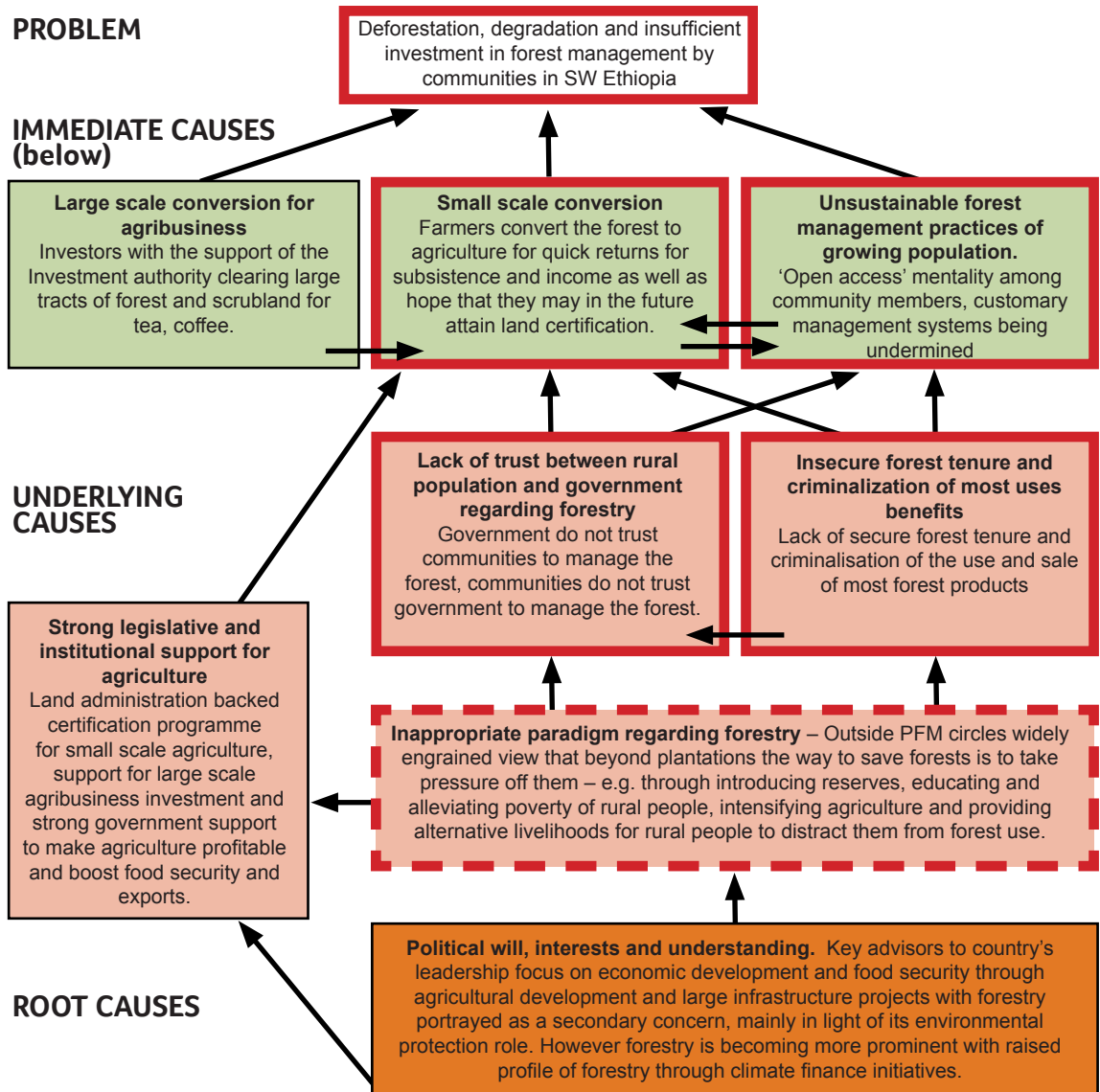


Figure 2. Problem analysis showing the author's interpretation of the complexity of inter-connected causes of deforestation in Ethiopia and highlighting with red boundaries the key causes the NTFP-PFM project phase 2 attempted to focus on. The dashed line shows a cause that the project had a more indirect focus on.

Evolution of the Project Strategy

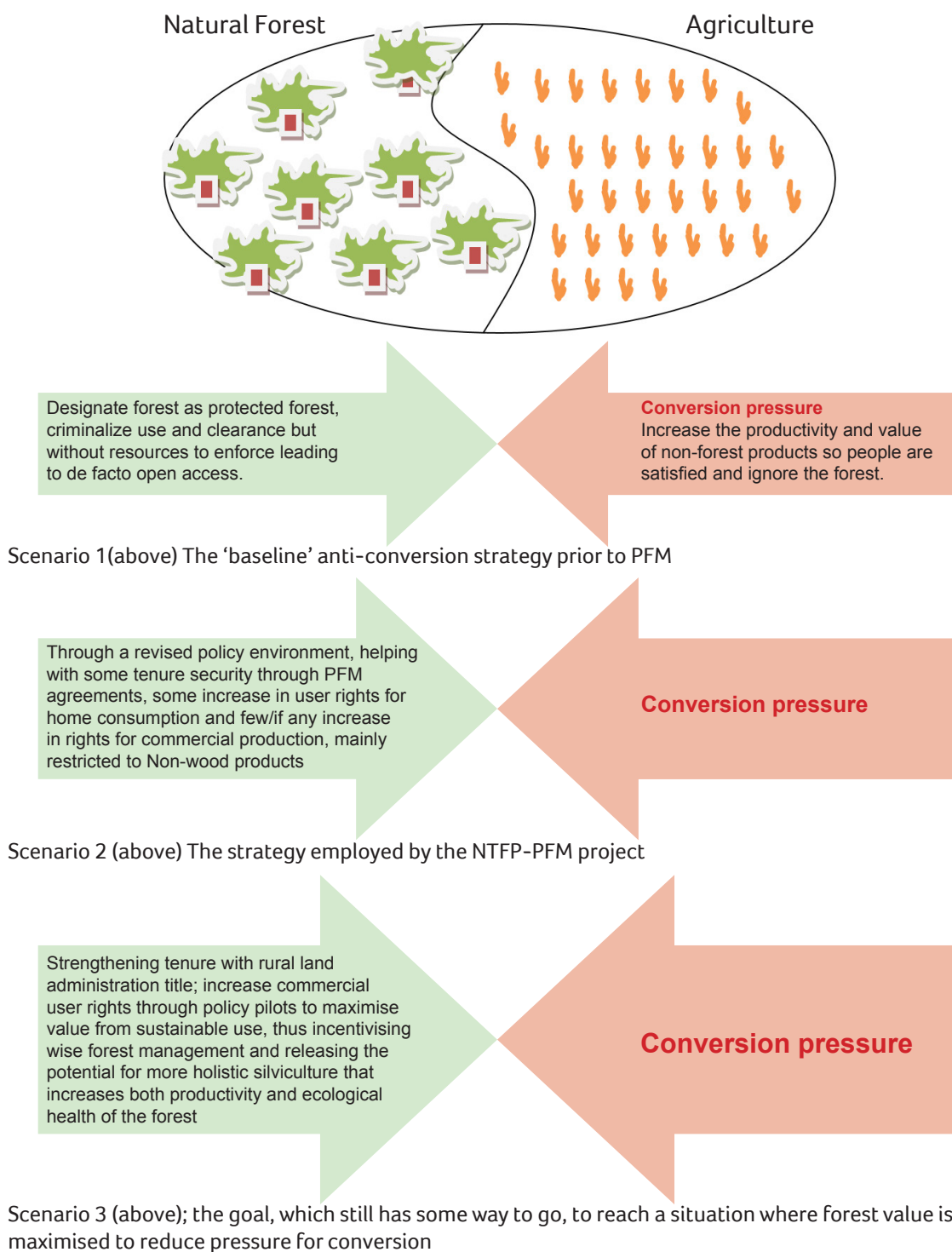


Figure 3. Evolution of the project strategy to address conversion pressure through increasing the value of the forest

Key lessons, challenges and recommendations that emerged about PFM from project experiences

PFM – when a name means too many things to too many different people.

Unpacking the name Participatory Forest Management is a very helpful exercise to better understand gaps between the principles and the practice. At the origins of the science of forest management are customary practices of silviculture that were once common throughout the world. Tools today in ‘scientific’ forest management such as thinning, coppicing, lopparding etc. are the same practices that were carried out in customary practices. It is no surprise therefore that when dealing with forest communities such as those at the Sheka project site silviculture principles and practice are nothing new to local forest people.

When reviewing the PFM literature it is telling to see the gaps around silviculture (see page 29 for more discussion on this). Forest management is often absent from PFM. Many governments and even NGOs have still not fully internalised or accepted wholeheartedly the rationale, principles and practice of forest management that come so naturally to forest communities. Rather many still hold on to and see PFM as a vehicle to implement conservation approaches. This is also the case in Ethiopia, where

showing the definitions related to Participatory Forest Management below, particularly the definition of forest management, raised some objections from regional officials, including trained foresters.

Text Box 1 Definitions related to Participatory Forest Management

Definition of Participatory Forest

Management: Participatory Forest Management approaches involve legally devolved rights and responsibilities to communities where community members are the key decision makers, beneficiaries and actors in sustainable forest management. Adapted from FAO, 2009.

Definition of Forest Management: It is the branch of forestry concerned with the overall economic, legal, social and technical aspects of forestry, especially silviculture (the manipulation of forests to increase its productivity and economic value for people) adapted from Wikipedia 2010.

Definition of Sustainable forest

Management: Recognises forests as a renewable resource that can and should be wisely managed to ensure a sustained off-take and where the health and productivity of the forest is increased through human manipulation of the forest. Adapted from FAO, 2009.

The ‘participatory’ element in the PFM name opens the door to a whole range of unhelpful misunderstandings and misinterpretations. According to FAO’s definition of Participatory Forest Management, communities today in PFM

are the key decision makers; they are in effect the forest managers who set the objectives and manage the forest to meet their objectives. This is understood to be within the confines of what is allowed in the legal framework.

The problem with the term participation is that it means a lot of different things to different people. Most PFM

practitioners view participation as the devolved control to communities of what was previously state administered forests. However many others have widely differing interpretations of what participation means and there is a broad spectrum of understanding of the degree of engagement in participation (See Table 1 below)

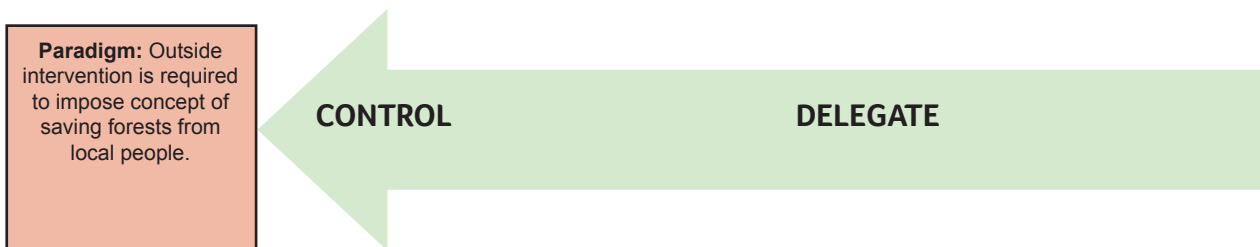
Degree of Participation	Typical role of project/government staff
Full Engagement	Does not make decisions but facilitates the process and methods so that community members can determine the decisions and actions. (E.g. government/project facilitates a step by step process where community members analyse and decide what should be the management objectives for the forest – of course as long as they are in line with the legal framework). Facilitation does not focus on extracting information with outsiders then analysing it, but rather facilitation involves guiding community members to do their own analysis and develop their own answers.
Consulting	This is where the project/government makes decisions prior to meeting community members but asks for feedback from community members on those decisions. (E.g. government/projects decide what should be in the management planning objectives, then presents to community for feedback)
Informing	Makes decisions and then informs community members of decisions that have been taken (e.g. government/project prescribes management plan contents based on their own objectives for communities).

Table 1. The spectrum of participation

It is clear that the application of different degrees of participation in Participatory Forest Management will have very different outcomes and levels of ownership of the outcomes among community members.

Another common misunderstanding about ‘participation’ in the context of PFM is that it is about sharing knowledge, mixing scientific from professionals with indigenous knowledge. This sometimes

happens in PFM, what the essence of ‘participation’ is devolution of forest management to communities. ‘Devolved forest management’ is probably a much more useful and accurate a term to describe the transfer of power that is the central ethos of PFM. Likewise the term ‘community forest management’ would be a more helpful definition of the outcome of devolved forest management at the project site.



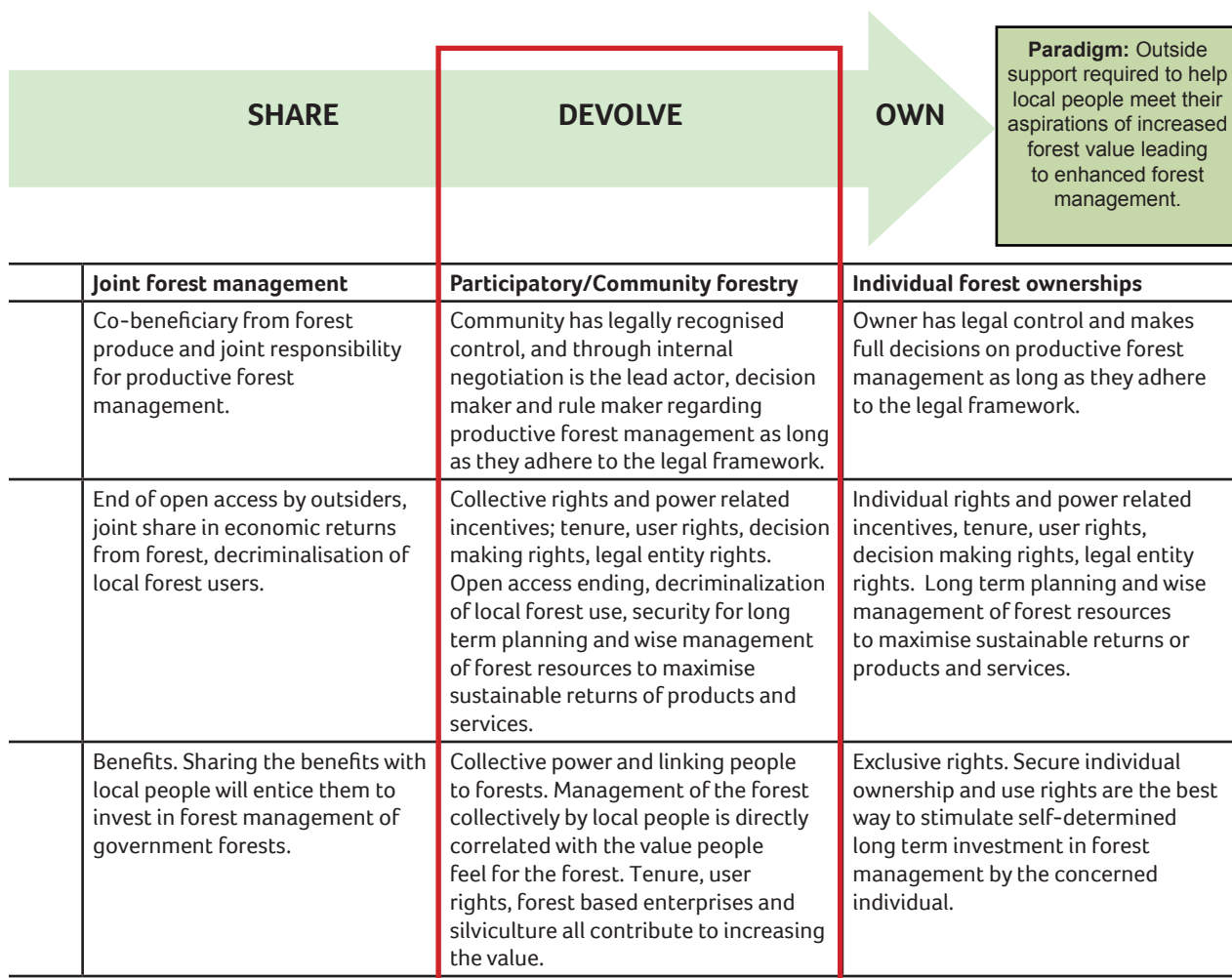
Type approach	Exclusive reserve based	Participatory conservation
Typical role of local people in the forest.	Criminalized for using the forest, rule follower	Delegated responsibilities to conserve good forest and rehabilitate degraded areas (e.g. buffer zones) and patrol forest. In best examples consulted by the government on imposed rules. Very restricted use of good condition forests, forest management (silviculture) generally not allowed in good condition forest.
Typical incentives for local people	Carrots related to alternative livelihood projects, sticks related to enforced protection of forest by government.	Carrots related to alternative livelihoods projects, subsidies for forest rehabilitation, higher use rights restricted to degraded parts of the forest. Enforced protection by government and/or delegated to paid village guards.
Assumption underpinning the approach	Delinking: Forest must be saved from the local people through strict outside rules and enforcement.	Buffering: Need to enforce change in the behaviour of the local people and buffer the best of the forest through zonation and engage local people in protection and rehabilitation, through a mix of subsidies, controlled user rights, education and enforcement.

13 **Table 2** Spectrum of approaches to Participatory Forest Management according to the level of transfer of power/ devolution

Placing PFM within a spectrum of levels of devolution of forest management also helps define PFM and highlight differences with other approaches. Using levels of devolution helps to differentiate PFM from other approaches with participation in the name, such as Participatory Conservation. (Table 2).

Changing the name of PFM to a process of devolved forest management, leading to community forestry, might

in itself be a helpful way to reduce a number of unhelpful interpretations, misunderstandings and confusions currently created by the breadth of the umbrella created by the term PFM. The word ‘participation’ seems to have been particularly problematic and has even distracted the focus away from the crux of the approach which is devolution of power.



The importance of prioritising incentives important for communities: tenure, user rights, sustainable forest management

Like building a house, one of the key lessons that emerged from the experiences of the NTFP-PFM project is that from the perspective of community members, sequencing of priority components in PFM is extremely important. Communities' most urgent priority is securing the tenure – removing open access, protection from outside threats and providing the feeling of secure ownership. Once this 'foundation' is in place, they then ask about user rights; without user rights PFM will simply be delegating responsibilities without benefits and also will restrict the ability of communities to practice forest management.

Finally, once the 'foundation' and 'walls' are in place sustainable forest management actions come into play. However project managers and government are overly fixated on the 'roof' - getting the sustainable forest management plans in place. There is reluctance to tackle the challenging underlying causes of deforestation. Respecting the priorities from the perspective of the communities and 'building the house' of PFM with these in mind is clearly key to the resilience, sustainability and success of PFM.

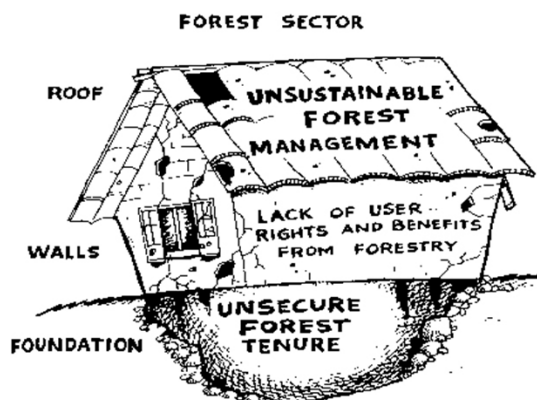


Figure 4. Underlines the need to focus on tenure security and user rights as priorities in reaching a goal of sustainable forest management

This sequencing of priorities was reflected in the NTFP-PFM project's revision of PFM steps. Many sustainable forest management elements have been pushed into the later implementation phase, after the PFM agreement has been established so that communities could get the important incentives - tenure and user rights - as quickly as possible, (Figure 5.)

This focus on getting the incentives in place - which in turn results in behavioural change from communities - instead of focusing directly on changing behaviour, is the essence of what makes devolved forest management different from for example, participatory conservation approaches.

The PFM Equation

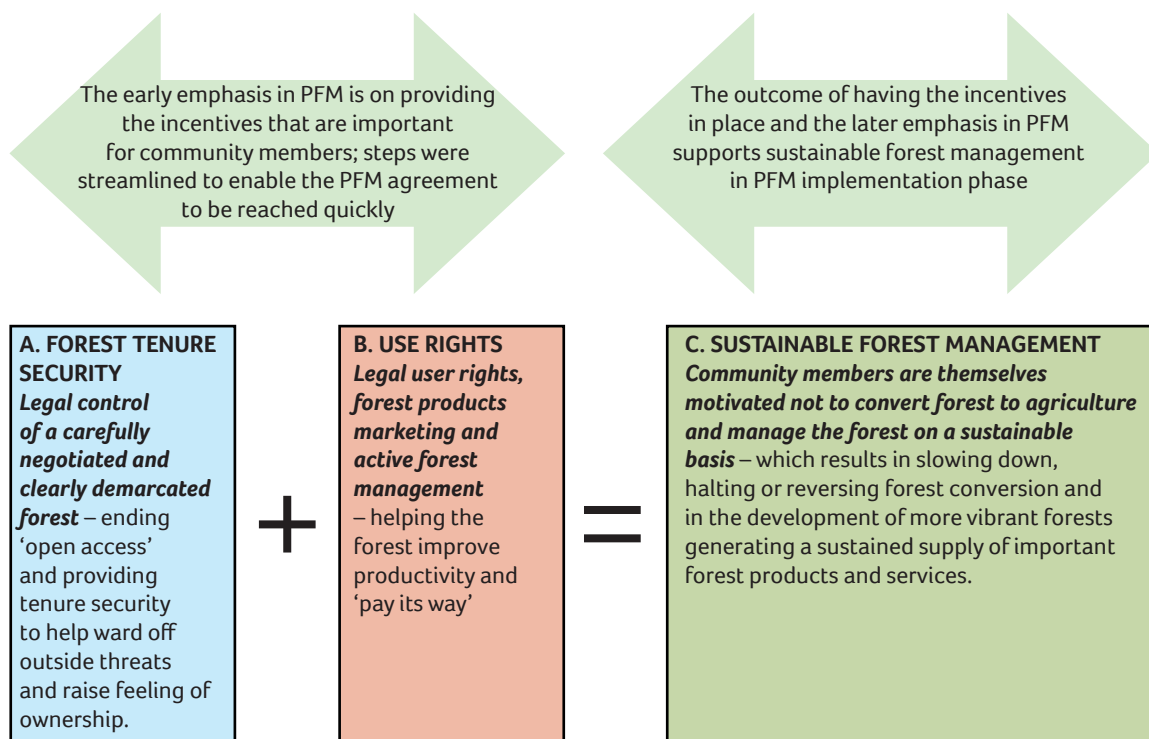


Figure 5. The PFM equation showing that sustainable forest management is a result of getting incentives in place and demonstrating the need to get the emphasis and sequence correct in the establishment of PFM to reflect the importance of the incentives to communities.

As there are often forest plans in both participatory conservation approaches and in participatory forest management approaches, conservationists sometimes think the approaches are similar, without realising that the plans are produced by communities often with a primary intention of attaining the PFM agreement – the devolved power. Some of the most successful examples of PFM that author has witnessed in his career

have been simple principles for forest management that have been agreed by internal discussions by communities and scribbled by hand on a piece of paper. The least successful have been where there are complex management plans, loaded with terms provided by professionals and with often a degree of uniformity among them all. In the NTFP-PFM project a positive indication has been that management plans have been

shortening during the duration of the project and have been developed in more diverse ways, such as rough plans on flip charts and internal byelaws developed through community discussions on the ground.

However, plans are irrelevant, no matter how simple or complex, unless the fundamental incentives for PFM are devolved. In the NTFP-PFM project perceptions related to devolution of power have been assessed. In all cases communities emphasised that secure tenure – rights - was the fundamental incentive for them to invest in forest management. The second most important incentive was the revenue they could legally remove as off-take from the forest. Increasing rights and legal revenues (including products for home consumption), according to communities, leads to enhanced forest management.

The complicated part about this sequencing is that to get forest tenure and user rights, the communities have to develop a plan for sustainable forest management. This is a pre-requisite to attain the Participatory Forest Management Agreement, which effectively is a contract with government that devolves control and use rights. Therefore pragmatically a more general management plan was developed prior to the PFM agreement; once the PFM agreement was signed and community members felt motivated and empowered to manage, then the more detailed and practical annual work plan was developed.

It is a simple equation, Rights (Tenure) + Revenues (user rights/legal benefits) = Responsibility (for wise forest management); but often implementers of PFM get it wrong, and then blame PFM for the failings. If use rights without secure tenure is provided it



Photo 1 Conducting a Rights Responsibilities and Revenues (3R) analysis of before and after PFM, shows that changing incentives related to increased rights (tenure) and legal use of selected forest products for home consumption and for sale were determining factors in motivating communities to be responsible for and manage the forest wisely

may lead to continued exploitation without management investment. On the other hand secure tenure without legal user rights is simply handing over responsibilities, not rights, and can lead to disillusionment. In addition, pushing the result of the equation 'responsibility' for forest management onto communities before delivering the incentives 'tenure' and 'user rights', not only leads to disillusionment but also undermines the whole 'ownership' of PFM which in itself is a key motivational factor.

Related to this is one common burden on communities – the very high and often hidden transaction cost of time. Time is often money for farmers. Communities can become alienated from the process through a disregard for the value of time for them and also with regards to the relevance of the steps for them. The author has come across many community members in PFM sites around the world and in Ethiopia who have been reluctantly dragged to the forest for days to answer repetitive extractive questionnaires, which seem to be irrelevant to their needs.

Steps/methods in the first phase and the beginning of the second phase of the NTFP-PFM project required some

streamlining to ensure that the relevance of steps/methods were maximised for communities, increasing ownership over the process and outcomes and where necessary making them more time efficient.

A major part of this streamlining was not to get different functions mixed up. For example in PFM management planning processes, notably the forest resource assessment, they often have different functions for different actors - government, communities and projects. The communities see the management planning process partly as a necessary pre-requisite to get the PFM agreement, but also do see value in the process in terms of having an opportunity to come together to practically discuss and strategize. However government foresters often tend to see the management planning process and forest resource assessment as a way of developing a scientifically rigorous monitoring baseline of forest condition, as part of a control function. Projects which are transient often push elements related to their own specific objectives into the PFM process, delegating tasks onto communities that may not be relevant for them and undermine ownership.

A review of the steps was conducted at numerous stages throughout the NTFP-PFM project with community members. The results of this included that communities felt that the most time consuming/least relevant step for them at that time was the forest resource assessment, which they felt extracted too much information and took too long. They actually felt that more time should be taken over the boundary demarcation and that more effort in contacting more concerned stakeholders would save time in the long run, cutting down on time consuming conflicts. Overall however, community members made the case that the process should be streamlined to get them to the PFM agreement stage as quickly as possible, then after that they would be more motivated to talk about forest management.

This streamlining helped make the establishment process itself more attractive, relevant and the outcomes owned by communities. The external control and monitoring requirements of government and project has been largely removed from the community management planning step and is now placed within the cross cutting monitoring and evaluation step, with the onus for such monitoring falling on the shoulders of the project and the government.



Photo 2. Farmers use the ‘thumb method’ as part of the simplified forest resource assessment to analyse density of stands of trees in the forest as a basis to discuss possible silviculture interventions.

Participatory policy process support

In the second phase of NTFP-PFM, realizing the fundamental importance of the policy environment that underpins devolution of power in PFM, the project approached the Regional Government of SNNPRS and offered technical and financial support to the process of the development of a new proclamation, regulation and guideline. This acceptable ‘entry point’ of influence on policy process support was an important lesson in itself. Government was not keen to allow an NGO to directly influence content, but was quite open to the idea of process support. The idea of having a participatory process was ‘sold’ to the Regional Government by explaining that increased stakeholder participation

would ensure that the policies would be better tailored to the SNNPRS context and be more widely accepted and supported by stakeholders during implementation.

The outcome of this process - providing more opportunity for devolved forest management, and recognition of community rights to forests – was a clear improvement. However, the fact that this was probably the most participatory policy process ever followed in Ethiopia was a major achievement in itself.

The participatory policy process that was followed is detailed below.

Preparation – establishing a multi-disciplinary government team and assessing the task and requirements.

Developing Methods - training the team on technical aspects required to develop a policy, particularly with respect to stakeholders' engagement and consultation. This included organizing the first proclamation development planning workshop for the multi-disciplinary team with financial support and some technical backstopping from the NTFP-PFM project staff. The workshop identified a series of steps to be followed and formulated a process action plan. A follow up planning workshop was also held where further

training on policy consultation skills was given and a more detailed action plan and toolbox of methods for the formulation of the policy was refined.

Field Consultation - The team then conducted extensive stakeholder consultation involving 87 government representatives and 170 local community representatives in eight zones, 10 Woredas and 34 kebeles of the region. This involved the collection of information from a range of stakeholders involved with forest management, such as farmers, forest users, Development Agents, government officials, and private sectors actors. After gathering the information, identifying policy gaps and assessing recommendations from stakeholders the team produced a draft policy.

Multi-Stakeholder Workshop – A multi-stakeholder workshop was then held to present a review of the existing policy and propose recommendations for the revision of the policy. In addition, a first draft version of the proclamation was presented to that workshop for comment and enrichment. The workshop was held in Hawassa, and attended by a total 84 individuals, including a full range of stakeholders.

Policy Drafting – The policy was reviewed after the workshop and a revised version produced for final consideration in government and with stakeholders.

Legal Compatibility – The final policy had to be reviewed for legal correctness and compatibility with other regional legislation before it could be sent for formal approval.

Final Stakeholder Review Forum – A multi-stakeholder forum was held to present the final version of the Proclamation to the stakeholders for their final comment.

Regional Cabinet and Council – Review and approval by the Regional Cabinet and then by the Regional Council to formally and legally approve the new Proclamation.

Publication – The Proclamation was formally published by the government. The NTFP-PFM project and the follow-on projects are producing additional copies for local circulation along with the Regulations and Guidelines. These are being used to raise awareness amongst the forest fringe communities of the new legislation.

A thorough stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted as a key step in policy development. This looked at skills

in stakeholder engagement development and facilitation of stakeholder analysis. This went beyond a superficial consultation to a genuine engagement of stakeholders in a policy formulation process.

The policy dimension of PFM is being increasingly considered in PFM projects in Ethiopia, but the ‘entry’ point to influence policy is often no more than producing policy briefs, meetings with government officials, or presentations in workshops. This policy process support showed an entry point to influence that was acceptable to government, suited the skills of the NGO involved (facilitation and participation) and resulted in a proclamation that could have considerable impact on stakeholders throughout the SNNPRS. In fact arguably this one intervention in the policy process could have more impact (albeit less direct) than all the field work combined. The cost/benefit return of supporting good policy processes should be more fully considered by those engaged in PFM.



Photo 3. A farmer recaps the collective problem analysis of problematic aspects of the previous Forest Proclamation. This was one of the many participatory tools used throughout the participatory policy process supported by the project that demonstrated that with the right method farmers could be meaningfully engaged in a policy review and revision.

PFM agreement – the hinge that devolved forest management is built on is currently too weak

As mentioned earlier, secure community tenure is the fundamental foundation of devolved forest management; without it PFM will simply not work. Although the strengthening of support for devolved forest management was achieved through the policy process work, the PFM agreement approved by the regional government is far from offering clear tenure control to communities over the forest. There have been examples where this agreement has not been respected by local government, notably the local

judiciary and law enforcement bodies. When communities have reported infringements or illegal activities in their forest, no action has been taken. Examples include forest land covered by a PFM agreement being granted for investment and valuable forest products – bamboo - removed by local government from the forest and sold without permission from the Forest Management Association. These infractions may be due in part to a lack of understanding of the implications of the PFM agreement.

However, on reviewing the agreement as a mechanism for forest devolution there are numerous weaknesses, including the following:

- Ownership/property rights are not clearly expressed;
- Absence of clear articulation about the power of the community (rather than the government) to make decisions on the forest;
- Not a legally binding agreement, more of a Memorandum of Understanding;
- Communities are still at risk of dispossession and eviction if the government decides that doing so will be in the greater ‘public interest’. This does not afford fundamentally

stronger protection against eviction and dispossession than forest communities without PFM agreements.

- In the approved PFM agreements non wood forest products are banned. This clearly indicates a misunderstanding of government on the principles of forest management, where economic value of the forest, manipulation and productive use are all key ingredients. This suggests that the aspirations of the government are to delegate responsibility for forest conservation rather than devolve rights to communities. This difference in interpretations, if it is indeed the case, could cause a lot of problems in the future if not bridged.

Clearly the PFM agreement lacks both the solid ‘foundation’ and the ‘walls’ referred to in Figure 4 to build effective, resilient and sustainable forest management. The contents of the agreement could be interpreted to illustrate that the government still do not trust in the principles of devolved forest management, and are instead using the agreement to delegate conservation responsibility without devolving real power for tenure, user rights and decision making.

Because of the weakness of the PFM agreement it wouldn’t take much for the whole ‘house’ of PFM to crumble. Strengthening the mechanisms that devolve forest management is of crucial importance in South West Ethiopia and Ethiopia as a whole as well as ensuring widespread acceptance and enforcement of the agreement amongst all relevant government institutions.

To close the gap between what is in the PFM Agreement now and what is required for effective devolved forest management, there is clearly a lot of work to do. Lessons from the participatory policy process, i.e. providing support to a review and revision process, rather than an outright focus on revising the content of the PFM Agreement might be more fruitful. The enactment of the new Regional Forest Regulation could provide an opportunity for this process of PFM agreement revision.

Another one of the most important achievements of the project with regards to strengthening tenure occurred in Gesha Woreda, Kaffa Zone, SNNPRS where 7575.6 ha of forest managed by 17 Got level PFM Groups (branches of the Woreda Forest Management Association) have been certified as

communal forest and issued a group certificate, with legal backing in the Rural Land Administration Proclamation. This is the first of its kind in Ethiopia.



Photo 4. A collective forest land title certificate from Gesha Woreda

This certificate enables ‘Households and individuals who are allocated forests and forestland are entitled to exploit production forests, exchange, transfer, lease, inherit, and mortgage the land’ -use rights, clearly much stronger in terms of tenure and use rights than what the current PFM agreement provides. The communities in Gesha currently have both the PFM Agreement and the collective forest land certificate.

It seems that the decision to grant such certificates was at the discretion of local

officials based on their interpretation of the provisions within the Rural Land Administration Proclamation. The process to obtain such a certificate is relatively simple, compared to the PFM agreement.

This is an extremely important development and possibly one of the most important achievements of the NTFP-PFM project, and should be harnessed and built upon. For example, exploring the possibility of applying the certificate in other areas currently under only PFM agreements. There would be challenges of course, especially regarding the application to only ‘production’ forests and the current vagueness around forest classification in many of the sites. In the process of reviewing and revising the PFM agreement, the need to synergize it and avoid contradictions with the provisions in the Rural Land Administration could be an argument to strengthen the PFM agreement further.

PFM forest must pay its way

Forest management has at its root an economic motive; forests must pay their way for local forest managers. The NTFP-PFM project phase II with its forest management emphasis viewed forest dependency as an opportunity

not a threat and consequently focused on increasing the amount of income communities received from the forest as a way of stimulating enhanced forest management.

The case for following an economic forest management (the forest must pay its way) rather than a conservationist (the dependency on the forest must be reduced approach) is most strongly argued for by the forest community members themselves. To quote a villager at a PFM agreement signing ceremony who was concerned about a conservationist approach being introduced.

'We the local forest dependent community want green development through (Participatory Forest Management) not green hunger (through biosphere reserves)'

Similar sentiments were expressed by forest communities in the NTFP-PFM forest site, who repeatedly stated that their willingness to maintain the forest was linked to the revenue from and value they perceived it had.

Economics in forest management is used in the broadest sense; the 'value' that is defined by community members are both tangible, such as financial

returns and home consumption, and less tangible, such as a feeling of ownership, a livelihood safety net, having the forest as an asset, cultural aspects etc. An important aspect of 'value' in PFM highlighted by community members was that in PFM they no longer felt like criminals in their own forest. This will certainly be a contributing factor in making the value of legalized use more attractive than continued illegal use.

Although economic values go beyond the financial for community members, it was made clear by community members time and time again that the importance of the financial contributions from the forest was increasing over time: as household expenditures increased, importance of cash crops increased. When pressed on what impact removing the financial value of the forest would have for them, farmers repeatedly stated that the forest would be cleared. So realizing the financial value is essential to forest maintenance.

The project has explored a number of avenues to increase the value of the forest for communities. Notably, as the name of the project suggests, NTFPs (although in practice because of restrictions in regulations the focus was on non-wood forest products (NWFP).

Undoubtedly there has been success especially with organizing economies of scale through PLCs helping foster market linkages for honey, which have increased the value of honey, and as a result the value of the forest and the incentives to invest in forest management.

There are however a number of very important problems with restricting use to NTFPs in relation to helping managed PFM forest pay its way.

- No differentiation between PFM forest and non PFM forest. In PFM there are substantive responsibilities/costs to invest in forest management; those outside of PFM do not have the weight of those responsibilities. However the rights to produce many NTFPs for example honey, are the same inside and outside PFM. Thus PFM brings new burdens but not new benefits. This could lead to disillusionment, eroding the incentives to join and maintain PFM.
- An extension of the conservation/take the pressure off paradigm. The justification for NTFPs/NWFPs from government officials that the author interacted with in Ethiopia was often much more in line with a 'take the pressure off/reserve approach', rather than embracing the idea that

forests and trees are a renewable resource that can and should have sustainable extraction to maintain health and productivity. In line with alternative livelihood philosophy, NTFPs again seem intended to distract people from tree use, rather than as a means to encourage forest management and increase forest value.

- Silviculture; forest management is the manipulation of forest to provide important forest products. If the products are restricted to NTFPs the forest will be manipulated to produce NTFPs, at the expense of other products – reducing the potential of the forest to pay its way. This can be clearly seen with coffee forest, where everything is often cleared except some canopy trees and the coffee plants themselves. 'Putting all the eggs in one basket' is not a resilient strategy, all it takes is a crash in price or a disease, and with the main value of the forest gone, the forest will also be cleared. (This is discussed further in the silviculture section that follows).

The most important barrier to release the potential of economic forest management is the policy and legislative environment, reflected in PFM

agreements that restrict the ability of the forest to pay its way.

The project brought in a forest enterprise development advisor early in NTFP Phase II. However it seems on hindsight that this was a little premature, as community members at that stage were focused on prioritizing securing tenure through PFM agreements. As a result of this, many of the enterprise development related steps now take place after the PFM agreement is signed. However more fundamentally, the enterprises will still be disconnected from silviculture as long as wood products are off the legal commercial menu.

The ‘lower hanging’ fruit – again to be analyzed by the communities in light of the new regional forest regulation - might be products such as Tree Fern and Bamboo but it is recommended that use rights should be restricted to PFM sites only. For the more controversial products such as wood it is recommended that controlled pilots are the way to help convince government. (See page 31).

With regards to integrating the enterprise development steps into the PFM process, the most important aspect was ensuring that enterprise development is conducted in a way that adheres to PFM principles; notably that

community members are in the driving seat of the analysis and decision making (Photo 5.) Many of the community members engaged in the forest enterprise development training were existing entrepreneurs and showed their expertise in astute analysis.



Photo 5. Farmers analyse a complexity of factors to rank the most feasible forest enterprises; investment/ return, supply/ demand, value chain, quality, social factors, profitability factors are considered. Though some information was provided by project and government staff on possibilities, the analysis and ultimate decision making was left to community members.

Text box 2 illustrates some findings from interviews with carpenters in Mizan Teferi early in Phase II of the NTFP-PFM project and helps illustrate the futility of the continuing ban on commercial use of wood from the natural forests and points to opportunities of linking carpenters with sustainable wood sources in PFM.

Selection of responses from interviews with 8 carpentry groups in Mizan Teferi in 2008

What is the impact of making wood use from natural forests illegal?

'Poor conversion rates, 4 planks cut from a tree that could produce 8 or 10. Untrained people using poor equipment at night, all leads to high wastage and as a result more deforestation'

'Lack of regular and reliable supply, difficult to plan, I often don't get the dimensions I need. Also it comes in the middle of the night, always has to be hidden and secretive, very inconvenient. Transporting wood is very hard and inconvenient work, roads are often avoided and going through the forest at night is very difficult for the transporters who are often from marginalized groups'

'It is a ridiculous situation, some of my biggest customers are government employees yet for me to produce the furniture for them, I feel like a criminal buying illegal wood'

Recommendations from carpenters

'We are worried about the continued supply of wood, making things illegal does not encourage farmers to maintain young trees for future harvesting when they are mature. Legalize wood trade – allow wood to be transported during day and allow transporters to pay taxes (rather than bribes).'

Improve communication between carpenters, producers and transporters to decrease wastage, improve quality and increase regularity of supply.

Educate consumers so that they do not always insist on one or two species for their furniture but a much wider range of species – this is better for forest.

Allow carpenters to train villagers on effective harvesting of trees to produce higher quality and less wastage.

Hand ownership and right to produce to villagers – they will take care of forests. Town people should not have rights to cut in forest because they are greedy and do not care for the forest, they only care about money.

Text Box 2 Responses from carpenters illustrate the potential for synergies between PFM – which is striving to make the forest pay its way, and carpenters who are asking for a legal source of wood.

Recommendations from carpenters included:

- Releasing the full economic potential of the forest in PFM might be much more effective if focussed on the numerous existing often informal entrepreneurs and small and medium forest enterprises in Ethiopia,

rather than creating new ones.

Interventions to support this could be related the following:

- **Formalisation.** Much of the wood-based enterprise sector in Ethiopia operates informally; formalising this sector and providing assistance with organisation and registration etc. will provide more opportunities for

organisations to openly negotiate with producers and transport and market products.

- **Training.** Enterprise development skills such as value chain analysis, wood working skills, business management, accounting etc.
- **Supply, market and trend information.** Systems could be set up to better link supply and demand, possibly using mobile phone technology. Experiences with the DFID supported Commodities Exchange in Addis Ababa may also be relevant to draw upon for the development of a similar market system for forest products.
- **Credit access.** With formality credit access will be easier, but assistance might be required to better link enterprises to credit access and revolving loans might also be considered.
- **Consumer education to promote preference change.** This could involve information campaigns on the broad range of natural forest species that are suitable for furniture, for example displaying posters in market places where wood products are sold.

Natural forest silviculture

As discussed on page 11, forest management did not grow out of some abstract concept but grew from documenting the practices of customary silviculture, which is based on the principle that forests can and should provide a sustained off-take of valuable products and services, or as put simply by a farmer in Sheka, *'Trees grow, trees get mature, removing a mature tree provides space for the next generation of trees'*.

At the moment commercial use rights in the forest are restricted to so few non-wood products, particularly honey, there is a real danger that the forest will be manipulated to develop in a way that provides an abundance of flowering trees and plants at the expense of other non-flowering plants. Likewise with the commercial ban on natural timber species, what will likely happen (and is happening in some PFM sites) is the enrichment planting of the forest with exotic species for timber, which do not have their use restricted.

Restrictions in the policy and regulatory environment are restricting the introduction of effective silviculture in the project sites; this is compounded by an almost complete lack of understanding of silviculture in natural

forests in Ethiopia among government staff, including government foresters.

This seems to be the result of an orientation in forestry curriculums¹ of only focussing on silviculture in plantations and resigning natural forest to conservation approaches.

As more of the fundamental tenure related aspects of PFM improve, issues such as silviculture in natural forests will increasingly come to the fore in PFM. Community members - as observed in training on silviculture in the project - are extremely clear on the basic principles and practice, yet this is beyond the grasp of many government officials interacted with who see manipulation as a threat to forest condition. The idea of the government being able to provide silviculture technical assistance to communities in PFM seems some way off. A probably more useful early step in building the understanding of government on silviculture principles and practice would be to enable them to be taught by the farmers!

The root of this problem of ignorance on natural forest silviculture can probably only be tackled though its inclusion

¹ Information gained through personal communication with several forestry lecturers in Ethiopia

on forestry curriculum in Ethiopia and to have professional training on the topic with existing government staff engaged in PFM. Participatory Action Research pilots which enable farmers to experiment would be a valuable input to such training.

This problem is not unique to Ethiopia; there is a conspicuous absence of silviculture in natural forests in most of the PFM literature internationally which might reflect the continued gap in understanding between the name PFM and the practice of forest management in natural forest – especially among government foresters.



Photo 6 The head of the Forest Management Association in Masha explains forest management/silviculture principles and practice in the Sheka forest.

Facilitation and responsiveness in PFM

One of the most successful but possibly most under the radar achievements of the NTFP-PFM project was the skills

developed within the team to facilitate processes that allowed community members in particular to set the agenda and take ownership of outcomes. This is not an easy skill to develop if you have been trained as an instructor or advisor, it requires a new role entirely, a focus on listening and facilitation skills, participatory methods and process rather than on prescribing solutions and outcomes.

This switch from prescribing and setting the agenda to facilitation and allowing community members to set the agenda was probably one of the key factors in the high degree of ownership and motivation felt by communities in NTFP-PFM sites – even with all the problems with the policy environment.

On several occasions during the project there were decisions that needed to be taken, for example, regarding organisational formats for PFM management groups. What enabled progress on these issues and ownership of the outcomes was good process facilitation with community members fully engaged in analysis and decision making.

PFM is basically a process of forest devolution, with a set of process steps and principles that should be flexible

enough to ensure mutually agreed outcomes between government and communities emerge at the end and are formalized in some kind of agreement. In the experience of the author, as long as the principles are adhered to there can be a whole range of different outcomes and agreements, many unforeseen at the beginning of the process. This degree of responsiveness not only provides challenges with regards to skills, but also with regards to how projects that support PFM are designed.

Donors often require prescribed outcomes and activities on project documents and proposals. If these prescriptions were followed exactly, no matter how well designed the proposal was, they will undoubtedly fail. The most successful PFM approaches are those that are responsive to emerging issues, not those that stick religiously to a log frame and pre-prepared workplans.

This degree of flexibility and management responsiveness necessary for PFM to succeed on one hand and reporting requirements against log frames and pre-determined workplans on the other is probably one of the most hidden but necessary skills in making PFM work within a project context.



Photo 7. Farmers present their annual work plan they developed for the forest. When asked what the strength of the plan was, one reply was ‘We developed it ourselves’. Facilitated self-determination and ownership is of key importance to PFM success and a difficult skill to develop.

Projectization of PFM

Development organisations funded by increasingly cash strapped western governments have been increasingly under pressure to deliver tangible often numerical and visual concrete results within limited time frames of only a few years. This often results in donors tackling more immediate causes of forestry problems that can have quick tangible results (e.g. developing management plans, forming organisations), rather than more fundamental root cause problems related to enabling the governance environment for forestry. Over the last

few decades a tiny fraction of the total amount of donor funding for forestry in Ethiopia has been spent on improving the enabling governance environment. The vast majority of funding has been spent on operational projects, which might partly explain the forest governance deficit.

Yet communities repeatedly point out that the root causes of their forestry problems are related to governance issues, including insufficient use rights. One thing is clear and that is that the enabling environment and institutional commitment are not in place within government to make PFM self-sustaining in the absence of donors, and almost 20 years of work in Ethiopia could be easily lost if the enabling environment is not meaningfully dealt with before the donor support for PFM ends (See page 36.)

In addition, projects are designed according to current donor fashions; whereas PFM is devolved forest management, designed to lead to community forestry for decades to come if not longer. PFM-supporting projects often have objectives that are peripheral to devolved forest management, for example biodiversity, poverty alleviation etc. Project managers often have to focus on delivery of such objectives

within the project timeframe. There is understandably a risk they take their eye off the ball of the longer process of forest devolution and what is required and to secure that.

Another interesting problem with PFM is how best to ensure that it leads to a self-sustained forest management approach. Where the necessary foundations of PFM – devolved forest management - are in place for example in countries like Gambia, supporting projects are replaced by viable community based organisations. However alternative approaches to PFM, such as participatory conservation approaches require sustained assistance from projects to continue. Exit strategies in PFM will have to be clearly thought through in advance to enable PFM to be self-sustaining.

In Ethiopia there is clearly a need for more donor communication and coordination, in particular as biosphere approaches are being introduced with the support of European donors into PFM sites. The introduction of contradictory approaches in the same area is a very inefficient use of tax payers' money. It might be beneficial for a formal or informal group of donors and key implementers (particularly government staff from Federal and Regional Forestry

institutions) in the forestry sector to be established who meet on a regular basis to share updates on progress, plans and lessons learned. There is already a Forestry Society which could be an entry point to forming such a group, as well as an existing PFM Working Group.

REDD+ friend or foe of PFM?

Linked to the discussion previously on donor fashions, nothing is more in fashion at the moment than REDD+. However the principles of REDD+ and PFM have not been unpacked. Instead there has been a rush to combine both REDD+ and PFM as quickly as possible.

PFM- devolved forest management - is based on decades of practical experience that suggests that secure tenure and use rights are the best way to encourage forest management investment by communities and ensure there is no dependency in the long run on outside financial support from donors. PFM has proven to be one of the most cost effective ways to avoid deforestation.

REDD+ is based on an untested premise that providing money and services to forest stakeholders will motivate them to avoid clearing the forest, and that dependency on outside finance is a necessity to maintain the forest.

PFM has analysed the drivers of deforestation for decades from the perspective of forest dependent people and the answer has always come back to governance issues - tenure and use rights. Whereas REDD+ needs tangible results for money spent, providing money for governance reform might not be acceptable to buyers, even though it would probably be the most cost effective way to address deforestation it would be difficult to tangibly measure the impact of the money spent on avoided deforestation.

PFM advocates should prepare themselves well for REDD+, in enabling communities to analyse and set the agenda as much as possible and employ all the great skills and processes developed in PFM to good effect. It will also be important to educate donors and even buyers on the actual drivers of deforestation and what actually works most effectively to address deforestation. In addition and very importantly PFM – devolved forest management mechanisms - must be the vehicle for REDD+ support, so that no perverse and contradictory incentives are introduced undermining PFM. It is also important to have the long game in mind: never substitute expected carbon finance for the need to increase user

rights and benefits from PFM forests, or make avoiding deforestation only reliant on funds coming from the outside.

Secure local tenure and local demand for forest products is a safer long term bet to motivate communities to invest in forest management rather than the fickle voluntary contributions of western companies and individuals to some far away forests and communities in Ethiopia. Carbon money should always be seen as an extra, building on existing PFM, not as an alternative or cornerstone incentive of PFM.

Institutionalizing Participatory Forest Management

In spite of the apparent successes and lessons of the NTFP-PFM project with regards to PFM over the last 10 years, PFM is still not rooted deeply enough within the policy/regulatory and institutional environment to be self-sustaining.

The most important and long lasting lessons from the NTFP-PFM project might be the work the project undertook with regards to governance reform. The policy process support at regional level displayed an entry point acceptable to government and where a real difference was achieved. If all the projects involved in PFM in the two decades had spent

even 25% of budgets and resources on processes to change the governance environment, PFM would have a much more fertile foundation to grow on and a much more certain future.

Still almost 20 years on and after 10 years of experience of the NTFP-PFM project the fundamental question still exists about whether government is convinced and trusts devolved forest management (PFM) as the best vehicle for forest maintenance, or whether they still believe in forest conservation and see largely donor supported PFM as a way of delegating responsibility of protection onto communities without granting genuine power.

What is required is a more explicit focus on the governance and institutional environment, better linking PFM field experiences and allowing community members to articulate needs for government reform with policy makers. Curriculum in forestry colleagues have to be revised to focus on economic forest management including in natural forests, associated silviculture and the essence of PFM with is devolved forest management that requires strong tenure and user rights as a base. Rules and regulations at different levels and under different sectorial proclamations have to

be harmonized, mechanisms for forest devolution secure and clear. Forestry is a long term investment and requires more security over future tenure and use rights than agriculture, not less.

Pilots will certainly be required to convince policy makers on PFM; concrete experience that you can see can be very convincing and doing things on a small scale can lower the risks for decision makers that authorise it. Often the chances to get authority for pilots are increased if they are pitched to the decision maker with the concerns of decision makers in mind (See text box 3 below).

Pilots on utilization of wood and silviculture are urgently required in PFM in South West Ethiopia. But pilots have to be effectively monitored and effectively linked to policy processes and decision makers, with their buy in from the very beginning. Even if policy and regulations are conducive to PFM and senior decision makers are convinced, there would be the requirement of a new reoriented institution for forestry. It is essential that what develops is not a regulatory, command and control organisational form and function as witnessed in the past but rather a pro-forest management extension service, pro

Pitching a policy pilot for utilisation of tree ferns;

Regulation: Presently there is uncontrolled informal use; legalisation will make it easier to monitor and control its use to ensure sustainable harvesting.

Ecological: Tree ferns inhibit natural regeneration of tree species and are dominating the forest; sustainable extraction would be good for the forest.

Economic: If legalised, farmers could get a better price for products by transporting them to towns, which will provide the costs for the forest management groups to protect the forest. This could provide additional revenue from government through some form of taxation.

Control: The pilot will be carefully controlled with partnership between the project and government, all aspects will be carefully monitored and if any negative consequences arise the pilot will be stopped, so risks will be minimised.

Text box 3. An example ‘pitching strategy’ for a policy pilot – attempting to appeal to the interests of government

forest enterprise and service oriented institution.

For deep-rooted institutional behavioural change, performance incentives would have to be examined and increasingly performance should be linked to relevant and efficient service provision to, for example, community PFM groups. The ‘forest fund’ set up to support the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE) in Oromia could also be examined to explore ways of applying it to other institutions to more clearly and directly link taxes and fees collected from PFM hence making them more directly accountable to the PFM communities.

References

- ADB, EU and FAO (2003), Forestry Outlook Study For Africa: Subregional Report East Africa. Rome: FAO.
- Bekele E. (2003), Causes and Consequences of Environmental Degradation in Ethiopia In: Asfaw, G., eds. Environment and Environmental Change in Ethiopia; Consultation Papers on Environment, No.1, Forum for Social Studies. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Bekele, M. (2003) 'Forest property rights, the role of the state, and institutional exigency: the Ethiopian experience', PhD Thesis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Bekele, M. (2008) 'Ethiopia's environmental policies, strategies and programs' In: Assefa. T. (ed.) Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs. pp. 337-69. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.
- Damtie, M. (2008) 'Legal and institutional issues for environment in Ethiopia' Ethiopia Environment Review, 2010 (1) pp1-18
- Derero, A., Mamo N., and Kelemu K. (2010) 'Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Forest Development in Ethiopia', Forestry Research Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Ethiopian Forestry Action Program (EFAP) (1994) Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2011) Ethiopia REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). Submitted to Forest Carbon Partnership Facility.
- FAO (2001) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2001, Rome: FAO
- FAO (2006) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005, Rome: FAO
- FAO (2007) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2007, Rome: FAO
- FAO (2010) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, Rome: FAO
- FDRE (Transitional Government of Ethiopia) (1994a) Ethiopian Forestry Action Program. Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

FDRE (Transitional Government of Ethiopia) (1994b) Forestry Conservation, Development and Utilization Proclamation No. 94/1994. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

FDRE (1997a) Environmental Policy. Environmental Protection Authority and Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

FDRE (1997b) Micro and Small Enterprises Development Strategy. Ministry of Trade and Industry. Addis Ababa:

FDRE (2002a) Environmental Protection Organs Establishment Proclamation No. 295/2002. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

FDRE (2007a) Development Conservation and Utilization of Wildlife Proclamation No. 541. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Gebremariam. A. H. (2005), Options for in situ conservation of forest coffee in Kontir Berhan Area, south west Ethiopia, In: Workshop organised by the EU Delegation and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, June 22-24, 2005. Yirgalem (Sidama), Ethiopia.

Gebremariam A.H., Bekele M., Ridgewell A. (2009) Small and medium forest enterprises in Ethiopia. IIED Small and Medium Forest Enterprise Series No. 26. FARM-Africa and International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

Kassa, H., Campbell, B., Sandewall, M., Kebede, M., Tesfaye, Y., Dessie, G., Seifu, A., Tadesse, M., Garedewe, E., Sandewall, K. (2010) 'Building future scenarios and uncovering persisting challenges of participatory forest management in Chilimo Forest, Central Ethiopia' *Journal of Environmental Management* 90(2) pp.1004-1013

Lemenih, M. (2008) 'Current and prospective economic contributions of the forestry sector in Ethiopia', In: *Ethiopian Forestry at Crossroads: Proposal on New Direction for Sustainable Development*' Workshop, March 24 March, Ethiopia.

Lemenih, M., Tolera, M., and Karlun, E. (2008) 'Deforestation: Impact On Soil Quality, Biodiversity and Livelihoods in the Highlands of Ethiopia' In: Sanchez, I. B. and Alonso, C. L. *Deforestation Research Progress: Nova Science Publishers*. pp. 21-39.

Lemenih, M. and Woldemariam, T. (2010) Review of Forest, Woodland and Bushland Resources in Ethiopia up to 2008. Unpublished manuscript, April 2010).

Matchmaker Associates (2006) 'Analysis of selected sub sector in Kafa Zone of Ethiopia: forest coffee, honey and cardamom'. Unpublished consultancy report. SOS Sahel: Ethiopia.

Mamo, G., Sjaastad, E. and Vedeld, P. (2007) 'Economic dependence on forest resources: a case from Dendi District, Ethiopia', *Forest Policy and Economics*, 9 pp.916-927.

O'Hara, P. (1994) Exploring the reasons for forest cover change in Ireland during and after the period of colonisation. BSc Thesis (unpublished), Aberdeen University, UK.

Oromia Regional Government, 2003/200. Forest Proclamation of Oromia Rural Land Use and Administration No. 130/ 2007.

Tefera M., Teketay D., Hulten H. and Yemshaw Y. (2005) 'The role of communities in closed area management in Ethiopia' *Mountain Research and Development* 25, pp.44-50.

Teketay D., Lemenih M., Bekele T., Yemshaw Y., Feleke S., Tadesse W., Moges Y., Hunde T., and Nigussie D. (2010) Forest Resources and Challenges of Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation in Ethiopia. In: Bongers, F. and Tennigkeit, T. (eds) *Degraded forests in Eastern Africa: management and restoration*: Earthscan. pp. 133-152.

Vincent, K. (2004) Creating an index of social vulnerability to climate change for Africa. Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and School of Environmental Sciences UK: University of East Anglia.

White, A., and Martin, A. (2002) 'Who Owns the World's Forests? Forest Tenure and Public Forests in Transition', In: *Forest Trends*, Centre for International Environmental Law, Washington D. C.

World Bank, (2006) *Managing Water Resources to Maximize Sustainable Growth*, A World Bank Water Resources Assistance Strategy for Ethiopia. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

World Bank, (2009) Ethiopia at a glance - http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/eth_aag.pdf

World Bank (2005) Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project Ethiopia. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Yineger, H., Yewhalaw, D., and Teketay, D. (2008) 'Ethno-medicinal plant knowledge and practice of the Oromo ethnic group in south-western Ethiopia', *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 4 (11).

Yemirui T. et al. (2010) 'Forest incomes and poverty alleviation under participatory forest management in the Bale Highlands, Southern Ethiopia', *International Forestry Review* Vol.12 (1), pp. 66-77.

Annex 1. About the NTFP-PFM project

NTFP – PFM R&D Project Phase I (2003 – 2007) was implemented in 3 Zones and 5 Woredas of SNNPRs. It was funded by the EU (80%) with the Norwegian Embassy and CIDA contributing the remaining 20%. Implementers were Jimma University and Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA, Ethiopia), University of Huddersfield (UK), and Wagenigen University (The Netherlands).

NTFP – PFM R&D Project Phase II (2007-2013) Implementing partners of this project were the University of Huddersfield, Sustainable Livelihood Action (SLA), EWNRA and the SNNPR Government. Funding agencies were the EU (80%), Royal Netherlands Embassy and Royal Norwegian Embassy.

Project Funding Agencies



European Union,
Environment Budget



Royal Netherlands
Embassy, Ethiopia



Royal Norwegian Embassy,
Ethiopia

Project Partners



The University of Huddersfield: With 18 years experience of field research, project management and consultancy / advisory work on natural resources in Ethiopia.



Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association: The first Ethiopian NGO to focus on forest and wetland issues. It has worked with most of the donors in the country and has run projects in three of the country's eight rural regions.



Sustainable Livelihood Action: A European Economic Interest Grouping which focuses on capacity building to support local NGOs and organisations in developing countries. Its staff have over 25 years of experience in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



Southern Nations,
Nationalities & Peoples
Regional State



Photo: Indrias Getachew

For more information contact:

Centre for Sustainable and Resilient Communities (CSRC)
University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
Huddersfield HD1 3DH
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1484 47 1367

Email: csrc@hud.ac.uk