

Local Forest Management and Tenure Reform: Experience from Ethiopia

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Ethiopia

- Total land area: about 1.1 million sq. km.
- Human population: about 90 million (second largest in sub-Saharan Africa)
- Largest livestock population in Africa
- Agriculture contributes about 40% of GDP

Brief history

- Imperial regime (before 1974)
- Military/socialist regime (1974-1991)
- Current regime (since 1991)

Extent of forest

- Estimates differ for various reasons
- 4 mil. ha of high forest
- 29 mil. ha of woodlands
- 26 mil. ha of shrub lands
- Over 500,000 ha of plantations

Contributions of forest sector 1

- About 90% of household energy from biomass fuels
- Wild food and medicinal plants
- Bamboo, resin, various spices and honey
- Forest input to crop and livestock: fodder/ grazing, rangelands under forest cover, regulation of water flow and erosion, coffee shade
- Tourism and wildlife

Contributions of forest sector 2

- NTFPs
- Watershed protection
- Biological diversity
- Wage employment in formal sector
- Payment for environmental services
- Mitigation of climate change

Forest related issues

- Deforestation and forest degradation for various reasons (pressure from human and livestock population)
- Issues of organizational instability, ownership, and policy and implementation capacity

Organizational instability

- Frequent change of government institutions
- Over the last several years forestry was under a case team within a Directorate for natural resources under the Ministry of Agriculture
- Currently forestry is under a state minister in the new Ministry of Environment and Forest

Ownership

- Land owned by state/public with individuals and groups having land use right
- Large part of the forest under state ownership with “protectionist” approach and *de facto* open access
- Private tree plantations
- Communally managed forests including Participatory Forest Management (PFM) and Joint Forest Management (JFM)

History and extent of PFMs

- Initiated and financed by NGOs (since mid-1990s)
- Increased active involvement of government
- Over 2 million ha of land (follows general international trend)
- In different regions but most are in Oromia and Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regions

PFM

- Forest units allocated to forest user groups (FUGs)
- Signing agreement (with rights, obligations and duties specified)
- Share of revenue/benefits between stakeholders
- Participatory decision making

Performance/benefits of PFMs

- Studies show
 - improvements in forest cover/quality,
 - carbon sequestration
 - increased incomes of communities
 - participatory decision making
 - conflict resolution
- Role of collective action

Policy environment 1

- Federal Constitution and other environment related policies and strategies
- First federal level forest policy (in 2007)
- Latest federal level forest proclamation (in 2007) and work on its revision going on focusing on:
 - climate change and
 - Ownership (to more explicitly include PFM)

Policy environment 2

- Related forest regulation (draft prepared but is yet to be issued)
- Regional proclamations
- Guideline for PFM prepared at federal level in 2012
 - Based on past experience
 - To harmonize process while allowing for flexibility
 - Quick and simple reference to users

Policy environment 3

- Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy launched in 2011
- Attempts being made to implement REDD+ after approval of REDD readiness plan
- PFM considered important for implementation of CRGE in general and REDD+ in particular

Conclusions and implications 1

- Developments in forestry in Ethiopia are in line with the general trend in the rest of the world
- CRGE and links to forestry issues
- Recent organizational change is an opportunity
- Need to reduce forest loss
- Loose federal-regional linkages

Conclusions and implications 1

- Need to do more to formalize/institutionalize and 'regularize' PFMs
- Government should play a facilitating role instead of 'policing' role
- Policies and proclamations should be followed by regulations and directives and more active implementation

Thank you!

