

Stakeholder analysis of a Community-Based natural resource management: A Case Study of Ambohilero Forest, Madagascar

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Introduction

The past several decades of planned development and top-down conservation practices have proved the limited capacity of states to force their citizens into conservation program. At the same time, an emphasis on a community-based approach reflects the emergence of decentralization of natural resource management in developing countries and throughout Africa. In Madagascar, the 1996's legislation (GELOSE) marked the beginning of the government decentralization movement that includes contractual arrangements for the management of the country's public forests from the state forest agency to the community-level forest association that is formed for this purpose (COBA). In general, the contracting process is facilitated by a third party that is either a conservation or a development organization.

However, efforts to decentralize forest governance to local communities revealed some real difficulties and even mixed results when decision-making powers have remained centralized or have been captured by a powerful minority. Consideration of the complexity and fragility of the community and locality is pointed to be essential if decentralized forest management is to generate a long-term benefit to local communities.

Objective and Method

The objective of this study is to compare and analyze the different pattern of organization and relationship of the participants in two projects for the Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) sponsored by donor countries in Madagascar.

Ambohilero forest was selected for the study because of the presence of 16 communities supported by the Eco-Regional Initiative (ERI), an USAID-sponsored conservation project and the French Fund for Global Environment projects (FFEM)-a development oriented pilot project. From June to July 2007, data collection procedures involved 9 villages, plot and at households level. Direct observation, semi-structured interviews based on questionnaire guideline were done to key persons and randomly selected head of households' members. A total of 95 of 555 (17.1 %) households' members were interviewed.

Results and Discussion

Ambohilero forest covers an area of 117600ha of which 47.2% is under the Community-based Natural Resource Management. The two projects' approaches and goals tend to be different. The objective of the ERI project is to promote conservation and agricultural development while the FFEM project encourages sustainable use of forest through logging activities. Also, members of the FFEM projects consult directly the executive committee, as opposed to the ERI projects which are more inclined to work indirectly through local NGO.

Preliminary observation of these two projects through perception survey revealed that protecting the traditional use right is the main motivation in the CBNRM representing of almost 70% of the total member. Meanwhile the COBA from the ERI projects seems to be much more aware of the environmental problem than the members from the FFEM project, respectively 27.8% and 7%. I will present further detailed results on problems and relationship of participants during the presentation.

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