



The Nou Joint Forest Management Project  
a model for conservation in partnership



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SOS Sahel Ethiopia



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FARM-Africa Tanzania's Nou Joint Forest Management (JFM) Project has been running since 2001. The Nou Forest lies in the southern part of Babati and Mbulu Districts of Manyara Region, northern Tanzania. The forest is surrounded by eighteen villages and covers 320 square kilometres. It is a source of 28 permanent rivers and directly affects the livelihoods of more than 200,000 people, making its conservation vital to Tanzania.



The project is managed in collaboration with SOS Sahel Ethiopia and is part of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia's broader Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP). This programme also includes Chilimo, Borana and Bonga Forests in Ethiopia. The programme is coordinated by the Participatory Forest Management Unit (PFMU), based in FARM-Africa Ethiopia's country office.

FARM-Africa Tanzania focuses on pastoral development, community forest management and smallholder agriculture. We manage grassroots projects in partnership with communities, government and the private sector. These projects are designed to develop models of best practice so that they can be documented and then replicated by community partners, the government and other organisations.



## The problem

### forest clearance and destruction

More than 70 per cent of Tanzanians live in rural areas and they are largely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. To cope with the low productivity of their land, low crop prices and high costs of agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilisers and improved seeds), farmers are increasingly practising shifting cultivation. This is a type of farming where previously cropped fields are left fallow to recover, while new land is cleared for agriculture.

As the population has increased in many regions, so has the demand for agricultural land. The areas cleared to meet this demand are usually part of the forest. Shifting cultivation, population growth and increased demand for agricultural land are all major and interrelated causes of forest degradation in Tanzania.

Forest destruction affects the environment and natural resources, including wildlife and water resources. In the case of the Nou Forest reserve, unrestrained grazing, illegal timber harvesting and uncontrolled forest fires contributed to forest destruction, leading to soil erosion, silting and bank erosion of streams. Various tree species including *Fagaropsis angolensis*, *Podocarpus spp*, and *Ocote usambalensis* have also been threatened by these activities.

Forests provide livelihoods for millions of poor people across Africa and their destruction, unless addressed, will have devastating impacts in terms of increased rural poverty and hardship. FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia's work in the forestry sector is designed to resolve this problem in a sustainable manner.

## The solution

### participatory forest management

Our response to the problem has been the introduction, adaptation and establishment of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) – an innovative approach which sees governments and communities working in partnership to conserve threatened forest resources.

In Tanzania, the Nou JFM project is a collaboration between forest communities and the government's Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. The project aims to conserve a Catchment Forest of national importance.

The work supports joint management initiatives at the grassroots level. The project is run in partnership with community village governments, village natural resource committees and communities of each of the 18 villages that surround the Nou Catchment Forest Reserve. Working with these groups, the project aims to develop sustainable management plans combining watershed management, rural livelihoods improvement and biodiversity protection.

FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia support this by providing technical expertise to help communities and government staff implement JFM initiatives and other community development interventions.



## What is Joint Forest Management?

Joint Forest Management (JFM) is a specific adaptation of Participatory Forest Management (PFM). In Tanzania, there are two types of PFM.

The first one is the Joint Forest Management system, promoted and implemented in State Forest Reserves owned by the national or local government authorities. JFM develops strong partnerships between forest villages and the government's Forestry Department. Partnership is based around jointly defined roles and responsibilities regarding forest use, protection and development. Under JFM, the user (local communities) and the owner (government) manage the forest resource together. The two parties share the objectives of forest protection and sustainable forest-based livelihoods. Both parties share the costs and benefits of JFM between them.

The other form of PFM is Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) where village forests and plantations are handed over to communities to manage on their own.



**Villagers in awareness-raising meeting at the start of the Nou JFM project in 2002**



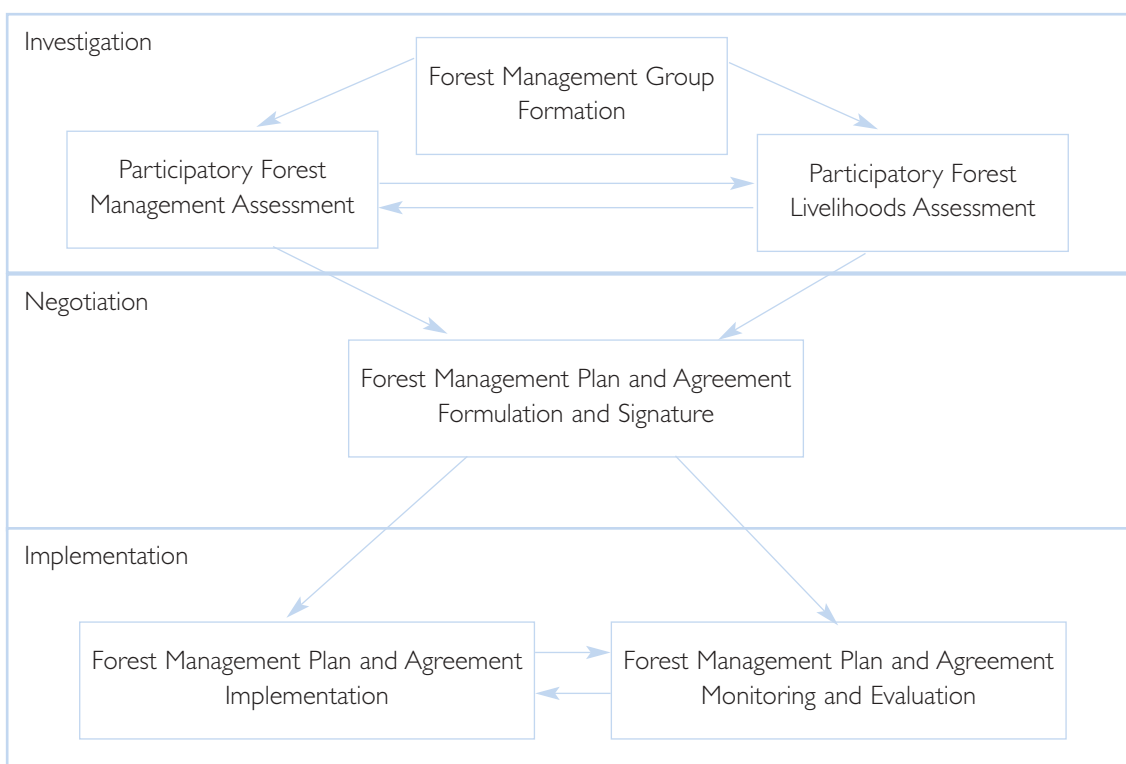
## The PFM process

investigation – negotiation – implementation

The Participatory Forest Management Programme in Tanzania and Ethiopia has made important contributions to the development of PFM in East Africa.

In our model, the PFM process can be divided into three stages.

- **Investigation stage:** gathering information about the forest users and resource use; establishing a forest management group; defining the forest area; assessing the condition of the forest resources; and analysing forest-based livelihood opportunities.
- **Negotiation stage:** the negotiation of forest management plans and agreements (including rights and responsibilities of community and government); securing legal signatures for these agreements.
- **Implementation stage:** community forest management groups implement their forest management plans and uphold the forest management agreements, with full government support. Together, the community and the government monitor and evaluate both the process and the forest resources.





## Working in partnership to make a real difference: impacts of the Nou JFM project

By working in partnership with communities and government, the project has developed effective management systems for forest resource use and sustainable forest-based livelihood options for poor forest communities. This has helped communities establish sustainable livelihoods and develop the skills required to ensure that the Nou Forest will be protected for future generations. There are a number of important impacts from this project.

### **Conserving the forest by developing sustainable forest management systems**

- 18 participatory forest resource assessments have been carried out and recorded.
- 18 participatory forest management plans and agreements have been developed and/or reviewed and refined.
- Forest rights and responsibilities have been clarified for 18 villages.
- Forest management groups have been established and trained in various aspects of forest management in each of the 18 villages.
- Community-level forest management is being implemented within Nou Forest.

### **Developing sustainable livelihoods through complementary natural resource management and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) technologies has been key to the success of the project**

- Appropriate alternative natural resource and forest-based livelihoods and NTFP technologies, such as improved beekeeping

and raffia grass product development, have been established.

- The potential of forest eco-tourism has been reviewed.
- Introduction of farmer-led participatory research crop trials on improved bean, maize and wheat has resulted in new successful technologies being adopted and shared widely within the communities.

### **The project ensures that PFM and livelihood approaches will last well into the future by developing the capacity, skills and expertise of partners, forest management communities and the government's Forestry and Beekeeping Division**

- Human and institutional capacity of both communities and government staff have been developed by providing appropriate training and workshops. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the full involvement of all stakeholders in JFM.
- A range of Participatory Forest Resource Assessment methodologies was established to



serve as management and monitoring tools. These tools help draw forest management prescriptions and gather baseline data so that the community and government have a clear understanding of what the forest was like before activities began. This helps them to assess impacts of forest management on the forest resources. These methods have been adopted by the government offices in Mbulu and Babati districts.



**Farmers' research groups assessing their wheat trials**

- All forest communities surrounding the Nou Forest have greater awareness of their rights, roles and responsibilities regarding the forests, as stipulated in the government's Forest Policy. This has helped community members to understand and carry out community-based forest management much more effectively.
- Communities have developed a range of skills to help them work on their own and develop sustainable forest-based livelihood systems. The establishment of the beekeeping and raffia weavers groups has helped community members access credit from financial institutions, which can then be invested in other natural resource livelihood activities.

**So that others can learn from the success of this approach, the project has encouraged information dissemination, networking and experience sharing**

- Government staff have benefited from exchange visits to various PFM sites in Ethiopia.
- The project supports this exchange of experiences by coordinating meetings of the

Tanzanian Forest Networking Group – a forum created to bring together all those involved in natural forest management in Tanzania, so that they can share experiences and discuss challenges and lessons learnt.

- Exchange visits were organised for community members, including visits to other community groups who have developed new and sustainable livelihood activities.
- Government and community relations have been strengthened by the project's collaborative partnership approach.
- Project lessons have been published and disseminated via various media (e.g. PFMP Newsletters, the PFMP and FARM-Africa websites ([www.pfmp-farmsos.org](http://www.pfmp-farmsos.org); [www.farmafrica.org.uk](http://www.farmafrica.org.uk) ), as well as local Tanzanian newspapers, local radio programmes, Radio One and Radio Tanzania. A Nou JFM documentary has also been produced in Kiswahili and distributed to partners.



## Feedback from the forest communities

*"Since the Nou JFM project started working with us, we have been managing the forest alongside FARM-Africa and the Government. We have learnt that it is the source of our water and how we can supplement our income by other forest-based livelihoods."*

*"The project has trained us how to use and where to place modern beehives. We have seen the importance of using these hives. As a group, we have a plan to buy more hives to increase our income while training other community members to adopt the modern beehives and improve their livelihoods."*

Madunga Beekeeping Group, 2006







## Key lessons learnt

### **Forest conservation can be achieved through the development of sustainable forest management systems**

Establishing PFM/JFM systems is a complex and long-term task. It is not a 'quick fix' solution to problems of over exploitation of forest resources. Success will take time and requires investment by both government and communities so that they can learn, plan, develop, adapt, negotiate and share the responsibility of forest management.

The major lessons learnt are:

- JFM objectives need to be clearly negotiated between the government and community in order to balance the objectives of forest protection and sustainable use; and,
- Government support at different levels and in all stages of the JFM process is essential.

### **The adoption of complementary natural resource management and NTFP technologies**

This is a component of the project providing forest user communities with alternative natural resource-based livelihood options. The major lessons from this show that:

- Alternative livelihoods options should be forest/natural resource-based such as the raffia

and honey initiatives. Livelihoods which are not related to natural resources provide little learning, innovation or impact on the new forest management systems in the future.

- Thorough economic assessment of alternative livelihoods before they are introduced to communities is essential. These should be developed taking into account the technical skills required, economic viability of the activity as well as its market potential. This will ensure that viable options are provided for communities and reduce the likelihood of them returning to unsustainable timber harvesting to support themselves.
- CBFM approaches should be contrasted and compared with JFM approaches in reserve forests to provide lessons, models and evidence to support the development of sustainable livelihood approaches in different policy environments.

### **Capacity of partner organisations developed**

Capacity building of both government staff and community members is essential to develop and sustain new forest management systems/ approaches. This is a sustainable approach ensuring that community members can continue to manage their natural resources, with technical support from the government, once the project phases out.



### **Networking and dissemination of experiences and forest policy development**

Developing strong communication strategies is essential, guaranteeing the most effective way of sharing experiences and lessons learnt.

- The development, application, refinement and government adoption of new Participatory Forest Resource Assessment methodologies are key to the process, enabling communities, government and other partners to understand the impact of PFM.
- More research should be carried out to identify the costs of JFM to communities involved and its contributions to improved livelihoods and poverty reduction.
- A better assessment of the policy and environment framework prior to the start of the implementation process is essential so that the policy gaps and opportunities to engage with policy makers can be identified.



**Mrs Samson knows the value of conserving the forest for future generations**



## Way forward

The Nou JFM project has already delivered a number of important improvements to forest management in Tanzania. However, additional support is needed to ensure that questions that have arisen through the JFM process are addressed and lessons from the project are properly disseminated so that they can be replicated by partners.

To address the major challenges faced during the first phase of project implementation, and to enable replication and scaling-up of projects, the Nou JFM project makes the following recommendations.

- Research the key bottlenecks and barriers in replicating and scaling-up projects. This includes development of legally supported cost-benefit sharing mechanisms between the government and community for JFM.
- Communities also have to benefit from natural resource-based livelihoods. For this to be

successful, the project, in partnership with the government, will need to develop a body of evidence demonstrating sustainable livelihood approaches in JFM and CBFM.

- Work should be conducted on the potential conflicts between the objectives of watershed management and sustainable forest management for poverty alleviation by identifying the best forest-based livelihood options.
- Carefully studied and larger scale sustainable livelihood support activities – such as beekeeping, eco-tourism, marketable raffia products, and selling tree seeds – should be incorporated into management activities.
- Experience and best practice from the programme in both Ethiopia and Tanzania should be documented so that the approach can be replicated by others involved in sustainable forest management.



**Communities working in a tree nursery**

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