

# The progress of participatory forestry in Africa

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## SUMMARY

Participatory forestry has progressed significantly during the last decade in most African countries. A positive trend towards more conducive policies and a growing will for participatory forest management (PFM) can be identified. Institutional and professional capacity is developing, and in many countries people have a positive attitude towards increased stakeholder participation in forest management. Despite this positive trend in many countries the actual implementation does not receive the support that is required for meaningful implementation of the approach.

On the basis of the insight gained through a questionnaire survey, recommendations for active support to the implementation of participatory policy include the following:

- to continue to systematize information gathering and sharing on progress of PFM;
- to ensure that funds are allocated to the implementation of participatory forestry;
- to build capacity at the national and decentralized levels for the implementation of PFM;
- to scale up strategies from pilot cases to the national level;
- to ensure inclusive and secure rights for forest users;
- to ensure intersectoral coordination.

## Introduction

Participatory forestry has emerged during the past decade as an effective approach to be used by local communities in taking part in decision-making to ensure the sustainable management and use of forest resources that are key to their livelihoods. At present, although in varying degrees, all African countries have experienced a move towards more people's involvement in forest management.

The numerous publications available about different aspects involved in participatory forestry and best practices are an important support in the implementation of the approach. Yet little systematic documentation is available about the actual state of advancement of participatory forestry in the African continent. Such information is essential as a means of facilitating learning and building on the experiences of others. In addition, it serves as a realistic basis for planning and for policy formulation; for identifying

issues that need more active support from governments and national and international organizations; and for monitoring the process of change over the years.

The First International Workshop on Community Forestry in Africa, held in Banjul, the Gambia in April 1999, was aimed at stimulating the exchange and flow of information and a mutual learning process. One of the recommendations made at this workshop was that a country status report on participatory forestry be prepared every five years to provide better insight into the status of implementation of the approach in Africa. The present document is a first attempt to provide such an overview. One of its aims is to formulate recommendations for the use of governments and donor organizations in order to enable the advancement of participatory forestry for sustainable use of forest resources in Africa. The present document serves as a basis for this discussion.

## Methodology used

This report is based on a questionnaire survey carried out during 2001. The questionnaire was circulated to government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in forestry in all African countries, to assess the level of implementation of participatory forestry at the national level. A total of 30 countries were included in the questionnaire survey (see Annex 1).

This specific method of information gathering has advantages and disadvantages, and the reader should be aware of both. The strength of the method is the fact that it is a systematic way of gathering information on a range of issues. Furthermore, a questionnaire survey has a low cost and is a relatively easy way to obtain a general overview of a situation in a large area. Compared with more intensive methods of information gathering (such as interviews, case studies or group discussions), there is a considerable risk of differences of interpretation among respondents in the questionnaire method, and this results in information that is difficult to judge and to compare. It is also more difficult to obtain complete information, and there may be severe bias in the selection of respondents. Since the answers are written, some difficulty arises in assessing the value and precision of the information. However, if these factors are kept in mind, the method is adequate for obtaining a general overview to serve as a basis for further discussion and investigation.

## Definition of participatory forestry

A plethora of related terminology has evolved from the various attempts to achieve increased stakeholder participation in forest management. Concepts such as community forestry, community-based forest management, social forestry, joint forest management, collaborative forest management, common property forest management and participatory forestry all refer to approaches with some level of local stakeholder involvement in forestry activities. In this report, the term "participatory forestry" is regarded as an umbrella concept covering all of the different types of forestry activities that involve local stakeholders, especially villagers, in different degrees of decision-making authority. On the one hand, there is an advantage in adopting such a broad definition for a study aimed at obtaining a general overview, because it can include experiences from countries that differ in their approach and does not preclude any experience that may be of interest. On the other hand, its all-inclusiveness implies that traditional indigenous practices and international donor-guided and government-supported experiences are included in the definition, together

with those of private forestry and local timber companies. This lack of focus may result in some vagueness as regards insight on the advancement of participatory forestry.

## Organization of the report

The report is divided into two parts. The objective of the general overview on the advancement of PFM in Africa is to show the extent and importance of experiences in participatory forestry and the seriousness of political will to support its advancement.

The second section concentrates on constraints and opportunities for PFM, as identified by the respondents for their national context. This insight can be a valuable contribution to the discussion on strategies to improve PFM.

The report ends with some recommendations for further action and the identification of issues that require further discussion and investigation.

## Overview of the progress of participatory forestry

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### General information

#### *Total forest area and area under participatory management*

The data on the total area covered with forest vegetation and the percentage of this area that is managed under some sort of participatory arrangement (see Table 1) provide a good basic indication of the significance of PFM in each of the countries. However, there is considerable variation among respondents in the data on total forest area. Considerable variation can also be observed relative to official data on forest cover published in *Forest Outlook Study for Africa* (FOSA, 2001). This variation can be seen partly as a result of differences in the definition of forest; by some definitions, forest area is limited exclusively to high growth forest, whereas other definitions include wooded land or tree savannah. In general, the data obtained from the PFM questionnaire show higher participation than the FOSA data. This may indicate that PFM often takes place in areas not included in the official data on forest cover, as managed by the forest departments and reflected in the outlook study.

The information on the area under PFM is less comprehensive. This may partly be the result of a lack of clarity in the question asked, but it is probably also

**TABLE 1 • Total forest area and area under PFM in Africa**

COUNTRY AREA	LAND AREA	FOREST AREA IN FOSA*	RESULT FROM QUESTIONNAIRE				
			AREA 1 000 ha	FOREST AREA 1 000 ha	VARIATION AS COMPARED WITH FOSA 1 000 ha	AREA UNDER PFM 1 000 ha	DEMARCATED AREA 1 000 ha
Benin	11 063	2 650	7 030	4 380	2 267	2 168.00	32.2
Burkina Faso	27 360	7 089	n.a.**	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Burundi	2 568	94	171	77	64	n.a.	37.4
Cameroon	46 540	23 858	19 598	-4 260	6 173	n.a.	31.5
Chad	125 920	12 692	21 754	9 062	23	n.a.	0.1
Comoros	186	8	12	4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Congo	34 150	22 060	22 000	-60	19 800	n.a.	90.0
Congo, DR	226 705	135 207	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Côte d'Ivoire	31 800	7 117	5 500	-1 617	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Ethiopia	110 430	4 593	4 505	-88	450	50.00	10.0
Gambia	1 000	481	500	19	30	5.00	6.0
Ghana	22 754	6 335	2 000	-4 335	400	0.20	20.0
Guinea-Bissau	3 612	2 187	2 034	-153	30	0.50	1.5
Kenya	56 915	17 096	37 600	20 504	250		0.7
Lesotho	3 035	14	52	38	1	0.80	1.9
Madagascar	58 154	11 727	12 000	273	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Malati	9 409	2 562	2 642	80	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Mali	122 019	13 186	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Morocco	44 630	3 025	8 000	4 975	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Mozambique	78 409	30 601	62 000	31 399	1 000	150.00	1.6
Niger	126 670	1 328	8 000	6 672	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Senegal	19 252	6 205	18 201	11 996	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Sierra Leone	7 162	1 055	6 305	5 250	15	n.a.	0.2
South Africa	121 758	8 917	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Sudan	237 600	61 627	46 800	-14 827	124	12.50	0.3
Togo	5 439	510	3 430	2 920	5	5.00	0.1
Tunisia	16 362	510	971	461	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Uganda	19 964	4 190	4 949	759	3	3.00	0.1
Zimbabwe	38 685	19 040	19 000	-40	8 800	88.00	46.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2 978 394</b>	<b>649 866</b>	<b>1 284 901</b>	<b>1 043 336</b>	<b>39 435</b>	<b>2 483.00</b>	

\* Forest Outlook Study for Africa, 2001

\*\* n.a. = no answer.

the result of a lack of information available at the country level on the actual area under participatory forestry. Nevertheless, it can be noted in the column showing the area under PFM as a percentage of overall area that the area under participatory forestry usually represents a relatively small part of the total forest area. Only Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, the Congo and Ghana are positive exceptions, with more than 20 percent of total forest area under some form of participatory management.

It is important to gather more accurate data on the area under PFM in order to allow for comparison over several years. To make this possible, it is necessary to agree on the definitions of forest area and of participatory forestry.

### ***The introduction of participatory forestry***

All countries mentioned the existence of participatory forestry at present. The Congo was the only country where the experience was not ongoing, as it had been limited to one project in the mid-1980s. As a general trend, PFM was introduced mainly in the first half of the 1990s. Nevertheless, earlier experiences were mentioned in some countries; this is probably because of the broad definition used in the survey, which includes many forms of traditional forest management or social reforestation activities.

It would have been interesting to have had information on participatory forestry from the first years of its introduction in order to observe the process of implementation. At present, roughly one decade after the concept of participatory forestry gained momentum on the African continent, it is appropriate to evaluate the results achieved so far and to identify strategies to facilitate the further advancement of participatory forestry.

Contrary to what is often believed, formal experience with participatory forestry is recent in most African

countries. Given the complex process involved in the change from state-managed forestry towards more local-level participation in forest management, it is crucial to acknowledge that the concept still needs active support in order to achieve meaningful implementation and to exploit its full.

### ***Parties supporting participatory forestry***

In almost all countries, the government, bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs provide some kind of support to participatory forestry. This report aims to shed some light on the aspects of this support. However, a questionnaire survey is not the best means of gaining detailed insight into local processes.

### ***Special regulation and legislation for participation in forest management***

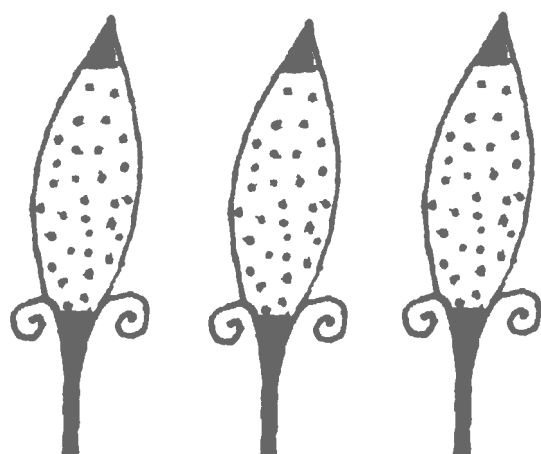
One basic manner in which the government supports participation is by formulating specific legislation and regulations for participatory forestry. Almost all countries have some sort of specific legislation or regulations. Respondents from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe were the only ones to mention the absence of legislation and regulations related to participatory forestry, which is a constraint for local-level participation in forest management. However, it is encouraging to see that most countries have now taken steps to introduce PFM, although these initiatives need to be strengthened further.

### **Conditions of PFM**

#### ***The condition of forests handed over to communities***

The quality of the forest resources managed under participatory forestry is an indication of the government's commitment to the sharing of responsibilities and benefits of forest management. If forests that are in good condition are available, but a country designates only degraded forest resources for management by local stakeholders, the government's commitment should be questioned critically. The government might simply be aiming to reduce the costs of management of these non-productive resources, and for local stakeholders the benefits from the forest resources might not show a notable increase. This notion does not deny the importance of participation for the local population in terms of empowerment and livelihood strategies.

However, an examination of the information gathered on the conditions of forest resources under PFM does not show a general trend in a clear manner. Equal



numbers of respondents indicated that the forests managed under participatory forestry are “degraded”, or in “fairly good” or “good” condition. It would be interesting to compare these data with the actual quality of available forest resources in each country.

### **Formal and informal rights**

Under participatory forestry, most African countries provide some kind of formal management rights for the local stakeholders concerned. In 20 percent of the cases, both formal and informal rights exist, that is, some users have formal rights and others use the forest on the basis of informal rights. Only for Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Kenya did respondents say that no formal rights exist and that PFM is not recognized by law.

Many issues need to be understood in order to gain more profound insight into the real state of advancement of PFM in any country. For example, it is essential to comprehend how formal and informal rights are combined in practice; under which circumstances forest resources are managed under formal or informal rights; and what kind of de facto security is provided to the holder by both types of rights. On the one hand, it should be kept in mind that formal rights do not necessarily imply secure rights. Some informal indigenous de facto arrangements may provide a more secure right base than other formally documented and recognized rights. On the other hand, informal status makes rights fragile when they are challenged by changing resource use situations or new national policies.

### **Right-holding parties**

Villages (or communities) and user groups are the parties most frequently mentioned in terms of right holders under PFM. Nevertheless, in addition to those groups, individuals or households are also in a position to obtain such rights in 12 countries. The specific characteristics of these individual rights, and the question of whether they can indeed be considered participatory management or are, rather, a situation of private forest ownership, needs more investigation in each specific case.

### **The basis of rights and their duration**

Formal use and management rights can be established on the basis of various arrangements with varying degrees of security of access to the forest resource for the right-holding party.

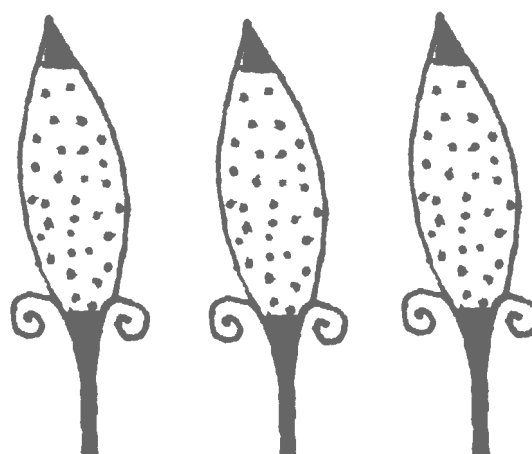
The situation that occurs most frequently in Africa is one in which rights are based on a temporal agreement or contract, in combination with a management plan. It is important to note that some

countries, including Lesotho, Mozambique, Cameroon, Benin, the Gambia and Ghana, have reached the stage of granting permanent title over forest resources. In many cases, this titling of land also requires a management plan in order to ensure sustainable management of the resource.

The duration of arrangements regarding rights is another index of security of access to forest resources for the people who hold those rights. In addition to countries that grant permanent land or resource ownership titles, there are various other situations, the most common being the combination of either a contract or agreement with a management plan for a period from five to 15 years.

The granting of temporal rights does not necessarily indicate a lack of commitment to participatory forestry. In the light of the fact that most countries have adopted participatory forestry relatively recently, it might mean that governments want to experiment cautiously with the new approach to see how it functions and what effects it has on the resource and the economy. However, it is important to be aware of the danger of granting short-term rights. A short-term guarantee of benefit tends to favour non-sustainable use of resources. In other words, it may provoke the opposite of what was intended and completely undermine the concept of PFM.

Surprisingly, some respondents mention agreements or contracts that are permanent in duration. One should be especially cautious about interpreting this as a situation of secure access to the forest resources, for it may also mean that the duration is not mentioned explicitly in the contract, leaving the access rights vulnerable to changes in the resource use situation or the national policy. A more detailed study will be needed to understand the security of access provided by a certain set of arrangements in a specific country and under specific circumstances.



## **The policy environment**

### ***Existence of land-use mapping***

Land-use mapping provides a sound way for securing rights under participatory forestry. If land-use mapping is used as a key instrument for participatory forestry, and if this type of land use is recognized by law, rights are generally a more secure basis for livelihoods than in the case when nothing is set out in official documents. In half of the replies, it is stated that formal land-use mapping forms a basis for participatory forestry and, in all but one of these cases, participatory forestry is established and/or recognized by law. In some cases, a formal land-use mapping does not exist but participatory forestry is recognized as an official land-use type by law. When PFM is not included in land-use mapping, this makes way for the possibility of manipulation of the area.

### ***Possibility of by-laws***

The possibility of making by-laws is an indication of the extent to which right holders can decide about the use and management of the forest resource. All respondents, with the exception of one in Benin, mention the possibilities of formulating by-laws. A study of the specific cases in which such by-laws can be formulated would yield interesting information on the actual meaning of these data.

### ***Government investments in participatory forestry***

The formulation of specific legislation or regulations for participatory forestry, as already discussed, is an important first step towards PFM. Nevertheless, in effectively implementing participatory forest policy and achieving real changes in resource management, an investment in financial and human resources is essential. The existence of a special service for participatory forestry and the allocation of staff and budget are indications of the government's serious commitment to participatory forestry and of the chance that positive results can be achieved.

The existence of a special service for participatory forestry was mentioned in 25 countries (see Table 2). Shaded areas in Table 2 indicate services that are explicitly directed at participatory forestry.

Given the recent introduction of participatory forestry in many countries and the considerable changes required to make it work, the implementation of the approach requires considerable investment. Especially in the initial period, a special service may be essential for successful implementation. It seems positive that the number of countries that have such a

special service for PFM is surprisingly high. However, closer examination of the information provided shows that in many cases the general forestry department is named as that special service. Only the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Morocco, South Africa, Cameroon and Uganda have a special service that is explicitly aimed at promoting participatory forestry. It certainly requires more in-depth study to understand the status of PFM in the other countries. It could mean that participatory forestry is mainstreamed in the forest policy of the country. However, it may be true that participatory forestry is paid lip service in policy, but that the will to allocate the necessary staff and financial means for its implementation is weak.

### ***Officially registered committees, user groups or associations***

The official registration of the social group of local stakeholders involved in PFM is a further indication of the government's commitment to sharing or devolving management responsibilities over forest resources. Through registration, the group obtains legal status as managers of the forest resource. The possibility of registration for local management groups or associations exists in 23 countries, under various names. The data on the number of groups are not complete but show considerable variation, from thousands of "groupements forestiers" mentioned in Burkina Faso to some dozen in Benin, for example. The smaller numbers seem closer to the average.

### ***Entitlements of right-holding parties***

In addition to the type of rights arrangements and to their duration, as already discussed, the extent of the entitlements of right holders is a clear indication of the scope of the right base. For example, if a community is only allowed to harvest products for its own consumption, the rights of this community result in less benefit to them than if they were allowed commercial use of the resource and there were no other rights over it.

In 21 countries the government grants exclusive rights to local communities, and in the same number of countries right holders are granted commercial rights, meaning that they are allowed to sell part of the products harvested. In most cases where the products are specified, this concerns a multitude of products, from edible forest products and medicinal plants to timber and construction wood. However, this type of use is subject to national regulations on the use of forest products and on the quantity of the products to be extracted from the forest.

**TABLE 2 • Overview of special services,  
number of staff and budget for PFM in Africa**

COUNTRY	SPECIAL SERVICE FOR PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY	NO. OF STAFF	% OF STAFF	BUDGET FOR PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY IN US\$
Burkina Faso	Direction Générale des Eaux et Forêts: Foresterie Villageoise et Aménagement Forestier, Faune, et Chasse Pêche	800	100.00	662 000
Burundi	Service Développement et extension du patrimoine forestier	12	6.00	No
Cameroon	MINEF, direction des forêts	n.a.*	n.a.	n.a.
Chad	Division Forêts et reboisement	13	4.30	No
Congo	La direction des Forêts	7	1.00	Very small
Côte d'Ivoire	Société de développement des Forêts (Sodefor)	1	0.03	No
Gambia	<b>Community Forestry and Extension Unit</b>	4	1.54	1 683
Ghana	<b>Collaborative Forest Management Unit</b>	7	0.23	10 000
Guinea-Bissau	<b>Division de Foresterie Communautaire</b>	3	1.17	Not specified
Kenya	<b>Collaborative management section of the forestry department</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Lesotho	<b>Social Forestry Section</b>	143	97.30	500 000
Madagascar	Gestion durable des ressources forestières	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Malawi	Forestry Extension service	75	12.80	Yes, not specified
Mali	<b>Unité de gestion forestière UGF</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Morocco	<b>Service de l'approche participative et de la communication</b>	5	16.70	No
Mozambique	<b>Community Forest Unit</b>	26	6.50	82 000
Niger	Service peuplement naturels et Appui a la gestion de terroirs	4	-	862 375
Senegal	Direction des Eaux, Forêts, Chasse et conservation des sols. Division suivi-évaluation, Formation Sensibilisation	11	2.10	No
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	350 000
South Africa	<b>Participatory Forest Management task team</b>	9	1.40	In total budget
Sudan	Forest Extension Unit	48	1.20	3 478
Togo	Within the département de l'environnement et des ressources forestières, a unit is developing the concept of participatory forestry	33	3.50	Government contribution to projects
Tunisia	Establishing a special service in the direction de la organización de la population	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Uganda	<b>Collaborative Forest management Unit and CFM Committee</b>	40	5.10	No
Zimbabwe	Forest Extension Service (operates on the basis of participatory forestry)	70	14.00	1 000 000

\* n.a. = no answer.

In most countries there exists the possibility of establishing concessions within areas under participatory forestry. There is some contradiction in the answers for Benin, Cameroon, the Congo, Kenya and Madagascar, where some respondents state that this possibility exists, whereas others deny its existence. Further enquiry is needed in these cases. Another issue that needs further attention is the question of who grants concessions and what impact they have on the community and the forest resource.

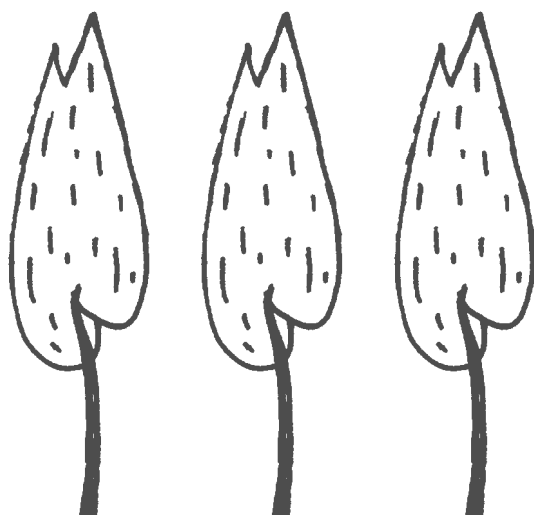
In general, the entitlements are surprisingly exhaustive, with more than 20 out of a total of 29 countries granting exclusive rights and commercial rights. This is cause for optimism about the progress of PFM in Africa.

### **Financial incentives for PFM**

Some kinds of financial incentives for PFM were reported in 20 countries. These can be summarized under the following four broad categories.

Reduced prices for inputs for PFM:

- loans for seedlings and payment of land rent after the first harvesting (Uganda);
- refunds of reforestation costs (Sierra Leone);
- free seedlings (Lesotho);
- forest materials at half price (Kenya);
- national forest fund finances extension (the Gambia);
- development projects (Ghana);
- formation, credit, facilitation of access to distribution channels (Senegal);
- grants (South Africa);
- some material incentives (Chad).



Reduced taxation:

- positive taxation on participatory forest products (Senegal);
- reduction of tax on transportation and commercialization (the Niger);
- no taxes to be paid by communities (Mozambique);
- fiscal relief (Cameroon, Madagascar);
- reduction of taxes (the Congo, Mali).

Share in revenues from forest resource:

- flow of part of forest revenues back to community (the Congo, Guinea-Bissau);
- division of revenues from commercialization of fuelwood etc. among community, state and forest (Benin);
- income from exploitation and ecotourism activities (Madagascar);
- allotment to community of a portion of fines from illegal activities (Senegal).

Preferential exploitation rights:

- preferential forest royalties (Senegal);
- preferential exploitation rights if the forest cover is being restored (Burundi);
- preferential exploitation rights for communities (Burkina Faso).

In order to judge the true value of these regulations it would be essential to study under what circumstances and through what procedures incentives are obtained by the local stakeholders.

## **Opportunities and constraints for participatory forestry**

In efforts to enhance PFM, the identification of opportunities and constraints provides a basis for defining future action. Opportunities are defined as those circumstances that should be used to advantage, and constraints as those that require extra attention in the attempt to achieve more stakeholder involvement in the management of the forest. The array of factors that constrain or provide opportunity for PFM reflect general requirements for participatory forestry. Three broad categories have been identified to structure the range of factors: government, resources and people. These categories are very much interrelated, as are many of the factors mentioned in each of them. The opportunities and constraints that were indicated most often are as follows. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of countries in which each was mentioned.



## Opportunities for PFM

Government provides the following opportunities for PFM:

- new conducive policy environment (18);
- growing political will (six).

Resources that provide opportunities for PFM are:

- specialized institutions for PFM (seven);
- growing professional capacity (five);
- available forest resources (five).

People provide opportunities for PFM through:

- a generally positive attitude towards PFM and a motivated population (19);
- perception of PFM as an opportunity to improve forest management (six);
- positive experience with PFM (seven).

These factors indicate a change towards a more enabling environment for participatory forestry. In practice, however, many constraints are also still encountered, and they need to be addressed in order to take advantage of the possibilities.

## Constraints to PFM

### Government-related constraints

Government presents the following constraints for PFM:

- lack of conducive policy or even obstructing policy legislation (nine);
- lack of political will (eight);
- general organizational problems (corruption, bureaucratic obstacles, low salaries) (six).

### Resource-related constraints

Resource-related constraints include:

- lack of funds allocated to PFM (15);
- insufficient human resources for implementation of PFM (13);
- severe pressure on forest resources (six).

### People-related constraints

Many different factors referring to attitudes and ways of thinking that constrain the advancement of participatory forestry were mentioned. None of them was particularly dominant, however. The factors mentioned include:

- weak social organization;
- lack of awareness of participatory forest management;
- a suspicious attitude towards the forest service;
- lack of knowledge of legislation.

## Other constraints

A fourth category of constraints can be identified; it refers to factors outside the direct influence of forest policy and the people involved in forest management, and it includes political instability, unrest and war, illiteracy, poverty and the economic situation of the country.

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Some general conclusions

Participatory forestry has progressed significantly during the last decade in most African countries. A positive trend towards more conducive policies and a growing will for PFM can be identified. Institutional and professional capacity is developing, and in many countries people have a positive attitude towards increased stakeholder participation in forest management. Despite this positive trend, in many countries the actual implementation of PFM is not given the support it requires, thereby hampering the meaningful implementation of the approach.

Table 3 presents a qualification of the degree to which the policy environment is conducive to participatory forestry in the various countries that were included in the questionnaire survey. It should be noted that this is a broad classification on the basis of the aspects included in the survey.

One trend that seems to be evident in Table 3 is that Sahelian countries tend to have a better policy environment for participatory forestry than other regions of the continent. It is possible that this trend may exist because Sahelian countries receive more donor support to meet the challenges of drought and desertification; because fuelwood shortages in these regions give rise to increased local interest in forest management; and because there is more competition with private sector forestry for forest resources in well-endowed countries. However, identification of the cause can only be conjecture at this time.



**TABLE 3 • Qualification of the policy environment for participatory forestry in Africa**

QUALIFICATION	COUNTRIES	DESCRIPTION
<b>Conducive</b>	Burkina Faso Chad Gambia Ghana Niger Sudan	The policy environment is conducive to the implementation of PFM and provides a secure right situation for right holders
<b>Favourable</b>	Ethiopia Lesotho Mozambique Mali Senegal	Almost all requirements as investigated are conducive to the implementation of PFM and a secure right situation for right holders
<b>Partial</b>	Benin Cameroon Congo Guinea-Bissau Malawi Madagascar South Africa Togo Zimbabwe	Basic requirements are in place, but other essentials are still lacking or underdeveloped
<b>Weak</b>	Burundi Côte d'Ivoire Kenya Sierra Leone Tunisia Uganda	Despite some rudimentary provisions towards PFM, in these countries the most basic requirements are absent. Policy environment does not provide secure rights over forest resources.
<b>Absent</b>	Congo, DR Morocco	No provision whatsoever has been made to enable PFM

## Recommendations

On the basis of the insight gained from the questionnaire survey, it is possible to identify the following important issues that would actively support the implementation of participatory policy.

### *In-depth follow-up of this survey*

One of the striking findings of the present survey is the difficulty of obtaining accurate information on the actual advancement of PFM. There is a need for a further follow-up survey to monitor and evaluate fully the situation of PFM, to be repeated at regular intervals, i.e. every five years. This survey should be increasingly in-depth and should explicitly assess the

impact of participatory forestry on poverty alleviation and forest resources. It would provide an excellent tool for policy-makers, civil society and forest administrations to use in defining strategies to support the advancement of participatory forestry and its contribution to poverty alleviation.

### *Funds allocated to the implementation of participatory forestry*

Participatory forestry is often seen as a means to reduce the cost of forest management to the government. However, this is a mistaken idea, especially in the first phase of implementation. The decentralization of forest management is a process of change that needs active support in terms of

human and financial resources. When a progressive policy is adopted, but governments abstain from allocating the necessary funds to the appropriate level, the forest management situation cannot be expected to change, nor can local stakeholders be expected to assume responsibilities for forest management.

### ***Capacity building at the national and decentralized levels***

PFM requires specific capacities at all the levels involved. To support implementation, it is crucial to continue to provide opportunities for building the specific capacities needed to support PFM.

### ***Scaling-up strategies from pilot cases to the national level***

With some positive exceptions, in most countries the actual extent of PFM in terms of hectares and number of people involved is still limited. A questionnaire survey does not reveal under what circumstances these pilot experiences take place, but the questions

about scaling-up and about sustainability of these experiences need to be addressed at all levels.

### ***Inclusiveness and security of rights***

Although the information gathered in the questionnaire survey gives a rather positive image of the devolution of rights under participatory forestry, it is necessary to take a critical view of excessive optimism about property regimes and security of rights. Although rights are exclusive under participatory forestry in most countries, and commercial exploitation is allowed, this does not necessarily signify true devolution of the rights. It is important to assess the security and benefit of each specific right situation and define ways of improving it.

### ***Intersectoral coordination***

In the implementation of participatory forestry, it is important to realize that forest management does not take place in a vacuum, but is instead influenced by other national policies and local realities. In this light it is important to strive for consistency in policy and legislation and search for synergies between sectors.

## **Annex 1**

### **Countries included in the questionnaire survey on participatory forestry in Africa**

The questionnaire was sent to 54 African countries (with the exception of Réunion and Saint Helena). This report is based on the information received from the following 30 countries.

Benin	Gambia	Mozambique
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Niger
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Senegal
Cameroon	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Chad	Lesotho	South Africa
Comoros	Madagascar	Sudan
Congo	Malawi	Togo
Congo, Democratic Republic	Mali	Tunisia
Côte d'Ivoire	Morocco	Uganda
Ethiopia	Mauritius	Zimbabwe

No information was received from the following 24 countries and regions and therefore could not be included in this report.

Algeria	Eritrea	Rwanda
Angola	Gabon	Sao Tome Principe
Botswana	Guinea	Seychelles
Cape Verde	Liberia	Somalia
Central African Republic	Libya, Arab Jamahiriya	Swaziland
Djibouti	Mauritania	Tanzania, United Republic
Egypt	Namibia	West Sahara
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria	Zambia