



Executive summary

End-term Review

“NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FOR
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
KIGOMA REGION (NRM-LED)”

Tanzania

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This review is realised as part of the cooperation between Tanzania and Belgium.

This report has been drawn up by independent external experts.

The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Enabel, the Belgian Development Cooperation or the authorities of the countries concerned.

Presentation of the evaluation

The End Term Review (ETR) of the NRM4LED project was organised in October 2019 (15 days – R1-R2 – R4) and in December 2019 (9 days - R3-R4 + Project management). Visits to all project districts included focus group discussions with beneficiaries and exchanges with project and district staff, as well as with a few resource persons. A debriefing was organised in Kigoma on December 2 and in Brussels on January 15, 2020.

The overall objective of the project (September 2014 - February 2020) is “To ensure that ecosystem resilience is maintained to sustainably provide socio-economic and environmental benefits to local communities in Kigoma Region”. Its specific objective is “An improved enabling environment and strengthened capacities for sustainable management of Natural Resources (NR) linked to an equitable Local Economic Development (LED) result in increased benefits for the communities of selected landscapes in Kigoma Region”. The target group of the project are communities in 36 villages and Local Government Authorities (LGA) in 6 districts in Kigoma Region, Tanzania.

The objective of the ETR is Steering – Learning – Accountability. In addition to the 5 OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the ETR main evaluation question is “To what extent the project contributed to create conditions and capacity for sustainable Natural Resources Management (NRM) in which user groups and LGA derive sustainable tangible and legitimate income in the selected landscapes?”

1.1 Context

Kigoma Region is situated in northwest Tanzania, on Lake Tanganyika, and shares a land border with Burundi and DRC. The remoteness of the region from the larger population centers located further to the east of the country and less frequent travel opportunities, especially by air, rail and road, have resulted in low exposure, limited availability of trained staff and NGOs operating in the Region. Due to continuing political instability in Burundi and DRC, the number of refugees seeking shelter in Kigoma remains high. A large part of Kigoma Region (20,000km² out of 45,000 km²) is covered by forests and water bodies.

1.1.1 Project Implementation

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) comprised a national Project Manager, an international Co-Manager, 3 to 5 National Technical Advisors (NTA) and 3 District Technical Advisors (DTA). A District Facilitation Team (DFT) and District Focal Point (DFP), all made up of district officers, implemented most of the field activities. The project had a budget of € 5 million (initially € 6 million).

1.1.2 The 4 Result areas

Four results areas were defined in the TFF: (1) A Decision Support System (DSS) on NRM for Local Government Authorities (LGA) established, enabling mainstreaming in decentralized planning of key issues; (2) Improved governance and sustainable management of NR by local institutions and key resource users; (3) Key resource users, transformers and traders of NR derive sustainable and equitable benefits from NR and (4) Strengthened institutional capacities and accountability of key stakeholders for improved gender sensitive NR governance, landscape coordination and implementation of CBNRM.

2 Results and conclusions

2.1 Relevance (score A)

The NRM4LED project is fully relevant in terms of Tanzanian policies on forestry, fisheries, wildlife, environmental management, land tenure and land use, as well as with decentralisation policy. The project is also in line with the Belgian Development Cooperation and with the Strategic Notes on Environment, Agriculture and Food Security, and Private Sector Development.

The project takes into account the natural environment and resources in Kigoma Region as well as opportunities to develop income generating activities, IGA, (i.a. beekeeping, fisheries and timber) and increase revenues for LGA. It is a response to specific challenges that the region faces (i.a. population growth, refugee flows, forest encroachment, and overfishing) and the clear need to protect its natural resources. The Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) approach combined with Village Land Use Planning (VLUP) offers 36 villages in 6 districts the opportunity to better manage their land, forest or aquatic resources through better planning and improved local organisation.

2.2 Efficiency (score C)

The overall efficiency of the project is rather weak due to a delay in the project start-up.

The Joint Local Partner Committee (JLPC) was co-chaired by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) and ENABEL and included key stakeholders from the Regional Administrative Secretary (Kigoma), the Local Government Ministry (PORALG) and the Ministry of Finance. Strategic issues were discussed in meetings, but insufficient strategic guidance was given to the PIU on issues such as Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) and LED, amongst others.

The PIU comprised relevant complementary expertise but was handicapped by belated recruitment and instability of project staff, mainly for LED, CEPA and M&E. The PIU suffered from a lack of consensus and coherent guidance from project management on strategic issues such as CEPA, developing a DSS and pursuing forest product value chains. The DFT directly facilitated village level processes but with only limited involvement of ward level officers in facilitation and monitoring. Paraprofessionals were trained in CBNRM, LED and gender.

NRM4LED resources were spread too thinly across a large region. The selection of sometimes non-adjacent villages was not conducive to the efficient organisation of field visits. Village level processes were conducted participatorily and overall implementation of the 6-step CBNRM process was relatively quick. However, sporadic delays occurred as a result of boundary conflicts, bureaucracy and occasional limited availability of district and PIU staff. The elaboration of Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCRO) was time consuming and expensive. Efficiency improvements from utilizing Internet based Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST) technologies was not fully realized. A total of 34 Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFR), with a total coverage of 30,000 ha, were declared across 6 landscapes. However, the average forest area covered, at less than 300 ha, was smaller than the 500 – 1,000 ha minimum area recommended in the TFF. The relatively small VLFR areas limited possibilities for LED.

The initial M&E system involved the use of complex tools and progress indicators (% increase) for the different outputs but without a clear list of targets for achievements. District

and Regional Facilitation teams organised monitoring visits, but there was no systematic data collection on outputs and outcomes, apart from a mini-survey that was carried out in mid-2019 and for which data analysis was never implemented.

Total expenditures up to February 2020 are TZS 12, 5 billion, or 97% of the TZS 13 billion budget.

2.3 Effectiveness (Score B)

Overall effectiveness is good but unfortunately it is not possible to compare actual outputs and outcomes with expected outputs and outcomes, due to the weak monitoring system.

The capacities of the DFT staff have clearly improved, not only in the fields of NRM and LED, but also in the broader fields of gender, conflict management and business development.

The project successfully sensitized the population on the value of natural resources and the importance of their protection. Processes of (1) elaborating 24 Village Land Use Plans (VLUP), 34 VLFR (2) creation of different committees such as 27 VLUM, 28 VNRC and of 8 BMUs as well as the approval of bylaws by full councils, went well with a large participation of villagers. A total of 3,691 CCRO were prepared and 1,994 printed (compared to 7,150 CCRO planned). However, as of December 2019 close to 90% of the CCRO were not yet issued to beneficiaries and 24 VLUPS could not yet be approved. Based on the management plans, conservation activities have started at village level, such as with the organisation of patrols in village forests and on the lakes. However, testing of the capacity of these village institutions to take more complex decisions in order to address difficult management challenges such as encroachment, uncontrolled fires and marketing of NR products, has not yet occurred. Training on conflict management was much appreciated by district staff and villagers.

In the field of LED, there was no consistent strategy or value chain approach. The training of 90 IGA groups and 94 VICOBA members strengthened basic business knowledge and capacity while the Business Plan Competition (BPC) and the Micro-Projects Co-Funding Scheme identified and financially supported 18 SMEs and 38 IGA groups. Direct revenues to village governments were limited to the contracted sale of poles and fuelwood to refugee camps. Nonetheless, due to an ongoing favourable trade environment, NRM dependent beekeeping and fisheries activities continued to provide tangible rewards at the household level and to attract new entrants into these sectors.

The ETR team finds that the MRM4LED should have been better linked with to national level processes in order to effectively address such policy level issues as encroachment, bureaucratic regulations and improving law enforcement and thereby creating a level playing field.

2.4 Impact (Score B)

Awareness has been strengthened at all levels on the importance of natural resources, both from the conservancy point of view and the importance of natural resources for economic activities.

The DFT gained experience in facilitating both villages based and larger stakeholder processes. However, the expected increase of budget spending on NRM proved to be unrealistic in view of existing regulations and weak district resources. The training on conflict management has reduced the number of local conflicts.

The Village Land Use Plans (VLUP) and land titles (CCRO), once approved, will lead to a stable access and use of land resources. However, the CCRO exercise largely covered

residential plots (almost 70%) instead of plots that are more sensitive to ecological deterioration or plots for groups of vulnerable people. The 6 step CBNRM process led to the protection of forests. VNRC-led patrolling by villagers led to the control of forest encroachment. Seven villages received village revenues from the sale of poles and fuelwood to agencies that service refugee camps. However, NRM4LED did not intervene in the sustainable exploitation of timber and charcoal. Working conditions and hygiene at landing sites were improved together with better fish processing techniques. There is clear awareness of the need to protect breeding sites. BMU-led patrolling by fishermen led to the reduction of illegal fishing and the use of illegal nets.

The village processes on NR protection created enabling conditions for income increase from fisheries, forestry and beekeeping. The basic management and technical capacities of SMEs and IGAs/VICOBAs is improved and they gained access to equipment and working capital. Effects on incomes from the timber and charcoal trades are limited. The project management and district officers do not have comprehensive, quantitative information on revenues from NR but focus group discussions with DFT and villagers mentioned positive impacts on livelihoods.

2.5 Sustainability (Score C)

The low score for sustainability is largely influenced by the fact that although all 24 VLUPs were approved by the respective village assemblies, and the associated bylaws approved by the district councils, all 24 VLUPs were rejected by the National Land Use Planning Commission. NLUPC cited 7 different reasons for the rejection, many of which were technical in nature. This experience of preparing the VLUPs highlights the risk to sustainability that village processes face from overly bureaucratic requirements insufficient regard for local capacity.

The sustainability of technical innovations such as stable canoes and fish smoking kilns is obvious, but similar, useful technical innovations in the fields of timber harvesting and processing, charcoal production or efficient use of fuelwood for tobacco curing were absent. It remains unclear why these issues were never discussed and reflected in JLPC minutes.

In accordance with the country's policies and guidelines, the project was embedded in government institutions at regional, district and village levels. The ongoing consultancy on 'Guide to Decision Makers' will enable the planning and implementation of new NRM processes. The fact that the VLUP, CBFM, and BMU are fully in line with the Land Use, Forestry and Fisheries Acts and regulations, and that bylaws have been approved, is a necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, condition for their sustainability. Financial sustainability is not guaranteed at district and village level. Covering the costs associated with CBNRM, such as patrolling, supervised utilization and fire management, cannot yet be fully guaranteed by the limited revenues being generated from the current level of sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

Significant governance and transparency challenges remain, such as widespread illegality and informality; interference from politically influential vested interests; and the practice of forestry authorities licensing harvests from village lands without reinvesting in these forests. The lack of CEPA materials, including a simple translation of the legal documents, is an important handicap. Even though the potential for benefits from NRM-based economic opportunities is large, the lack of an inclusive business development strategy and a level playing field for villagers, limits the economic sustainability of CBNRM. In light of these challenges, it is unclear whether these village committees will remain effectively operational after project end.

2.6 Transversal topics

A detailed project strategy for the Mainstreaming of Gender identified gender gaps. Project and district staff were trained on gender. The first phase of NRM4LED was very gender sensitive. Women participated significantly (around 35% in village committees) but women's specific needs were not fully taken into account in decision-making (e.g. patrolling schedules, distance to forest, security). Sensitization regarding women's signatures on CCRO was only partly successful, considering that 54% of CCRO were still only in the name of the husband.

It is too early to assess whether NRM4LED has made an impact on environmental degradation because many villages have only recently begun to implement and enforce their VLUP and NR management plans. Environmental degradation indicators were not sufficiently monitored and the ETR team was not in a position to assess village forests and fish breeding sites for environmental damage.

2.7 Overall conclusion

The NRM-LED project achieved important results in creating and strengthening different NR structures at village level in the process of elaborating VLUP, CBFM, and fisheries management for the sustainable managing of available natural resources – in 6 landscapes of Kigoma Region in collaboration with 6 DFT. NRM4LED opened new perspectives for strengthening Local Economic Development based on NR. The 60 months project duration was too short to launch novel community-based processes in NRM and develop LED.

The scaling-up of the VLUP process is not yet guaranteed as this requires additional financial and human resources over several years to guarantee that the VLUP is participatory, contributes to better protection of natural resources and can lead to local economic development. Training manuals and guides for technical training are available but scaling-up is handicapped by the absence of extension materials to facilitate communication with villagers on the CBNRM process.

Village level institutions (VLUM, VNRC and BMU) have been trained on NRM, good governance and conflict management, but not all are fully capable of upholding the rules and regulations to manage the village natural resources in an effective and accountable manner, without support from the districts or a project in particular because of many remaining unresolved issues¹.

NRM4LED opened the way to using and scaling up the landscape approach to larger geographical areas – in particular in the Lake based landscapes. The basic principles of the landscape approach were largely adhered to in the project, but there was no diversified funding mechanism, little involvement of private sector stakeholders and weak collaborative management among actors.

¹ In particular (1) inability to control illegal charcoal combined with the lack of promotion of sustainable charcoal; (2) the challenge of how can tobacco revenues be used to support CBFM as a source of sustainable fuelwood; (3) increased pressure on forests and conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists due to political pressure from pastoralists and influential groups that invested in livestock in Kigoma.

3 Recommendations and Lessons learned

The ETR team identified, for each result area, particular activities that need to be implemented at project end to ensure sustainability of results achieved, including finalising the Guide for Decision-Makers, involving ward staff to support village processes, refresher training for newly supported businesses and CEPA materials made available in Kigoma Region by MNRT. Additional recommendations for future project interventions – of at least 5 to 7 years – cover a better identification of landscapes and villages to tackle common issues, better value chain strategies and collaboration with private sector, and the use of digital technologies to facilitate elaboration of CCRO.

The lessons learned related mostly to policy contradictions in connection with CBNRM, including the trend away from decentralisation, the relevance of VLUP and CCROs beyond NRM, and the uneven level playing field for community-based LED