



# SCALING UP COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT IN ZAMBIA 2021 WEBINAR REPORT

## INTEGRATED LAND AND RESOURCE GOVERNANCE TASK ORDER UNDER THE STRENGTHENING TENURE AND RESOURCE RIGHTS II (STARR II) IDIQ

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCP	BioCarbon Partners
CBFE	Community-Based Forest Enterprise
CDLA	Chipata District Land Alliance
CFM	Community Forestry Management
CFMG	Community Forestry Management Group
CRB	Community Resources Board
DFO	District Forest Officer
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GMA	Game Management Area
HFO	Honorary Forest Officer
ILRG	Integrated Land and Resource Governance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
STARR II	Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## I.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In May – June 2021, the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program organized a series of webinars on community forestry. The webinar series was designed to raise national awareness and facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and the government on the status, challenges, and opportunities of community forest management (CFM). The webinars brought together academics, practitioners, and the government. The webinar series focused on four primary themes: the current status of CFM; scaling up CFM and enterprise development; benefit sharing and law enforcement; and how to move CFM forward.

The webinar series grew out of the ongoing work of the ILRG program in supporting partner institutions implementing CFM in Eastern and Muchinga Provinces. The objectives of the sessions were to:

- Raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities in scaling up CFM in Zambia;
- Provide a platform for sharing CFM experiences;
- Strengthen the linkages between local communities, government agencies, and communities of practice; and
- Generate new ideas to strengthen the role of community forest management groups (CFMGs) and critical stakeholders.

The webinar series was held for four consecutive weeks, with each week including three to four topical presentations, followed by a discussion period. Aside from the first week, each week’s presentations included two presentations from the community of practice, followed by a presentation by a District Forest Officer (DFO) presenting on the district-level experience of that week’s theme.

Participation in the webinar sessions was high, with an average of 42 participants per session representing non-government organizations (NGOs), government, the private sector, academia, and communities. Individuals from 28 institutions participated, with the largest share (42 percent) representing NGOs. Feedback from these participants in the Zoom comment panel found that the majority found the webinar series to be a great success.

This report summarizes the presentations and discussion from the various CFM webinar sessions. Full recordings of the sessions can be found on [YouTube](#).

## 2.0 CURRENT STATUS OF CFM

The first week's session, held on May 28, 2021, focused on the current status of CFM and included four presentations:

- CFM in Zambia: Current Progress, the Role of Government, and Other Key Actors in Scaling Up CFM – Ms. Thecla Musuku Kafwimbi, Senior Technician, Forestry Department; and
- Field-Level Experience in Promoting CFM in Zambia: The Journey So Far and Outlook –
  - Adam Ngoma, Coordinator, Chipata District Land Alliance (CDLA);
  - Haggai Mulenga, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, WeForest; and
  - Rachel Kunda, Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS).

### 2.1 CFM IN ZAMBIA: CURRENT PROGRESS, ROLE OF GOVERNMENT, AND OTHER KEY ACTORS – MS. THECLA MUSUKU KAFWIMBI, SENIOR TECHNICIAN, FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Realizing the critical role that forests play in the lives of rural communities, the Zambian government enacted a more participatory forest legal framework in 2015. In the last three years, the number of rural communities participating in CFMGs has grown to 112. Of these 112 CFMGs, 68 have already entered into a legal agreement with the government, while the others are at the recognition stage. These CFMGs are together managing just over two million hectares of forest land, in seven out of the country's ten provinces. Additionally, as a way of strengthening law enforcement under CFMs, the government has gazetted 224 Honorary Forest Officers (HFOs) since February 2021, of whom 112 have received formal training at Zambia Forestry College. The growth of CFM in Zambia has mainly resulted from the combined efforts of various key players, including the government, NGOs, and local communities, each playing different functions and roles.

### 2.2 FIELD-LEVEL EXPERIENCE IN PROMOTING CFM IN ZAMBIA: CHIPATA DISTRICT – ADAM NGOMA, COORDINATOR, CDLA

CDLA's presentation focused on its experience with CFM under the USAID ILRG program. Currently, CDLA is working with seven CFMs managing close to 80 ha of forest land. The CFM areas range from three to 35 ha. All the CFMGs are nearing the recognition stage. Mr. Ngoma noted that in carrying out this work, they have learned some key lessons, including the importance of community consultation and engagement; the need to use existing data and land use plans but to be mindful of gaps in data management; and the risks of establishing CFMGs in area where chiefdom boundary conflicts exist. Mr. Ngoma also emphasized the importance of flexibility in carrying out CFM processes, the importance of including women, and the need to clarify benefit sharing.

### 2.3 FIELD-LEVEL EXPERIENCE IN PROMOTING CFM IN ZAMBIA: COPPERBELT – HAGGAI MULENGA, SENIOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICER, WEFORST

WeForest is headquartered in the Copperbelt with significant operations in Copperbelt and Muchinga Provinces. They are involved in diverse forest management-related activities, including restoration, CFM, and small-scale plantation forestry. Their approach is to work through the local community groups with

a strong focus on supporting forest-based livelihoods. The minimum forest area that they work with is 5,000 ha. Among the many lessons learned from WeForest's experience is the need to undertake a thorough free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) process before taking the participating local communities into CFM activities. Stakeholder mapping should be undertaken from the initiation of the process. Additionally, law enforcement and the promotion of income-generating activities are key to promoting long-term sustainability in CFM. Finally, it is crucial to bear in mind that everyone is new to the process; learning is a continuous part of the whole process of CFM promotion.

## **2.4 FIELD-LEVEL EXPERIENCE IN PROMOTING CFM IN ZAMBIA: FZS – RACHEL KUNDA, FZS**

A presentation by FZS discussed the importance of good stakeholder engagement from initiation, especially in game management areas (GMAs). Equally important from FZS's experience is the need to undertake continuous awareness-raising on CFM, given that it is still a fledgling concept in Zambia. It is also critical to deal with thorny issues around boundary conflicts before proceeding to the signing of the agreement. Side-by-side with promoting forest conservation, it is crucial to promote forest-based livelihood activities such as beekeeping to incentivize sustainable forest management. FZS has found that the most significant challenge of promoting CFM in rural Zambia is sustaining activities in the absence of external funding, as all current CFM activities appear to be largely driven as donor projects.

## **2.5 DISCUSSION**

Following the presentations, there was time for participants to ask questions. Questions raised centered around how to keep the CFMG process going and how to reactivate it if it stalls; the comparatively low uptake of CFM in southern Zambia; how best to work with traditional authorities through the process; and how to avoid conflict of interest between organizations working with CFM to ensure that organizations are not working in overlapping areas.



## **3.0 SCALING UP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

The June 4, 2021 session focused on scaling up CFM and enterprise development, and included three presentations:

- Challenges and Opportunities of Scaling Up CFM in Zambia – Alastair Anton;
- The Importance of Promoting Forest-Based Enterprise Development in CFM – Moses Nyoni, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); and
- DFO Perspective – Japhet Kabonso, DFO, Shiwangandu District.

### **3.1 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF SCALING UP CFM IN ZAMBIA – ALASTAIR ANTON**

Mr. Anton's presentation opened by noting that CFM is a people-centered process that involves empowering local communities in decision-making about their surrounding natural resources. CFM provides more effective local control over forest resources leading to a more sustainable land management agenda. However, the critical issue to sustainable land management is tenure. Simply focusing on forest management without rights and tangible benefits does not improve environmental protection or sustainable forest-based livelihoods. Since the birth of the 2018 CFM Regulations, Zambia has yet to reach the desired CFM impact due to several daunting challenges. Among the many challenges is the inability to embed CFM in district planning systems. CFM has primarily remained a project rather than a government program with clear workplans and budgets. Tools to support strategic planning and communicate CFM issues in real time are not widely available. There is also weak integrated management of natural resources as trees outside of CFM areas are not covered. There is a poor understanding of roles among the various stakeholders. The lack of ownership of the CFM process by the communities themselves is yet another stumbling block in scaling up.

Despite all these challenges, some opportunities exist to aid in scaling up the impact of CFM in Zambia. The enabling environment for CFM is very supportive and requires only commitment from all the concerned actors. The existence of gazetted local forests in many districts presents opportunities for communities who have depleted their customary forests to apply for the management of such forestlands.

### **3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING FOREST-BASED ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN CFM – MOSES NYONI, TNC**

A strong link exists between poverty, environmental degradation, and climate change. For communities to buy into CFM, there must be a guarantee of improved community and household wellbeing. Livelihood systems strongly linked to sustainable forest management tend to foster a culture of conservation. Sustainable financing is critical for long-term investment in protection. So, forest-based enterprises can contribute significantly to forest management through the financing of efforts. In promoting community-based forest enterprises (CBFEs), the forest becomes a business asset and a resource to be conserved. For CFM and CBFE to succeed, net benefits from forest management and CBFE must exceed those from other non-sustainable ventures (e.g., unregulated charcoal, agriculture, unsustainable timber harvesting, etc.). To reduce anthropogenic pressure and unsustainable resource off-takes from forests under CFM, developing forest-based livelihood options or CBFE is essential. The

CFBE approach to CFM promotes direct management of forests as assets that require protection, but demands a mindset change in that CFM must be run as a business with professionals employed to manage the business end, rather than using the current committee approach. It is crucial to build on the existing forest use rather than starting new non-forest-based enterprises such as chicken rearing, gardening, fish farming, etc.

### **3.3 DFO PERSPECTIVE – JAPHET KABONSO, DFO, SHIWANGANDU DISTRICT**

Shiwangandu District is one of the pioneering districts in CFM in Zambia. The district has over 20 CFMGs with slightly over 10,000 ha of forest land brought under the management of communities. The district is well endowed with a variety of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) that local CFMGs are harvesting. Despite growing demand, the business potential of NTFPs is still strongly underutilized in most of Zambia due to a lack of business and marketing skills, unreliable supply from natural sources, low market transparency, and high transport costs. NTFPs are seldom processed before being marketed, and community-based institutions lack the capacity to run forest-based enterprises as a business. During the introductory phases of CFM in Shiwangandu, local communities were very suspicious of the project's intentions. They thought that the government was trying to grab their ancestral land. As expected, there was strong resistance among the majority of the communities. However, after significant awareness-raising efforts on the many benefits generated by CFM, communities started feeling comfortable and assigned large chunks of land for CFM. A lack of financial support for CFM activities appears to be the major roadblock for scaling up and generating the desired impacts. The most significant opportunity in Shiwangandu is the willingness of the local communities to take up CFM.

### **3.4 DISCUSSION**

After the presentations, the discussion section focused on the following topics:

- Scale of value of CFM, including how what a project values may be different than what communities value, and how to express this clearly to communities;
- Trust in the CFM process and benefits;
- How to re-frame the conversation with communities to more efficient use of forest resources and raising value as incentives for CFM;
- What scale of CFBE is needed to make a meaningful impact at the community level; and
- Planning for and managing the impact of livestock on forest.

## **4.0 BENEFIT SHARING AND ENFORCEMENT**

The third session on June 11, 2021 was focused on benefit sharing and enforcement, with three presentations:

- Forest Control and Law Enforcement in CFM – Alastair Anton;
- Does a Good Benefit-Sharing Mechanism Lead to Positive Outcomes in CFM? – Maxwell Phiri, Forestry Department; and
- DFO Perspective – Martin Chongo, DFO, Chinsali District.

### **4.1 FOREST CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN CFM – ALASTAIR ANTON**

Rights to control access, use, and management of a designated forest area are crucial to the successful scaling up of CFM in any region. Communities are expected to be able to issue permits and collect revenue; however, they also have an obligation to protect, conserve, and manage the designated community forest area. The CFMG committee should be accountable to the broader community. The community has a legal obligation to control access and forest product regulation. The CFMG must decide how many forest products can be harvested, when, at what price, and from which CFM area. Control commences with the assignment of the rights. The CFMG committee must understand the importance and availability of forest resources in the CFM area; this understanding should be based on the simple forest management plan that the CFMG formulated. It is also essential that CBFEs are developed on a sustainable foundation with a view to the long term. Considering the ability of buyers to pay and placing the correct value on forest products are all crucial in achieving high levels of compliance. The product value system must be based on the range of services that the CFMG provides and at what cost.

### **4.2 DOES A GOOD BENEFIT-SHARING MECHANISM LEAD TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN CFM? – MAXWELL PHIRI, FORESTRY DEPARTMENT**

CFM has attracted significant attention in Asia because of a belief in its potential to improve the welfare of impoverished people living in and around forests. However, the extent to which this potential is realized depends strongly upon whether communities can secure the benefits that community-managed forests generate and whether these reach the poorest in the community. Benefit sharing is considered one of the essential elements of community participation as it provides positive incentives to the continued achievement of both forest conservation and livelihood goals. To make a long-term commitment to sustainable forest management, communities need to see tangible benefits in return for their time and energy expended in management. This approach recognizes the need to give actors incentives for getting involved in forest protection and control.

Successful and self-sustaining CFM requires an attractive incentive balance that is sufficient to motivate communities to invest time, effort, and resources in forest protection, maintenance, and control in the long term. Fair distribution and the type of benefits are critical factors in incentivizing communities to participate in forest management. The cases of COMACO and BCP demonstrate the pivotal role that benefit-sharing can play in incentivizing communities. In both cases, the REDD+ benefits drive communities to set aside large expanses of land for forest management. This contrasts with experiences from around the country where a lack of monetary incentives makes communities feel reluctant to devote large parcels of land to forest management.

### **4.3 DFO PERSPECTIVE – MARTIN CHONGO, DFO, CHINSALI DISTRICT**

Mr. Chongo presented the case of Chapalakata CFMG in Chinsali District. The group was formed in 2016 and manages a forest area of about 350 ha. The CFMG committee has a relatively well-balanced gender representation (six men, four women). The group's primary goal is to sustainably manage the local watershed, which is critical to the water supply for downstream communities. As with other pioneering groups, Chapalakata community was initially quite skeptical about CFM and chose to set aside land that was deemed to be of little worth as community forest area.

Since its inception, Chapalakata CFMG has developed a working forest control system. Product harvesting is based on permits issued by the CFMG committee, which is well supported by the traditional authority. The forest control system has started showing benefits; the group generated about US\$685 from the sale of caterpillars harvested from the CFM area. Additionally, the group cropped about 30 liters of comb honey.

The main challenges faced by the CFMG are the small size of the CFM area and the long distance between the CFM area and settlements. There is also low participation of general CFMG members in communal control, along with high levels of freeriding. The delays in gazetting HFOs have also been a challenge in issues of forest control.

### **4.4 DISCUSSION**

A lively discussion period with a number of questions from participants followed the presentations. The main topics were how to coordinate and harmonize interests; how to coordinate enforcement in areas where there are both CFMGs and Community Resources Boards (CRBs); how benefits from CFMGs are or can be shared among different stakeholders; what contribution CFM makes to household income in areas where CFM has been in practice; how to ensure transparency in benefit sharing; how to secure larger areas of land for CFM; and whether any national forest areas should be converted to community forest.

## 5.0 LOOKING FORWARD

The fourth and final webinar session was centered on how to move CFM forward across Zambia:

- What Are the Enabling Conditions Needed for Scaling Up CFM to Achieve Desired Biodiversity Conservation Results? – Alastair Anton;
- Practical Ways of Strengthening CFMGs: Success Stories from Other Countries – Sylvester Siame, Forestry Department; and
- DFO Perspective – Titus Kabonso, DFO, Chipata District.

### 5.1 WHAT ARE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR SCALING UP CFM TO ACHIEVE DESIRED BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION RESULTS? – ALASTAIR ANTON

The preconditions for scaling up CFM to achieve biodiversity management are anchored on four pillars: authority, ability, incentives, and equity. These pillars are neatly tied together and speak to each other throughout the whole process of scaling up CFM. Communities must be assigned legal authority to stop all illegal activities associated with open access. Communities should be able to exclude outsiders from illegally harvesting their forest products. Fortunately, the CFM Regulations of 2018 provide for the transfer of such authority to CFMGs. The appointment of HFOs also adds to the many layers of legal authority given to the communities. Additionally, communities must have the ability to stop illegal activities and to plan resource use throughout their CFM areas and beyond.

The lack of capacity to enforce legally assigned authority may be the beginning and end of any CFM process. Presently most CFMGs are in their infancy and have limited ability to execute most of the provisions of the CFM Regulations. The majority of CFMGs lack the technical capacity to manage the CFM process. As expected, they still rely on external help to undertake planning, enterprise development, and financial management.

One of the critical pillars in scaling up CFM that is responsive to biodiversity management is incentivizing conservation. In the absence of an incentive system, most communities tend to withdraw their participation even when the right enabling environment has been put in place. The 2018 CFM Regulations provide a big incentive for communities to play an active role in CFM. It allows CFMGs to retain all the revenues and gives them the power to confiscate and sell illegally produced forest products from their CFM areas. Finally, attaining equity in the whole process of CFM, particularly as it relates to benefit sharing, is as crucial as the other three pillars in achieving both biodiversity and livelihood goals.

### 5.2 PRACTICAL WAYS OF STRENGTHENING CFMGs: SUCCESS STORIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES – SYLVESTER SIAME, FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

A global review of CFM over the past 40 years suggests that the significant conditionalities that need to be met for CFM to be successful are: i) secure tenure (property rights); ii) an enabling regulatory framework; iii) strong governance; iv) viable technology; v) adequate market knowledge; and vi) supportive bureaucracy.

Three case studies from Gambia, Ethiopia, and Tanzania stand out. Gambia presents a classic case of many CFM success stories mainly because it focused on building the capacity of CFMGs in various aspects, including leadership skills, sustainable harvesting and processing of forest products, marketing, and negotiation skills. They followed the “learning by doing approach” in which the process was phased

to allow communities to learn and build from their failures. Further, they encouraged CFMGs to form associations where numerous CFMGs existed. The government also ensured the effective empowerment of CFMGs in all decision-making processes, with transparency being the cornerstone in the entire process. Additionally, the government internalized the process into a government program, thus leading to a low dependency on external material and financial resources.

The Tanzanian CFM story is also one of the many success stories in southern Africa. In the case of Tanzania, they passed through initial phases of failure under joint forest management and went back to the drawing board to straighten out their processes. They shifted their attention from overregulating the community groupings to more participatory approaches, emphasizing improving market access and market share for forest-based products from CFM areas. They also promoted strong linkages between CFMGs and the private sector. CFMG capacities were also built around product value addition at the local level.

In the case of Ethiopia, collaboration, involvement, continuous follow-up, and support of relevant regional and local government sectors were the main ingredients of CFM success. Using and strengthening existing traditional systems was another reason behind their surge in the CFM process. There was also continuous communication and consensus with local elders, politicians, and religious leaders, and recognition of traditional knowledge and customary rights.

No one model can be applied universally. Community forestry needs to be promoted in the context of each country's historical, economic, political, and cultural circumstances.

### **5.3 DFO PERSPECTIVE – TITUS KABONSO, DFO, CHIPATA DISTRICT**

Community forest management, when well introduced, can contribute significantly to biodiversity management. It is important to pay special attention to the sequence of the CFM steps as outlined in the guidelines. The Chipata District Forestry Office religiously followed the steps from the onset of CFM initiation. Although the process was not free from pitfalls, the facilitation team navigated through the murky waters of CFM establishment. Awareness raising has been a continuous concern throughout the process, with every meeting commencing with an overview of the CFM process. To ensure knowledge exchange, the district facilitation team has also emphasized having materials translated into the local language.

One of the important lessons the district facilitation team has learned is that CFM establishment demands patience and should not be rushed. CFM is slowly beginning to contribute towards achieving desired biodiversity conservation goals in the district. Achieving enhanced biodiversity conservation goes beyond a mere ticking of the boxes but is an issue of behavioral change. In sites where CFM has been established, the district team has started noticing small but significant changes in the way people manage their forests relative to the baseline. For example, the team has observed significant changes in the way people harvest herbal medicines. Total uprooting of a tree for herbal medicines and traditional bark hive construction have become minimal. There has been increase in adherence to getting required permits for different NTFPs. Through the various CFMGs, communities have also started taking an active role in communal fire management.

### **5.4 DISCUSSION**

The question and answer period for the final session hit on a number of different topics, including:

- The cost and time required to set up a CFM structure;
- Whether enforcement and preservation of protected areas is truly happening throughout the country;

- Rates of degazetting of protected forest areas vs. rates of reforestation and CFM;
- How to raise awareness of CFM with children and youth;
- Individual vs. communal access to benefits from the forest;
- How to avoid repeating the past failures of joint forest management;
- How to identify and demonstrate intrinsic incentives for communities to participate in CFM;
- The role of other actors, such as traditional authorities and the private sector, in CFM law enforcement;
- Examples of CFM in Zambia drawing on traditional knowledge; and,
- Demand from communities for CFM.

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