



Governing REDD+: global framings
versus practical evidence from the Kasigau
Corridor REDD+ Project, Kenya

Joanes Atela

Governing REDD+

A large decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, curved, brush-stroke-like lines in various shades of green and grey, positioned below the main title.

Governing REDD+: global framings versus practical evidence from the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project, Kenya

This paper explores the governance and feasibility of globally-linked REDD+ projects in local African settings, focusing on the Kasigau project in Kenya – Africa’s first REDD+ project accredited under internationally accepted standards. The project is a commercial venture and during the last five years, it has unfolded in a relatively vulnerable Kenyan setting. A policy process analysis, interactive fieldwork and document review explored its interrelationship with local livelihood assets and state institutional capabilities. The paper reveals that while REDD+ institutions are globally standardised through negotiations interlocked with political and development interests, projects are faced with state and local resource histories and perceptions and in responding to such settings, such projects become highly contextual in practice. The paper concludes that communal systems, if well-defined, may provide a better basis for the governance of REDD+ projects, enabling inclusivity, collective action and societal benefits. If projects can genuinely enable local people to manage and benefit from their forest resources, REDD+ promises to be a multi-governance program that bridges the gap between global and local institutions and interests in the sustainable use of forests.

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Acronyms

CBFF	Congo Basin Forest Fund
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCBS	Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard
CCBA	Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CFA	Community Forest Association
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COP	Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC)
EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gass
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IAD	Institutional Analysis and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
Ksh	Kenyan shilling
MHCA	Marungu Hill Conservancy Association
PPA	Policy Process Analytical framework
REDD	Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UBoC	United Bank of Carbon
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

US	United States
VCS	Voluntary Carbon Standard
WWRPTF	Wildlife Works REDD+ Project Trust Fund

Abstract

This paper explores the governance and feasibility of globally-linked REDD+ projects in local African settings, focusing on the Kasigau project in Kenya, Africa's first REDD+ project accredited under internationally accepted standards. The project is a commercial venture and during the last five years it has unfolded in a relatively vulnerable Kenyan setting. A policy process analysis, interactive fieldwork and document review has explored its interrelationship with local livelihood assets and state institutional capabilities. The paper reveals that while REDD+ institutions are globally standardised through negotiations interlocked with political and development interests, projects are faced with state and local resource histories and perceptions, and in responding to such settings, these projects become highly contextual. Locally, the Kasigau project links carbon benefits to specific and significant local vulnerabilities such as low 'value' dryland, water scarcity and illiteracy. This has yielded an apparently uncontested acceptance and favourable perception of the project among the Kasigau people, appearing to reverse long histories of exclusion from their resources by centralised state-based resource management regimes. Yet the negative perception of state institutions that the Kasigau people have built up over time raises questions as to whether the state can ably oversee a successful REDD+ process, as is assumed by the international community. If resource management is not factually decentralised in particular countries, greater capture of local resource rights in REDD+ could result from state regimes than from private-commercial regimes. As such, international gains in safeguarding local communities in REDD+ could be seriously compromised. Kenya recently initiated land reforms as part of resource decentralisation, but the resulting regimes remain fuzzy, subordinate to powerful centralised interests, focused on individual title, and inadequately adapted to particular local contexts. Such reforms potentially re-shuffle the local engagement of the Kasigau project which draws its apparent success partly from a communalised land tenure system. This paper concludes that communal systems, if well-defined, may provide a better basis for the governance of REDD+ projects, enabling inclusivity, collective action and societal benefits. If projects can genuinely enable local people to manage and benefit from their forest resources, REDD+ promises to be a multi-governance programme that bridges the gap between global and local institutions and interests in the sustainable use of forests.

1.Introduction

Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) has gained legitimacy as a forest governance programme that links carbon management to human development. The initiative arguably provides better participation opportunities to sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries which were otherwise technically and sectorally excluded from the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) (Bond *et al.* 2009). The programme has nonetheless generated complex scientific and policy debates in the context of the economic, political and social significance of land resources in SSA. Specifically, in recent debates (Larson 2011; Corbera and Schroeder 2011; Sikor *et al.* 2010; Schroeder 2010) emphasise the importance of safeguarding the rights of local people who draw livelihoods from the target forests in REDD+. UNFCCC negotiations in Cancun (UNFCCC 2010) included safeguards as part of REDD+ specifically to protect the interests of the local communities against powerful commercial and state interests and in Copenhagen (UNFCCC 2009) REDD was expanded to REDD+ to link communal forestry and co-benefits to carbon management.

These debates mean the REDD+ process is subject to continuous negotiations. This has resulted in diverse project designs, with a multiplicity of funds and actors all seeking to ensure practical equity and success of 'a planned REDD+ project'. Yet when the resulting REDD+ projects, largely designed through boardroom negotiations and agreements, are put into practice they face new challenges. These test the feasibility of the negotiated consensus in specific local settings with their existing climatic and non-climatic histories, vulnerabilities and perceptions established from prior state or non-state resource management regimes. Such settings ultimately impact, and are impacted on, a given REDD+ project. Yet evidence of the practical interplay between globally-designed REDD+ projects and particular local and state circumstances is currently lacking in the literature of the political ecology of carbon (Caplow *et al.* 2011; Corbera and Schroeder 2011).

This paper contributes empirical evidence to the debate on the political ecologies of carbon in Africa. It focuses on a particular REDD+ project selected from a range of geographically and structurally diverse carbon projects in Kenya. Specifically, the Kasigau REDD+ project was selected as a case study here based on its international validation, its engagement with local communities over a relatively long period, and its occurrence in a relatively vulnerable setting. Indeed this case project is Africa's first REDD+ project to issue carbon credits under internationally accepted standards of Voluntary Carbon Standards (VCS) and Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard (CCBS) (Veronesi *et al.* 2012). This study is therefore one of the first to subject an internationally validated REDD+ project in SSA to policy analysis in the context of local assets and state institutional capabilities. The Kasigau project has partnered with local communities since 2005 to conserve about 500,000 acres of dryland forest located in the Marungu Sub location, North-west of Mombasa City, Kenya (Wildlife-Works 2011). The dryland forest comprises several communal ranches owned by private companies. The private companies were formed by a mix of neighbouring communities and immigrants.

Information on four aspects of the project was collected through fieldwork and interviews at the project sites. These were: (1) project actors and narratives; (2) community and state engagement; (3) land tenure; and (4) livelihood impacts. A 'hybrid' framework that combines the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (Ostrom *et al.* 1994), the Policy Process Analytical Framework (Keeley and Scoones 2003) and the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (Scoones 1998) guided data collection and analysis. A description of the framework, the case project selection process and the case project itself are contained in the first four sections of this paper. Results of this work

correspond to the four thematic areas the research focussed on and these results are presented in sections 5 - 8.

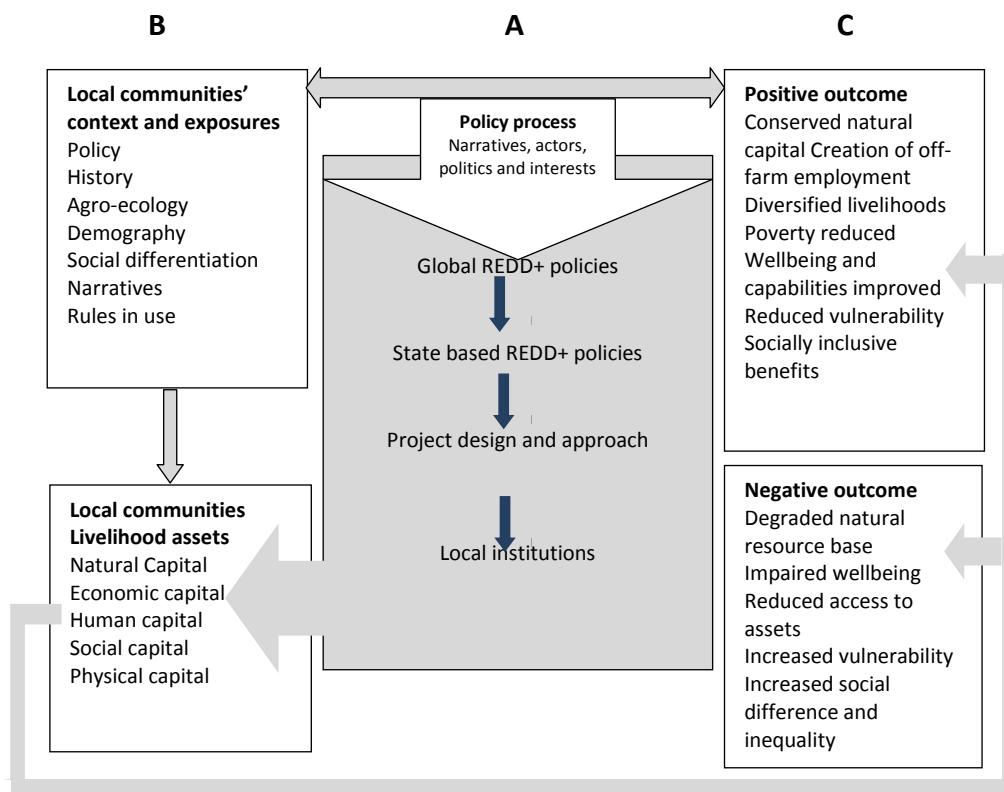
Results show that the Kasigau project is unfolding in a relatively vulnerable setting, with little access to water and other livelihood assets. This makes it different from most REDD+ projects in Kenya which seem to be concentrated in areas of low poverty, and means the local requirements of project operations sometimes override international standards in attempts to suit this vulnerable setting. However, in addressing local vulnerabilities through a share of carbon revenue, the Kasigau project has gained relatively uncontested acceptance amongst local people. In so doing, the project provides a multi-governance platform that bridges the gap between state institutions and local institutions for sustainable use of local resources. However, this REDD+/people relationship may be undermined by changing resource regimes and, in particular, fuzzy land reforms that do not consider historical land issues and context specific communal aspirations in the domain of natural resource management. As such, the extent to which the acceptance of the Kasigau project will be sustained over the years, with shifting rights over land and increasing awareness of land value, remains complex and will require additional research.

2. Analytical framework and methods

Analytical framework

The 'hybrid' framework (Fig 2.1) constructed for this research integrates the Institutional Analysis and Development framework (IAD) (Ostrom *et al.* 1994) and the Policy Process Analytical framework (PPA) (Keeley and Scoones 2003) into the Sustainable Livelihood framework (SLF) (Scoones 1998). The framework consists of three major components: (a) the central column for project evaluation specifically useful for analysing how the project design builds from global and state narratives, actors and interests; (b) the left column that details the livelihood assets of the project area and how these assets interact with the project; and (c) the right column that details the possible outcomes from the interaction between the project and local livelihoods. The 'hybrid' framework allows for multi-governance institutional analysis and considers power issues in policy processes. The framework also allows for analysing livelihoods' impacts of the case project in the context of asset bases. The 'hybrid' framework therefore overcomes specific weaknesses of individual frameworks. For instance, the IAD provides a multi-governance approach to institutional analysis but arguably lacks power consideration as an important part of policy process (Morse *et al.* 2009) while the PPA and SLF consider interests in policy process but arguably frame local vulnerabilities from a narrow perspective (Neylan 2008).

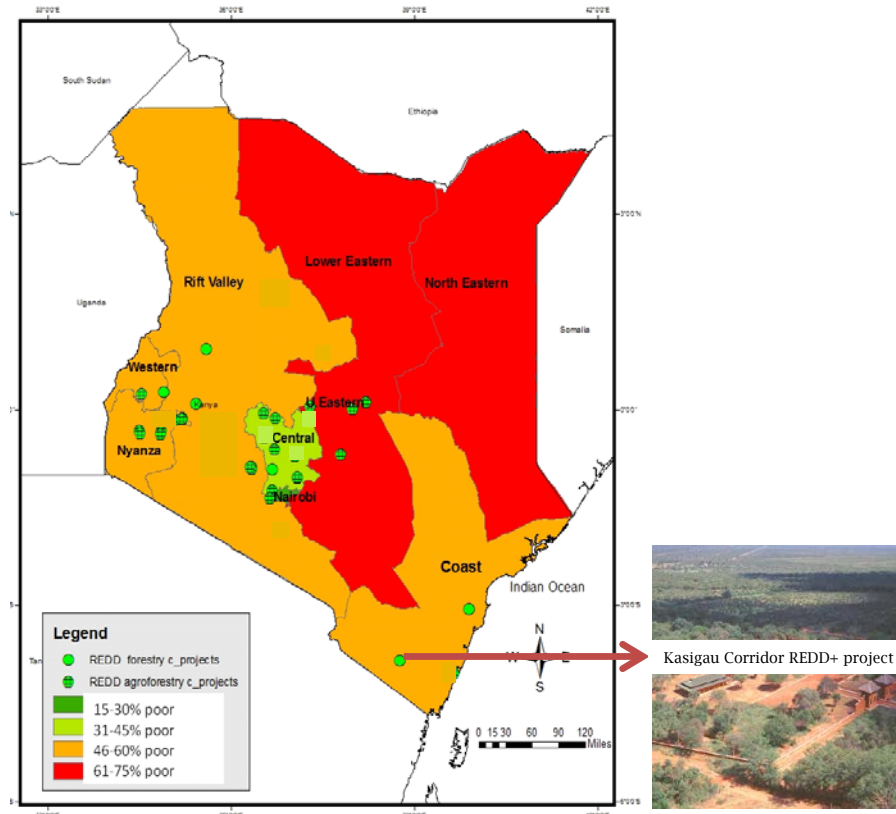
Figure 2.1: A 'hybrid' institutional-adaptive capacity analysis framework; a combination of SLA, IAD and PPA



Case Project Selection

REDD+ projects are diverse in design and drawing significant scientific and policy evidence from such projects requires optimal choices of case studies. The first step in this study therefore was to select a suitable case project and to do this, the number, geographical location and status of all existing REDD+ projects in Kenya were mapped, see figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of REDD+ projects in Kenya



Only about 30 per cent are pure forestry projects while the rest are agro forestry projects. Most projects are concentrated around forested and relatively rich areas. A list of projects is available in the appendix.

Data on the project's existence and type was collected from global, regional and national carbon data bases, case studies and field visits in Kenya. A range of databases were searched, including: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project registry, Center for International Forestry Research's (CIFOR) global inventory on REDD+ and other forestry projects, Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), charity carbon banks such as the United Bank of Carbon (UBoC), Ecosystem market place and the Kenya National Environmental Management Authority. The projects were then digitised into ArcGIS (a mapping and analysis software programme) and overlaid on a poverty index map generated from the proportion of households living below US\$1.25 a day in each of the eight Kenyan provinces. The poverty data were obtained from the National Household Budget Survey of 2005/2006 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2007) and the 2011 Kenya Statistical Abstracts (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2011). The mapping results are shown in Figure 2.2. Details of individual projects are included in the appendix.

The Kasigau REDD+ project was then selected as a suitable case study because it operates under internationally standards (both the Voluntary Carbon Standard and the Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard) and is located in a relatively poor setting that is typical of most localities of SSA. The project has also been implemented for a relatively longer time than other projects, thus enabling the collection of evidence on community engagements and impacts.

Data collection

Overall, data were collected from three groups of actors engaged in the project: community members, including participating households and Community Based Organisations (CBO) leaders (45 people plus three focus group discussions); project staff (nine people) and government staff including the local chief (four people).

Fieldwork and interviews were undertaken in the project sites at two different stages of the project implementation. The first field visit took place after the project had been validated and had received carbon funds but before these funds were distributed. During this first visit, data on project design, narratives, and socio-economic settings of the project area, resource histories and community and state engagements were collected. Specific methods employed include interviews with three project directors, six field staff, 41 community members (differentiated by gender and position in the project community), four representatives of local CBO (Marungu Hills), one local politician (ward representative), and two local chiefs. Focus group discussions were held with three community groups working under the project. Since carbon money had not been shared out during the first visit, it was necessary to make a second visit three months later, allowing adequate time for fund allocations. In the second visit, discussions were held with different committees charged with the distribution of carbon money and the various groups that were expected to implement selected community projects. In-depth interviews were also undertaken with two staff of the Ministry of Forestry in Nairobi. Other participatory approaches such as transect walks and informal discussions were also employed.

Figure 2.3: Interview with a community member in the Kasigau project area



Data were analysed qualitatively using a grounded theory approach. For instance, narratives about the project by different actors were generated from a perception matrix. The matrix was based on recorded interviews. In these interviews counts of the number of times specific issues were mentioned by various actors were obtained. Counts for global narratives were however obtained from UNFCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and donor documents.

3.The Kasigau REDD+ project: socioeconomic context

The Kasigau project is implemented in Marungu sub-location of the Kenyan Coastal region, 3°S of the equator and about 150 kms NW of Mombasa City. The project developer is a United States (US) based private company Wildlife Works. Wildlife Works has operated in the area since 1998 with specific interests in wildlife conservancy and eco-tourism. The project conserves a dryland forest spanning 500,000 acres and is a corridor for wildlife, linking Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, the two largest wildlife protection areas in Kenya. Land tenure in the project area is still evolving and is subject to ongoing land reforms, as discussed elsewhere in this paper, however, this ownership dates back to colonial times when the government allocated blocks of the land or ranches to different groups within the community. Currently the land constitutes a combination of private forested land, community owned group ranches, and community trust lands. Each ranch has about 50 to 2500 members drawn largely from local people, some of whom do not live around the project area. The ranch owners have agreed to be part of the REDD+ project by leasing their shares to the project developer who is also a major shareholder in the ranches.

The project has two phases each aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, protecting biodiversity and promoting community development (Wildlife-Works 2011). Phase I covers 74,516 acres and received CCBA validation in 2009, while the second phase covers the rest of the corridor and was validated in 2011 under the VCS standard. The VCS approved methodology 'VM0009 Methodology for Avoided Mosaic Deforestation of Tropical Forests V1-0' is applied in carbon accounting; this method was developed and is maintained by the project developer. The first phase of the project is targeted to generate about 300,000 tonnes of CO₂ while about 49,000,000 tonnes are expected from the second phase (Wildlife-Works 2011). Ranch shareholders benefit from part of the carbon revenue and a number of community projects are also funded from the money (Wildlife-Works 2011).

Transect walks and interviews with community members show that the area faces major vulnerabilities, including water scarcity (the area is classified as semi-arid with average annual rainfall of 300-450mm), high illiteracy rates, high Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Aids incidence and political exclusion in resource management. The unfavourable climatic and non-climatic conditions means the area has very little agricultural potential, with most households practicing rain-fed agriculture involving cultivation of maize and sometimes green grams. Initially when the ranches were allocated in the 1970s, a number of ranch shareholders assigned little value to the land and most of these shareholders left the area in search of better economic opportunities in nearby Mombasa city. The immediate project surroundings therefore comprise sparse settlements of Taitas and Durubas communities numbering about 35,000 people within 5km of the project boundary and some of these people have no shares in the ranches. These vulnerable local people, in the absence of better economic opportunities and sustainable conservation measures, historically burnt charcoal in the area currently protected under the REDD+ project.

The livelihood situation of Kasigau partly reveals that various SSA localities face certain levels of vulnerability and resource histories that are manifested in different ways in different places. Nonetheless, these situations ultimately shape how various actors frame, define and perceive REDD+ projects as analysed in the next section.

4. Narrative framing of the Kasigau project

Narrative framing refers to storylines that help identify competing ways of viewing a particular policy problem thereby providing both a diagnosis and a set of measures and interventions. Narrative framing of particular REDD+ projects build from global negotiations and state processes. These processes are connected and ultimately influence how REDD+ projects are framed and justified within local contexts. Therefore, to understand how and why the Kasigau project was designed the way it was it is important to first highlight the framings of REDD+ at the global level and national expectations before exploring how these, in combination with local narratives, have shaped project narratives.

Global framing: REDD+ for mitigation and development

At the UNFCCC negotiations it is argued that REDD+ is a cost-effective way of mitigating climate change in developing countries (UNFCCC 2008). In these negotiations, REDD+ is often scientifically linked to the role of deforestation as a source of 18 per cent of global GHG emissions (IPCC 2007; UNFCCC 2008). Peculiar to this framing is that the deforestation is taking place particularly in developing countries whose economies and livelihoods depend on land resources. A tight scientific and policy network therefore links deforestation and developing settings to justify a REDD+ programme for developing countries. Through specific funds and institutional support that were agreed upon in the COP 16 (decision 1/CP.16) REDD+ is expected to contribute to development and reduction of poverty while responding to climate change in the developing countries (appendix 1/CP.16). Additionally, REDD+ is linked to development in the sense that it makes carbon markets available to some developing countries that were otherwise technically excluded from the CDM (Bond *et al*, 2009). The novelty of REDD+ in the global debates revolves around this mitigation and development agenda and is often used by a range of actors, including multilateral funding agencies, to justify REDD+ conceptually and geographically. Multilateral agencies and UN bodies (UNFCCC 2010; UNFCCC 2012; UN-REDD 2010), developed countries, some low to middle income countries endowed with forest resources, international forest research institutions (Angelsen 2008; Angelsen and Wertz-Kanounnikoff 2008; Dkamela 2010; Dutschke *et al*. 2008), and several private sector organisations are some of the actors supporting this line of narrative.

In effect, most developing countries endowed with forest resources expect REDD+ investments to bring about some economic development (Beddington *et al*. 2012). In sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, the common perception is that REDD+ will accomplish goals of economic development and poverty reduction (Brown *et al*. 2011). For instance, Kenya actively engages in REDD+ negotiations and demonstrations and has received external support to prepare a REDD+ readiness plan (Government of Kenya 2010a) and a climate change action plan (Government of Kenya 2012) that prioritise REDD+ as a low carbon development pathway and an opportunity to attract international funds for development, green jobs and achievement of the country's Vision 2030. Vision 2030 is Kenya's economic blueprint aimed at transforming the country into an industrialised state by the year 2030:

'Attracting international climate finance, technology and capacity building – the evidence base provided through this Action Plan can help development partners ensure that their investments align with Government of Kenya climate change priorities and that these investments are nested within Vision 2030 and Kenya's forest national planning process.' (Government of Kenya 2012:15)

Multilateral agencies of the World Bank and the UN have mobilised a variety of funds to attend to such financial expectations. Both public and market based funding for REDD+ were agreed upon in the Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC 2009) with a justification around public-private partnership in the fight against climate change. The UN-REDD, the World Bank's Bio-Carbon Funds and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (World Bank 2009), the Forest Investment Program (FIP 2009) launched by a range of multilateral banks, and the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) are examples of funds with conditions and aspirations hinged on safeguarding certain development outcomes alongside mitigation. For instance, the UN-REDD (2010) explicitly states that REDD+ is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests and predicts a flow of US\$30 billion a year due to REDD+ and this could achieve development goals. The report states in parts:

'[...] This significant North-South flow of funds could reward a meaningful reduction of carbon emissions and could also support new, pro-poor development, help conserve biodiversity and secure vital ecosystem services.' (UN-REDD 2010:2)

While the mitigation-development narrative framing seemingly dominates the REDD+ negotiations and supports the additional role of REDD+ funds in promoting socio-economic development alongside incentivising forest conservation for carbon, an alternative framing exists to critique this dominant narrative. This alternative framing relates to local forest rights. The framing draws from the state and private sector dominance in the REDD+ negotiations, and claims that the REDD+ funds could attract powerful state and commercial interests which could exclude local people from benefiting equitably from the funds and/or accessing the forest resources. Actors behind this narrative include forest dependent communities, forest-people organisations, a range of civil society organisations, and global scholars concerned with the political ecology of natural resources. These actors often argue that about 60 million indigenous people and a further 400-500 million people in developing countries live in or close to forests and depend on them for livelihoods. These people are largely rain-fed farmers who in the face of climate driven vulnerabilities use forests as safety nets for emergency sustenance during crop failure. Some recent literature (for example Corbera and Schroeder 2011; Schroeder 2010; Sikor *et al.* 2010; Lemaitre 2011) specifically call for the inclusion of local communities in the REDD+ process, as have some NGOs and activist organisations. This advocacy led to the introduction of community safeguards in the REDD+ during UNFCCC COP 16 in Cancun (UNFCCC 2010). The safeguards are contained in appendix 1/CP.16 and are meant to enhance community participation in REDD+ interventions and guard against potential negative environmental and social consequences of REDD+ interventions. In the same context, some alternative social REDD+ standards such as the CCBA (CCBA 2010) also emerged to validate REDD+ project designs that generate community benefits and conserve biodiversity. While these efforts address the concerns of local communities at the negotiations, understanding how they inform projects is vital. In the next section, I analyse how the framing and design of the Kasigau project relates to the global narratives as well as state and local perceptions.

Project narrative: REDD+ for mitigations and improved land value

The framing of the Kasigau REDD+ project draws from the above global arguments but it is also significantly shaped by specific narratives about the local settings constructed around unproductive land prior to project intervention. The project design argues that conserving the 500,000 acre dryland forest for carbon increases the land's value to the local people. The project design further argues that alternative uses of the land, such as grazing of cattle and ecotourism, generated little value due to lack of funds (Wildlife-Works 2011), fragility of the ecosystem and lack of water. Specific details in the project document indicate that the land was historically unoccupied with insignificant livelihood/economic opportunities for the local people (Korchinsky *et al.* 2008).

'[...] Afforestation of plantation species and agricultural activities cannot profitably be carried out in this sort of area due to a lack of water and a fragile ecosystem. Therefore we believe that we have demonstrated through our activities to attempt many different economic activities and the activities that preceded us that there are no credible alternative economic uses for this land that could compete with the Project financially, or provide financial sustainability that would protect it from slash and burn use by the community.' (Project Design Document for Phase 2 of Kasigau REDD+ project, Korchinsky 2008:26)

This project narrative is re-enforced by local narratives that, prior to the coming of the project, defined the land as unproductive and valueless. It is claimed that, initially when the ranches were allocated in the 1970s, a number of ranch shareholders abandoned the ranches for other jobs in the nearby Mombasa city,¹ a claim that the project staff agree with:

'[...] Some shareholders/ranch owners left the land as unproductive and did not return' (Project staff, Rukinga, September 2011)

Due to such historical perceptions of poor land value the local community, who are largely peasants, faces various vulnerabilities, including low crop yields and a lack of economic activities. These vulnerabilities, according to the area chief, dominate community views during meetings aimed at disseminating the project's intentions, so it is no surprise that the local community expect the project to meet their livelihood needs. Indeed, according to project staff, managing such livelihood expectations was the greatest challenge in the early times of introducing the project to the local community. Project staff mentioned that they are not surprised by the livelihood expectations, arguing that that the land has no viable economic activities thereby exposing the local communities to several climatic and non climatic stressors. The project staff nonetheless argue that the REDD+ funds provide a unique opportunity to put value on the dryland, sequester carbon and address some of these vulnerabilities. The project narrative of improving land value therefore conceptually connects to the global framing of mitigation–development and is practically shaped by local narratives.

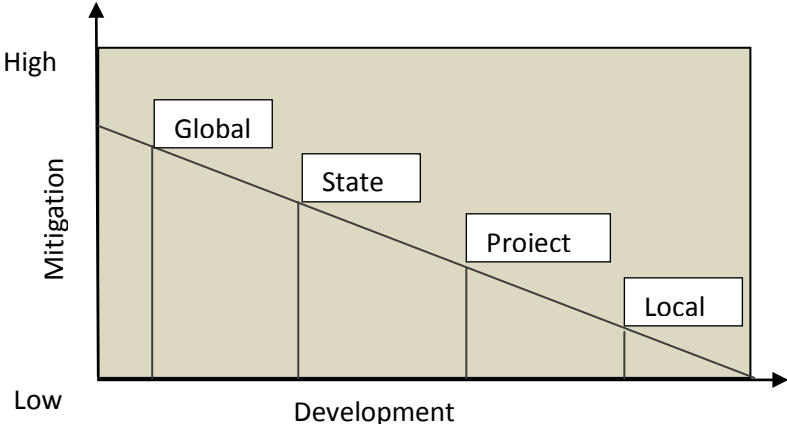
In the context of state policies, the project narrative relates to the provisions in Kenya's REDD+ readiness plan (Government of Kenya 2010a) and the climate change action plan (Government of Kenya 2012). The readiness and action plans are key REDD+ policy documents for Kenya. The documents legitimised Kenya's position in the REDD+ partnership initiative through which the country receives REDD+ funds from the World Bank's Forest Partnership Facility. The project narrative feeds into the aspirations of the REDD+ readiness plan that partly underscores the role of REDD+ in addressing vulnerabilities and enhancing development:

'The REDD+ multi-sectoral program will look into the drivers and underlying causes of deforestation and degradation, as well as promote sustainable forest management for improved livelihoods [...]. All activities will be designed with a focus on benefits such as improving biodiversity and livelihoods of forest dependent peoples.' (Government of Kenya 2010a:3)

¹ Interview with a rancher, Maungu, September 2011

In summary, the project narrative is aligned to the broader global and state mitigation–development goals yet the local narrative around poor land value and lack of livelihood opportunities significantly bears on how the project unfolds on the ground. The local people largely expect the project to meet their livelihood needs. In responding to this local narrative, project actors have considered livelihood enhancement alongside mitigation. Figure 4.1 contextually provides some indications of how various actors frame the REDD+ project. Rough estimates on the frequencies of responses around issues related to mitigation and development/livelihoods were generalised from recorded interviews with local people, project staff and a review of documents aligned to state and global actors. The matrix is indicative and perceptive, based on the context of the case project and does not, in any way, reflect the actual actions of various actors. For instance, the project’s consideration of development does not mean it does not fully undertake mitigations.

Figure 4.1: REDD+ framing matrix at different levels



Overall, the global, project and local framing of REDD+ broadly revolves around mitigation and development/livelihoods. The difference comes in the degree to which the two are emphasised by different actors. Emphasis on development tends to increase as the REDD+ process moves from negotiations to implementation and the reverse is true for mitigation. Ultimately, these framings in one way or another shape how a particular project works out in practice.

The next section analyses how the Kasigau project engaged the local setting to deliver carbon credits.

5.The unfolding of the Kasigau project

The Kasigau project was validated through global standards that aim to ensure the project's outcomes correspond to the global narrative framing. These standards partly guide the implementation and monitoring procedures of the project. Practical application of the standards however faces some challenges from the local narratives and vulnerabilities. In addressing these challenges, the project implicitly re-package these standards to suit the local settings while at the same time meeting the global expectations. In so doing, the project generates experiences and lessons that are highlighted in this section. However, first it is important to understand what the standards entail.

Project standards

The project was validated under VCS and the CCBS in 2008 and 2011 respectively (Wildlife-Works 2011; Korchinsky *et al.* 2008). The two standards have technically different but complementary procedures and requirements. The VCS particularly emphasises emission reductions and does not require projects to produce additional environmental or social benefits (Kollmuss *et al.* 2008). The monitoring and verification procedures under VCS largely borrow from the CDM and these procedures can be developed by a given project with ultimate approval from the VCS board. Under the VCS standard, the Kasigau project has wider freedom of choice on community engagement. On the other hand, the CCBS aims to ensure project designs that provide robust benefits to the local community (Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance 2010). The social and economic wellbeing of communities is central in the CCBA and here communities are required to provide input to the project design, express their expectations and raise concerns about potential negative impacts of the project. The project is expected to draw conflict resolution procedure and enhance capacity. The CCBS however does not verify emissions reduced but allows for verification through alternative standards like the VCS (Kollmuss *et al.* 2008). These standards are expected to guide the implementation of the Kasigau project.

Community engagement: project introduction

The project proposer had worked with the local community since 1998 and so the community had prior knowledge of its activities. The coming of the REDD+ initiative in 2006 was made known to the community through contacts, including the area chief and leaders of various CBOs. Introducing new projects through contact persons as conduits into the community is a common approach used by projects in many parts of Kenya and these approaches are embedded and legitimised as the accepted means of reaching many community members and gaining their attention. Specifically, public gatherings such as chiefs' barazas were widely used to inform the community about the project. Barazas are historical conduits for flows of resources and new development ideas from central government systems, and thus would always attract interest of many in the community who are expecting to benefit from any new initiative (Atela 2012).

Given that the project is implemented alongside existing enterprises (cloth making, eco-tourism, nursery management and eco-charcoal) that continue to employ community members, learning about the project is continuous for this community. Fortunately the task of introducing the project to the community and getting its acceptance was not subject to complex negotiations as community members are not the main carbon producers. The community however feared that the project would evict them from the land and restrict charcoal burning.

'At first, the community was called through local systems and in the meeting Mr Robb² explained the project to the community and the subsequent disseminations took place within barazas. At first they thought *Wazungu wamekuja kununua shamba letu na sasa tutafukuzua* (the white man has come to buy our land and now we will be chased away)³.' (Male Rancher, September 2011)

Eviction fears, according to project staff, could be because most people living around the project area do not have entitlements to the ranches (see section on land reforms below). However, these fears were overshadowed by the raised livelihood expectations (see above).

Community engagement: project implementation

Project implementation engages community members in three ways: (1) land acquisition; (2) secondary carbon generation activities; and (3) allocation of impacts. Details on land tenure and allocation of impacts are discussed later in this paper. This section discusses community engagement in specific project activities, especially those related to carbon, and the challenges faced in this engagement.

The project generates carbon from a protected area. However, it also engages community members in activities meant to reduce pressure on the protected forest. The community is organised into registered groups comprising 10–50 members and these groups form part of established umbrella CBOs, the Kasigau Conservation Trust and the Marungu Hill Conservancy Association (MHCA). The CBOs represent two villages (locations) surrounding the first project phase. The project logistically, technically and administratively strengthens the CBOs and has also worked with communities to establish village based REDD+ committees, such as the Locational Carbon Committees, to coordinate REDD+ specific activities. While CBOs play key roles in structuring communal engagement in the project, the village based REDD+ committees are central in community/project engagement. This approach differs from commonly deployed REDD+ dissemination approaches, such as established community contact persons or local elites. The REDD+ committees are referred to as Locational Carbon Committees and these committees are established in each village (location) within the project area. The committees draw membership from existing groups and comprise about seven individuals nominated from groups in a given village. According to one of the committees' chairpeople, the membership of the committees is subject to affirmative action and must ideally include representation from youth, women, and government employees. It is normally chaired by the chief of the given administrative location.

The committees, in liaison with CBOs, specifically coordinate community work in sub-projects such as the eco-charcoal factory. The eco-charcoal initiative aims to address opportunity cost incurred by households who burnt charcoal from the, now protected, forest area. In this eco-charcoal initiative, the carbon committees oversee the identification of charcoal burning households and their subsequent recruitment into the factory as wage workers specifically cutting and collecting shrubs for the eco-charcoal factory. The carbon committee works together with the CBOs to recruit and receive funds for community forest wardens. It also informs and guides community members on writing small grant proposals to be funded under the Wildlife Works REDD+ Project Trust Fund (WWRPTF). While the eco-charcoal initiative targets specific members of the community, the greenhouse initiative targets all members of the community. Due to the drought conditions in the project area, the greenhouse initiative supports tree nurseries:

²Mr Robb is one of the project's directors and is of British origin

³Focus group discussion with community group A

'Water is a problem. In Marungu town a single jericin (20 litres) goes for 25 Kenyan shillings (Ksh), while in the outskirts it goes for 50 Ksh/jericin. The water is bought from people with handcarts being pulled by donkeys or cows.' (Area chief, Maungu, September 2011)

Through the greenhouse initiative various community groups are supported to initiate their own tree nurseries and optionally can sell their seedlings to the REDD+ project. The project supports diversity of seedlings including indigenous and exotic species, and even grafted fruit trees. Seedlings bought from community members are left to mature in the greenhouse then supplied to community members, schools and even churches at no cost. However, grafted fruit trees are sold to farmers and other buyers at 100Ksh (approximately £1) per tree.

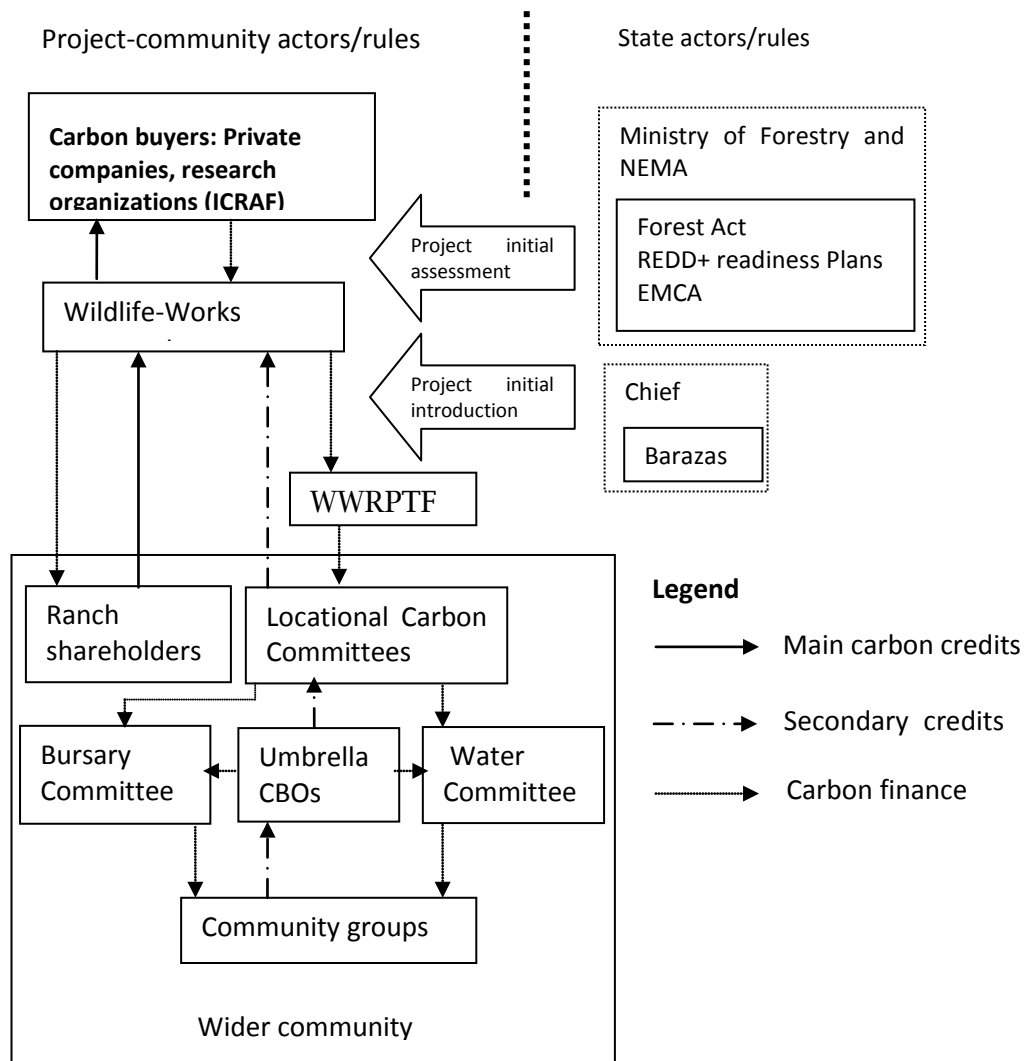
'We have a tree nursery supported by the carbon project. Most seedlings sometimes dry up due to lack of water but the project now takes the seedlings to a protected place and pays us 14 Ksh for each seedling which is alive.' (Chairperson of community group B, Maungu, September 2011)

During seedling distribution, community groups, schools and churches submit lists of the number and species of trees they need to the carbon committees and CBOs. Under the carbon committees sub-carbon committees, such as water or bursary committees, exist to oversee the implementation of related community projects that are supported by the WWRPTF. The bursary and water committees do not have direct mandates for the contribution of the community to project activities but they usefully facilitate the project's contribution to local livelihoods. Additionally, about 400 local people are employed within the protected sites, as community wardens, extension staff or clerks. During discussions, members of different groups expressed satisfaction with this mode of engagement, and particularly claim that they can always negotiate with the project on any concerns in their work with the project. An example of this was when they expressed dissatisfaction with the state linked Locational Development Committee. The project responded and the result was the formation of Locational Carbon Committees. This seems to have enhanced confidence among the local people working with the project, giving confidence that the project will always listen to their needs. Further, the benefit sharing procedures, as discussed later in this paper, seem to target the whole community, including any dissenting voices, at least at the time of this research. In fact such benefit sharing potentially appeal to non-project households who are likely to benefit from community projects even though they are not part of the project activities, argues the area chief: extensionists

'Water is the main problem in this area. Most groups proposed water projects and also other community members attending barazas always ask me to tell the government about their water needs.' (Area chief, Maungu, September 2011)

The overall institutional arrangement and flow of activities is schematically illustrated in Figure 5.1. The figure includes state institutions relevant to the project activities especially in the context of initial assessments and partnerships during implementation. The state institutions are discussed in detail in the next section but here it may be useful to mention that the Ministry of Forestry is relevant in the project by virtue of its role in implementing forest laws and preparing REDD+ readiness plans. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) also undertakes initial project assessments in the context of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA).

Figure 5.1: Flow of carbon credits and finance among various institutions (actors and rules) involved in the Kasigau project.



The term 'carbon credit' is used in a general sense to denote CO₂ sequestered from various activities. The continuous line indicates the flow of credits from the main source which is a protected area owned by various ranchers. The dashed line indicates secondary credits that come from community activities and are not a mainstream part of accounted carbon. The dotted line denotes the flow or disbursement of finances resulting from the credits.

In summary, the Kasigau project has devised specific engagement channels that suit the local circumstances and this has yielded 'uncontested' acceptance by local people. This shows that responding to local settings and re-adjusting global standards to such settings is crucial for the acceptance of a particular REDD+ project. In so doing, as this case indicates, REDD+ projects can be highly contextual in practice inevitably challenging and exposing gaps in certain global standards commonly used in validating such projects. For instance, while the UNFCCC agreed on safeguards in REDD interventions; some commonly used project validation standards such as the VCS have no provisions on these safeguards. The VCS standard validated Phase I of the Kasigau project and indeed this means the project was not under any obligation to address community concerns. However out of its experiences in this locality, the project had to devise its own mechanisms for engaging the community and promoting benefits. This may not be the case in many other projects that might use loopholes in the standards to gain more power over local resources at the expense of the local people. Potentially such loopholes compromise the practical operation of the community

safeguards. In the UNFCCC process reinforcing such safeguards and promoting equity in forest management under REDD+ is partly a function of the state.

In the next section, the role of, and experiences with, state institutions in resource governance and how these feed into the Kasigau project is analysed.

6.State-based institutions in REDD+

The state is the legitimate country representative in REDD+ negotiations. The UNFCCC mandates states to frame REDD+ policies, readiness strategies and governance procedures. Technically, the state is expected to define forests' reference values and reporting modalities based on national circumstances. International REDD+ funds, with regard to Green Climate Funds, will also be channeled through state-based institutions and these institutions are expected to safeguard the interests of local communities in forest resources. Safeguards are measured to protect local communities from problems, such as the capture of forest rights by powerful commercial and state actors in the REDD+ regime (Corbera and Schroeder 2011; Sikor *et al.* 2010). These mandates are central in a REDD+ process (McDermott *et al.* 2012) and are assigned on the assumption that states will embrace politically inclusive practices and goodwill to successfully and sustainably implement REDD+. But how is the real situation operating in the case of the Kasigau project?

The state is not directly responsible for the Kasigau project but it provides necessary institutional and collaborative support to it. According to the project directors, the institutional engagement with the state revolves around initial assessment of project plans to ensure their conformity to relevant national laws. Nationally, the Ministry of Forestry is the designate REDD+ focal point even though the Ministry has yet to put in place specific rules for approving such projects.⁴ Nonetheless, the state, through the NEMA, assessed the Kasigau project plans, mainly against existing forest regulations and REDD+ readiness plans.⁵ The forest regulations are documented under the Forest Act of 2005 (Government of Kenya 2005). The Act legalises diverse forest management options including leasehold (as in the case of the Kasigau project), public, and commercial forest management.

The Act entrenches community participation in the forest management options. Part IV, sections 45–48, of the Act specifically legalises the establishment of Community Forest Associations (CFA). These associations are constituted by groups of local people with clear interests and plans to manage forest in their areas. However, this Act does not include a legal basis for how external programmes such as REDD+ should engage local communities. It lays emphasis on how the local communities could manage or protect forests but not how they can benefit from, partner with or be protected from external programmes. Experts in the Forestry department argue that the Act was enacted when the country had not begun active engagement in the REDD+ process. However, it can be argued that prior externally funded reforestation programmes that existed before REDD+ could have informed the legislation. Moreover, the Act does not elaborate how the state will logistically and technically support CFAs. Kenya's REDD readiness plan (Government of Kenya 2010a) draws heavily from the Forest Act. The readiness plan incorporates views from local communities and usefully recommends the inclusion of local people in REDD+ projects. The proposed processes for community engagement are however ambiguous, with no indication of enforcement procedures.

Subjecting a REDD+ project to state regulations, whether a Forest Act or REDD readiness plan, therefore may not offer comprehensive assessment of and technical support to REDD+ projects, especially in the domain of local community engagement. This concern is compounded by a lack of

⁴ Interview, Ministry of Forestry staff Nairobi, March 2012

⁵ Interview, Ministry of Forestry staff Nairobi, March 2012

adequate capacity within Kenya's forestry sector (World Bank 2007) and relatively underdeveloped REDD specific institutions⁶.

The lack of comprehensive REDD+ standards and inadequate institutional capacity affect the role of the state in the Kasigau project. For instance, the Kasigau area at the time of this research had no registered community forest association and consequently there was no engagement of such an association with the project. Local forestry officers argue that establishing such associations needs incentives and support and these are apparently not provided for in the state regulations. Instead, a number of well-established state-based administrative institutions, such as the chiefs and Locational Development Committees dominate the project area and have historically exercised state authority over local resources. For instance, village trust land in the Kasigau area traditionally operates under local state bureaucracies where the chief has powers to allocate farming land to a particular household.⁷ The chief is appointed by the state through the provincial administration system. The chief is often in charge of a group of villages (location) performing duties related to security and formally linking the local people's concerns to the central government.

Pragmatically, therefore, at first the project used chiefs' barazas and the Locational Development Committee as conduits into the community. The Locational Committee linked community activities to the project. The Committee coordinated community sub-projects and groups. However, in my return fieldwork three months later, the project had stopped engagement with the Locational Development Committee and instead supported the community in forming Locational Carbon Committees. The role of the Locational Carbon Committees has already been discussed in the preceding section, but here it is crucial to understand why the project abolished community engagement through state-based committees. A discussion with the newly formed Carbon Committee indicates that community members felt the state committees were subject to manipulation for the benefit of the state at the expense of local people. This perception was aggravated by the fact that most people in the committees are former state employees. In response, the project worked with communities to establish the Locational Carbon Committees. The carbon committees are viewed by most community members as democratic, neutral and carbon specific. The government institutions are also reportedly bureaucratic and cumbersome. For instance community members point out delays in state approval of a community water project, funded under the Kasigau project, despite the glaring fact of water scarcity in the area. Water, arguably, is the most essential livelihood need of these communities and according to a local resource person, the state failed to provide this asset for many years. In addition, perceptions of state based institutions draw on historical experiences that people have had with state institutions, especially in the domain of local resource management. A chronological storyline provided by some community members, especially those who have leased their ranches to the REDD project, indicates that local frustration with government institutions dates back to the post-colonial period.

The history points to state based resource management regimes that are highly centralised, exclusive and often non-committal to local needs. As already mentioned, the Kasigau project is located in a land area that largely overlaps with a wildlife conservancy and, as the name suggests, the area is a corridor for wildlife movement between Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks. These Parks are the two biggest wildlife protection areas covering about 24,000 sq km and as part of wildlife tourism, contribute significant revenues to Kenya's GDP.⁸ The local people, historically utilised the wildlife

⁶ Discussion with Ministry of Forestry staff, Nairobi, March 2012

⁷ Discussion with a rancher, Rukinga, September, 2011 and Project Design Document

⁸ http://www.kws.org/parks/parks_reserves/index.html

resources for game meat, cropping and wood products.⁹ Over time these areas, and the animals living in them, became subjects of state interest due to the economic significance of wildlife tourism in Kenya. Prior to independence most of the land was owned by colonialists who began wildlife conservation. The conservation was founded on the basis that local people were antagonistic to wildlife and so there was need to confine wildlife within a particular area (Kabiri 2010a). Colonial governments therefore engaged game wardens to provide security to the specified conservation areas and mediate community-wildlife interaction. The game wardens acted to reasonably exclude local people from the wildlife but arguably not to the extent in which the post-colonial resource centralisation policies isolated the locals from these resources.¹⁰

The post independent resource management policies followed from this conservation agenda and established a stronger economic justification for the need to protect wildlife areas (Child 2009). Consequently by 1977 most colonial activities, including sport hunting and game wardens in wildlife areas, were abolished, making wildlife resources in the project ecosystem a state affair. A village elder argued that the colonial sport hunting and game wardening had some resonance with local people who could obtain game meat from these hunting activities and also that some wardens were locals. At the same time, cases of human/wildlife conflicts increased as villagers killed significant number of elephants that strayed into their farms, possibly as a protest against exclusion from the resource. Subsequently the state started to compensate community members for property damage by elephants in a bid to dissuade locals from killing the elephants. The compensation was abolished in the 1989 Wildlife Amendment Bill, though it was reinstated later due to public outcry and increased human/wildlife conflicts see (Kabiri 2010b). The compensation procedures were made more stringent and less accessible to the locals who reportedly abused such provisions. Nonetheless, subsequent legislation including the 2004 Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Government of Kenya 2004), popularly known as the GG Bill (taken from the name of bill sponsor, the then Member of Parliament, Mr G. G. Kariuki) and the 2007 Amendment Bill (Government of Kenya, 2007a) had no provision for local benefits from parks and reserves. Over the years, therefore, revenues generated from most parks in Kenya have risen and these collections are entirely channeled to the Kenya Wildlife Service, a mainstream state agency established to manage wildlife resources. While there are exceptional cases in Kenya where wildlife management has been devolved to local county governments,¹¹ the parks in the Kasigau project area are examples of the many other wildlife conservation areas in Kenya that are subject to state authority. The local community in the Kasigau area therefore perceives that it may never benefit in any way from state managed forestry and/or wildlife programmes.

‘We see so many white people pass-by on their way to see animals. They are sometimes escorted with Government vehicles but we are not asked anything. I hear the Government collects a lot of money from the white people who come to see animals. All the money is taken to Nairobi and the Government does not give anything to us’.
(Male rancher, Kasigau, September 2011)

To summarise this section, the institutional and collaborative experiences that the Kasigau people and the Kasigau project have had with state agencies, indicate how state institutions could either facilitate or create hurdles for a REDD+ project. This history indicates how state led resource management may exclude local people and this experience shapes local perceptions about the value

⁹ Interview with a village elder, Maungu, September 2011

¹⁰ Interview with a village elder, Maungu, September 2011

¹¹ Example of an exceptional case is the Maasai Mara National Park/Reserve. The Park/Reserve is managed by the Narok County Government rather than the Kenya Wildlife Service.

of state institutions involved in REDD+. In effect, the local people of Kasigau have little confidence in the state institutions. In the search for alternative opportunities community members agree that the Kasigau project is a better alternative. While the state seems to focus on exercising authority over local resources through its historical administrative units, such as chiefs, the new REDD+ intervention potentially institutionalises natural resource management locally and provides local people with a platform to bargain for benefits from their resources legitimately.

This could also mean that state related institutional gaps in the REDD+ and wider carbon management regimes provide opportunities for various actors in the REDD+ regime to exercise some power over local engagements. The degree to which such power is exercised for the overall benefit of local communities remains subject to particular project types, and the actors and interests involved. However, reverting back to the crucial role of the state in a REDD+ project, an institutional debate as to whether the state can oversee ably a successful REDD+ process arises, and in this case we see a scenario where greater capture of local resource rights results from the state than from a commercial REDD+ venture. Consequently, this experience indicates that centralised resource management, embedded in narratives of national economy, could negate state commitments to safeguarding local rights in REDD+, further compromising international gains in protecting local rights. The question that arises therefore is who should legitimately be responsible for addressing this challenge? Given states' sovereignty in REDD+, it is important that states commit to decentralise forest resource management processes and enact inclusive institutional reforms relevant to REDD+.

In Kenya such efforts have actually begun with the enactment of the new Constitution which gave considerable attention to land reforms. Of particular interest to the land reforms is the provision that communities living adjacent to land based natural resources should participate in their management and share in their benefits (National Land Alliance 2007). But are these reforms likely to work for REDD+ projects? The next section analyses the changing land reforms, actors involved, and implications for, the case study project.

7. Land rights and tenure reforms: a typology of actors and implications for REDD+

In this section, land rights and the tenure situation around the case project is first presented. This is followed by an analysis of the new Kenyan land reforms and how these reforms play into the case project. Land tenure confers legitimate powers on how to acquire, use and transfer land.¹² Within Kenya, land is a politically, socially and economically vital resource that draws diverse interests among multiple state and non-state actors. These interests act to inform land policies at a particular time and such policies bear heavily on REDD projects (Chhatre *et al.* 2012).

The Kasigau project land was initially classified as government trust land. In the 1970s, however, the state reclassified it and allocated it to private ranches. Both Somali pastoralists and Taita communities were part of these ranches and the Somalis, particularly, grazed their large herds of cattle on the land. The Taitas on the other hand were not pastoralists and informally/verbally leased parts of their holdings in the Taita Ranching Co. Ltd and Rukinga Ranching Co. Ltd to Somali pastoralists in expectation of some in kind payment which, however, was never forthcoming:

‘Initially the ranches were leased to Somalis for grazing livestock and they never paid anything but now we see schools being constructed.’ (Ranch trustee Maungu Ward, Maungu, September, 2011)

Current ranchers claim that many shareholders in these ranching companies perceived the ranches as valueless and would have preferred alternative economic opportunities. Most dissatisfied ranchers sold their shares to immigrants, including Wildlife-Works Co. Ltd, which in the year 2000 became a major shareholder of the Rukinga Ranching Co. Ltd.¹³ Phase I of the REDD project covers 70,000 acres of the Rukinga ranch and the establishment of the project on the ranch followed an agreement in which other shareholders transferred conservation rights to Wildlife-Works in 2005. The Kenya land policies (Republic of Kenya 2010b) legitimises such conservation easement as part of a leasehold rather than a freehold.¹⁴ Consequently, in 2009 Wildlife-Works had to acquire carbon rights from the Rukinga shareholders through Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) procedures, and this acquisition was reportedly ratified at project validation. The conservation easement and acquisition of carbon rights was however not without complex negotiations, including power games in which Wildlife-Works purchased majority shares from ranchers in a bid to outcompete an alternative investor who intended to put up a slaughter house on the land. While such investor interests are not unusual in land deals, this particular scenario is indicative of how perceptions of the value of Kasigau land began to change, drawing diverse actors and interests thereby creating more local awareness about that value. Increasing awareness of land value in the context of REDD+ has, according to the area chief, stirred interest among local people who have leased additional ranches and non-ranch land in Phase II of the REDD+ project. Phase II of the project is already validated and covers about 425,000 acres.

¹²Definition drawn from the National Land Policy

¹³Interview with project staff, September 2011

¹⁴The new constitution provides for renewable leasehold for a period not exceeding 99 years and the project hopes to get a renewal in 2038

‘Most people now believe that conservation can bring money. They have decided to donate the upper parts of the corridor to the project.’ (Area chief, Maungu 2011)

Most community members, some of whom apparently hold no share in the ranches, argue that committing land to the project will enable them benefit more from the community projects compared to initial individualised use of community land (outside ranches) that were largely permitted by the chief.

The project land tenure interaction is likely to play into the ongoing land reforms. These reforms are contained in Chapter Five of Kenya’s new constitution. The constitutional provisions are largely based on an initially proposed National Land Policy (National Land Alliance 2007). The reforms emphasise the principles of equity, productivity and sustainability in land deals. To achieve these principles, institutional changes in land governance have been proposed while provisions on land ownership (leasehold and freehold) and land types (private, public and communal) have not changed significantly from the previous policies. At the national level an independent arm of the state, The National Land Commission, has been constituted and this commission draws powers that were initially vested in the mainstream state Ministry of Lands. Specifically, the commission has supreme authority over land matters and has powers to allocate (**development control**) and acquire land (**compulsory acquisition**) in the interests of the public. The commission is arguably independent from mainstream state institutions that reportedly misused powers and subsequently mismanaged the country’s land tenure system:

‘[...] compulsory acquisition is the power of the State to take over land owned privately for a public purpose. [...].The power exists in the current Constitution, but has been abused especially with regards to Trust Land. Under the National Land Policy, the Government will: - Make rules, systems and procedures to ensure these powers are exercised in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner and strictly in the public interest.’ (Government of Kenya 2007b:7)

The commissioners in the National Land Commission are nominated, vetted by Parliament and ultimately appointed by the President (Republic of Kenya 2010b). The role of the commission is supported by the District Lands Board, comprising of people nominated from by various communities in the district, and Community Land Boards whose members are nominated by community members. The Community Lands Board is arguably the participatory arm of devolving land reforms and incorporating local voices in the land reform process. The role of the community board is to coordinate land registration and inventories at local levels and report the same to the National Land Commission through the District Lands Board.

These institutional reforms are important. However, the extent to which they represent factual land reforms for equality, sustainability and productivity is debatable. Peculiar to the reforms is that the president retains powers to appoint the influential National Land Commission. Yet it is within the presidency that mainstream ministries were appointed and these ministries were the centralised points responsible for excluding locals from resource management and benefits. Already it is emerging that the independence of the National Land Commission is faced with opposition from powerful political players in central Government. On 6 February 2013 national news reported that the President’s office had remained non-committal to gazetting the names of land commissioners

who were already approved by parliament.¹⁵ A group of civil society and citizens had legally challenged the presidency to gazette the commissions. A court ruling on this matter was as follows:

'The delay in setting in motion the operation of such a key institution in land reforms contrary to the expectations of Kenyans expressed through their duly elected representatives cannot be allowed to go on especially bearing in mind our common history, where the emotive issue of land has caused untold suffering and lives have been lost.' (Justice Majanja, Nairobi, 4 February 2013¹⁶)

Reports indicate that as of 18 February, the president was yet to gazette the commissioners despite the court ruling¹⁷ and the president, at the time of this research, was still under criticism for breaching the constitutional provisions on land reforms¹⁸

This indicates that the most influential institutions proposed in the land reforms, are still under the control of central Government. The political interests in the National Land Commission may extend its impacts on the REDD+ project through the Community Lands Board. The Community Lands Board could in one way provide local institutional support for REDD+ projects given its role in coordinating local land registration and inventories. On the other hand, the board could compromise the extent to which land resources are factually decentralised to support REDD+ locally. It is possible that the alignment of Community Land Boards with central institutions could further inform state interests in the ranch land within which the Kasigau project is currently generating carbon credits. This is because the Community Lands Board can only report local land issues to the central institutions but has no legislative power to reinforce local land aspirations, such as communal tenure in the Kasigau area. In the same way that national parks attracted the economic interest of the state, extending a strong link between central institutions and local ranches through the board could dramatically subject the ranches to changes in ownership and negotiating patterns for the Kasigau project. For instance, there is already a move to divide the Kasigau ranches into individual ownerships. A single group ranch is made of 50-2,500 shareholders so that would mean a given ranch could be subdivided 2,500 times. While many studies have interpreted such individualised entitlements as valuable for REDD+, and that such assignments can improve access and use of forest resources, improve local livelihoods, and strengthen local land institutions (Chhatre *et al.* 2012), the Kasigau area presents a different case. Through the REDD+ project the local people have embraced a collective front to conservation and this has significantly simplified negotiations for the project. However, the intended individualised tenure and fragmentation of the ranches, means the REDD+ project will have to convince over 2,500 shareholders to commit their parcels of land to the project. This could be complex and costly. The increased costs may eat into funds that would otherwise be allocated to community projects. Additionally, disadvantaged groups such as immigrant locals, landless youths and women who own no shares in the ranches, may lose the current benefits they draw from ranches through the REDD+ project.

Secure land tenure in REDD+ ought to be viewed both in terms of ownership and historical aspirations of a given community. In certain contexts, such as the Kasigau case, if communal ownership is well clarified and enshrined in law, a collective action to conservation with benefits that

¹⁵ http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000076710&story_title=Kenya-Kimemia-defied-order-to-gazette-land-team,-AG-says

¹⁶ http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000076645&story_title=Kenya-High-Court-orders-Kibaki-to-gazette-land-team-officials

¹⁷ http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000077599&story_title=Kenya-CIC-says-Kibaki-disobeyed-law-on-land-body

¹⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI6E0enOy5c>

accrue to the whole community may result. However, individualised land ownership may only work well in cases where carbon production is individualised as well as the benefits from carbon revenues. Such differentiated land rights should inform land reforms in Kenya and the wider sub-Saharan Africa. In so doing it will be possible to ensure the practical success of REDD+ considering that about 25 per cent of forests in developing countries are community controlled (Bluffstone *et al.* 2013). Conversely, land reforms in Kenya, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, are still fuzzy and subordinate to historical regimes with imperatives towards centralisation. Such centralisation regimes are driven by national economic interests at the expense of local interests and this may adversely impact on a conservation project such as REDD+. States, in formulating land reforms, should understand that the reforms suit various contexts differently. Policy process and research on REDD+ must not confine land reforms/land tenure security to individual entitlements but should widen their view in recognition of the fact that there are cases where communal or traditional land tenure systems work better for REDD+ projects than do an individualised system.

In the next section, I analyse how the Kasigau project has operated within a communal land tenure system to meet livelihood expectations and narratives of the local people.

8. Implications for livelihoods

This case study provides some evidence on how a particular REDD+ project may interact with local livelihood narratives to generate impacts. The evidence in this case is contextual but it is one from which a wide range of project and policy actors may draw specific lessons to apply in their own contexts. As already highlighted, local narratives and expectations about livelihoods do not only shape the project narratives but also play a role in structuring the project impacts. Before presenting how the project has responded practically to such expectations, it is important to first understand what the local people expect(ed) from the project.

At the time of this research, local people showed a positive inclination to the livelihood benefits of the project yet with little understanding of how the carbon crediting works. While community members would refer to the project as a carbon project, their interests and perceptions lay more in how the project helps them overcome certain specific vulnerabilities. During interviews, they would always refer to the funds supporting community projects as 'carbon money' even though the concept behind carbon crediting remains fairly opaque to them. For instance, in explaining about her understanding of the project and why she is engaged in it, a community member said:

'We were called to the chief's barazas and we were told that Wildlife-Works has brought another project called carbon project and the white man has decided to help Africans because the atmosphere is damaged. We hope the project will help us get water. We have been told to write proposals and in our group we have elected people who will handle the money.' (Female member of the community, September 2011)

Project staff agree that there is a greater livelihood enhancing expectation that sometimes challenges the dissemination of carbon/mitigation information and intake of such information by the local community:

'[...] While introducing the project, we tell the community that we are trying to reduce carbon emissions by planting more trees. We tell them that charcoal burning is harmful to the environment and there is need to avoid deforestation. When trees are cut soil erosion is eminent and gullies are formed. However people mainly ask about what they will get from the project and even start requesting the project not to work with some people they think are corrupt.' (Project staff, September, 2011)

'[...] Communities themselves still do not understand climate change impacts and always maintain the status quo. In our meetings, they normally raise issues related to climate change but rather front their immediate problems such as water needs and how elephants could be prevented from destroying their farms.' (Project staff, September 2011)

The project has employed a range of approaches to create awareness on carbon and its role in climate change and ecosystem productivity. These efforts usefully resulted in some awareness about carbon issues but this awareness, at the time of this research, still remained overshadowed by the livelihood expectations, a situation that may only change overtime with more awareness efforts, the project staff argues. When asked how they communicate climate change and carbon messages to the community, a project staff member said:

'We use different ways to educate community members on carbon issues. Sometimes we use drawings of trees with dots indicating carbon dioxide sinking into the tree. We also use drama, school bursary flyers designed with carbon information, and past historical experiences in land productivity. However, it will take many years for the community to understand issues of carbon as most people here are illiterate. They can understand only Kiswahili but it is even difficult to describe the word 'carbon' in Kiswahili. Most literate people have gone to Mombasa to look for jobs in the beaches and ports.' (Extension staff, November 2011)

The enhanced livelihood expectations from the Kasigau project show that while REDD projects are conceptually designed to mitigate climate change from a global perspective, attending to the local livelihood needs is almost inevitable in order that such projects gain acceptance, and perhaps for the success of wider REDD programme. However, such livelihood orientations present additional challenges, potentially overshadowing local intake of carbon related information, and in such scenarios of asymmetric information concerns might arise, especially on transparency and equity in benefit sharing. But how has the Kasigau project responded to such expectations to fairly and equitably promote livelihoods while ensuring mitigation targets are achieved?

The Kasigau project generates an array of impacts, shaped by history and resource politics. These impacts have different significance and value within international, national and local narratives of mitigation and development/livelihoods. Peculiar to the project, and perhaps partly the reason why livelihood perception is strong within the local setting of this particular project, is that the local people are not directly involved in carbon production. As initially highlighted, the Kasigau project generates its credits from a protected area and the local people do not engage in the details of carbon production and accounting. The project applies a VCS approved methodology, '*VM0009 Methodology for Avoided Mosaic Deforestation of Tropical Forests V1-0*' (Holland *et al.* 2010) to account for carbon credits. The methodology involves technical measurements within the protected area and these measurements are often undertaken by the project staff. The project aims to avoid emission of 51.5MtCO₂e (both phase 1 and 2 of the project).¹⁹ The emission would arguably result from unabated deforestation of the 500,000 acre dryland forest. This translates into yearly emission abatement of 0.8 MtCO₂e to 1.3 MtCO₂e over a possible 20-30 year project period (Wildlife-Works 2008; Korchinsky *et al.* 2008). These credits result from aboveground vegetation while possible belowground credits accounts for methodological uncertainties. The abatement target was validated in 2011, providing a level of certainty measure. The significance of avoiding these emissions can be viewed as a contribution to reducing the 17 per cent contribution of deforestation to global emissions. More importantly, the project significantly contributes to Kenya's target of avoiding emission of 1.6 MtCO₂e per year by 2030 (Government of Kenya 2012). Kenya prioritises forest mitigation in her climate action plan because the sector contributes 32 per cent (19.6 MtCO₂e) of total national emissions (Government of Kenya; 2012). This means the Kasigau project already abates about 5 per cent of annual emissions from deforestation in Kenya.

In the context of shifting resource rights, community members feel the project has restored their rights to forest resources compared to a 'no REDD+' scenario where all benefits were channelled to the central government. As already highlighted, community members, registered in groups, only play secondary roles in carbon production and these largely entail tree planting both within and outside the protected area, and these trees are not accounted for in the carbon projections. Within the

¹⁹ Phase I: 3.5 million Metric tonnes and phase II: 4.8 million metric tons. Project design document (Wildlife-Works, 2011).

acquisition of land rights, carbon rights have been transferred, in a written agreement, to the project developer who then produces carbon credits technically which are sold to generate revenues.

In terms of livelihood impacts, the project partnership with the people includes the sharing of carbon revenues. At the time of this research the project had received carbon payments backdated to 2006 when the project started conserving the dryland forest. The five year carbon revenue has been equally allocated based on a benefit sharing agreement in which community projects receive one third of these funds, while the remaining two thirds are allocated equally to ranch shareholders and the project administration. The share for community projects is managed through a trust fund named 'Wildlife Works REDD Project Trust Fund' (WWRPTF). WWRPTF, the project staff argues, transparently institutionalises fund disbursement to the community. Through it, a total of Ksh24 million (US\$300,000) has been allocated to various community projects (Fig 8.1) based on priority projects proposed by various groups in all the villages surrounding the project area (Fig 8.2).

Figure 8.1: Locational allocation of the carbon trust fund to community projects.

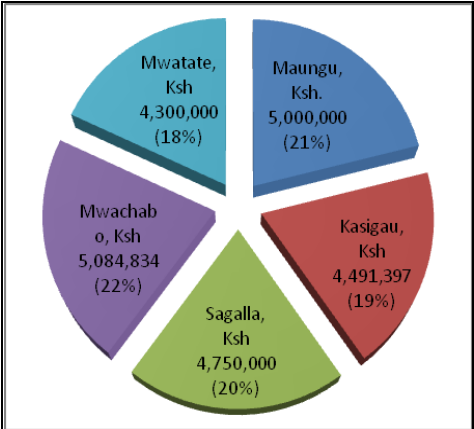
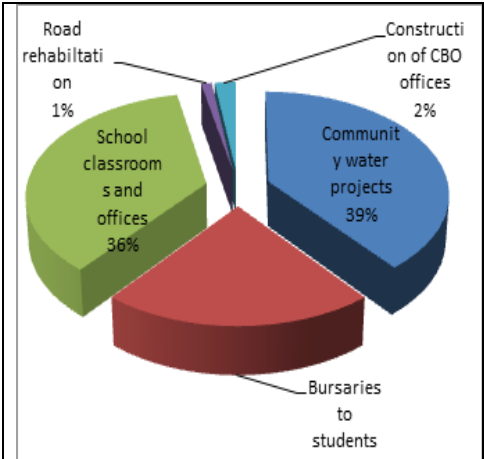


Figure 8.2: The proportion of allocation to different community projects



The prioritised interventions cut across a range of livelihood assets (natural, financial, human, physical and social). More than two thirds of the revenue is allocated to physical capital, mainly community water projects. Discussions with various groups that received funding for projects indicate that these projects will have knock-on effects on multiple livelihood assets. Members of a

particular women's group involved in enhancing economic and nutritional status of its members narrated the problems they face with water scarcity in the area, including poor crop yields and unhealthy livestock. This group, even though it was not funded for a water project, believe that a water project initiated by a neighbouring group would give them an opportunity to practice irrigated horticulture and poultry farming to supply Mombasa city, thereby expanding their economic assets.²⁰ The communal approach to disseminating carbon benefits, amongst other factors, contribute to greater social inclusion, thereby minimising potential negative impacts in terms of increased social inequality among various groups in the community. This is perhaps another reason for local acceptance of the Kasigau project. In this communal approach every community member (whether working with the project or not, group members or non group members, funded groups or non funded groups) is able to draw benefits. In addition, the procedure for the sharing out of carbon revenue was set by the project proponents in consultation with the community groups working with the project. Even though this might have left out non-group members from such decisions, most of these non-group members who largely pursue non-farm activities or non-charcoal related livelihoods (e.g. small businesses) still feel included because first, their activities are not adversely affected by the project and second, their inputs to the project are minimal yet they still gain advantage from project related communal benefits.²¹ Additionally, the carbon committees charged with overseeing the implementation of community projects include elected women, youth representatives and even government representatives as members. The general feeling of inclusion among the local people is also affirmed whenever various community groups reflect on their past experiences with resource centralisation regimes, something that observably works well for the project in terms of addressing high livelihood expectations. In other words, 'the better option' perception of the project by the local people appears to be covering up for the livelihood expectations.²² However, some social differences may arise from the other one third of revenues shared among ranch shareholders, but this again is largely based on the number of shares a particular rancher legally owns.

Reverting back to the actual project impacts, some community members, especially heads of households that include schoolchildren, view construction of schools and bursaries for school boys and girls as critical investments in education and a step likely to provide these children with competent skills for better jobs. A household head explained that most of the over 400 local people employed in the project sometimes lack skills for certain project tasks, and in such cases the project is forced to hire these skills from 'outside'. Many parents, whose sons and daughters have received the bursary, appreciate the role of education in their livelihoods, something that the Locational Carbon Committee re-enforces. In terms of social capital a major shift in resource governance, including instituting REDD+ locally, participatory engagement and capacity building, have had major impacts on the Kasigau project. These institutions have enhanced and coordinated participatory community/project engagements and have since revived the confidence of local people in their resources, something that many argue would not have happened in a 'no REDD+' scenario. In all, these impacts indicate that the Kasigau people, through REDD+, have experienced a shift from a powerful state-led resource management regime to a private-public partnership regime.

²⁰Discussion with community group C, Maungu, September, 2011

²¹ Interview with the chief on his experiences at the barazas bringing together both project and non project households as well as other members of the community, Maungu, September, 2011

²² Author's observation and analysis

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper draws empirical evidence on the practicality of an ongoing REDD project to show how global consensus on REDD+ is faced with contextual vulnerabilities and resource histories that ultimately shape project narratives, practicality and outcomes.

Local narratives about poor land value and poor livelihood assets shape the project narrative and its interaction with the people. The local ranch areas, prior to the REDD+ project, were not generating significant incomes for land owners, shareholders or local communities and were thus perceived to be valueless. Combined with centralised state-led land/resource governance, the local people perceived very little or no opportunities in their resources. The coming of the Kasigau project into the area provides an opportunity for the people to participate in the management of their resources as well as sharing in the benefits. The project therefore presents a 'better option' to the local people and has received 'uncontested' acceptance in the local area.

The local people appreciate project opportunities more in terms of their livelihoods, than in long term global climate change mitigation as envisaged by global and project narratives. This supports the idea that responding to local settings, and re-adjusting global standards to such settings, is crucial for the acceptance of a particular REDD+ project and even perhaps for the success of the overall REDD programme in mitigating global climate change and reducing local vulnerabilities. But if such livelihood benefits dominate project interactions at local level the result may be a lack of accountability, transparency and equity in certain REDD+ projects, especially when communities focus more on local outcomes than carbon production procedures.

The livelihood opportunities that currently result from the case study project might well be enhanced if the land reforms provided in Kenya's new constitution take into account communal aspirations in land entitlements both structurally and factually. This is crucial because the state has sovereign authority over REDD. However, past experiences with centralised state-led management of wildlife/forestry resources in the project area leave unanswered questions about the state's institutional ability to oversee a successful REDD+ process and safeguard local communities against exclusion from managing and benefiting from REDD+ related forest resources as envisaged by the international community.

The case study also suggests that REDD+ projects operating under communal land tenure are likely to enjoy greater acceptance among different groups in the community because benefit sharing in such cases are communalised rather than individualised.

Overall, the Kasigau project has given confidence to the local people who now believe they can contribute to the management of local resources and benefit from them. This is largely due to the project's sensitivity to local context and such lessons indicate that REDD+ potentially presents a multi-governance programme that bridges the gap between state institutions and local institutions for sustainable use of local resources. However, five key recommendations may help further shape REDD+ projects:

1. *A focus on relatively vulnerable settings.* To achieve greater success, acceptance and impacts, REDD+ interventions, whether project or nationwide programmes should steer investments towards relatively vulnerable areas rather than less vulnerable areas where alternative land value could exceed REDD+ benefits. For instance, while this case study project has achieved greater acceptance and impacts by linking REDD+ benefits to local vulnerabilities, in other

cases such as the vision 2050 REDD+ project in Ghana (Hashmiu 2012), farmers find alternative land uses such as pepper plantation more profitable than carbon benefits, thereby drawing in land use competition and relatively low acceptance of the project. It is however worth noting that the acceptance of the Kasigau project is also subject to other variables such as past experiences with the state and project engagement approaches adapted to local context.

2. *Decentralised resource management and inclusive decision making.* Kenyan and other governments should commit to decentralise land and forest resource management, empower local institutions such as the Community Forest Associations, and enact regulations on how such associations can engage with and benefit from REDD+ interventions.
3. *Private-public partnership.* The case study project is a good example of how private REDD+ interventions can provide beneficial partnerships with local people. While the state remains the sovereign authority for REDD+ interventions in a country, the private sector's role in REDD+ should be enhanced and supported institutionally. Potentially private-public partnerships and associated market based funds provide more options in REDD+, thereby covering any institutional and funding gaps the state might have, as well as providing alternative bargaining spaces for local communities.
4. *Safeguards in global validation standards.* The case study shows that some commonly used project validation standards, such as VCS, do not consider safeguarding community interests in their validation criteria but are more focused on emission reductions. Such standards ought to be reviewed to incorporate community livelihoods alongside emission targets as part of project validation criteria. Otherwise, some projects might use such loopholes to exclude local people from participating in and benefiting from REDD+ projects, thereby causing contestation from local people, poor local acceptance and potential project failure. Some experiences with A/R CDM projects point to this scenario. The Busoga Forestry Company Ltd, a subsidiary of Tree Farms, a Norwegian company, established pine and eucalyptus plantations on marginal agricultural lands for carbon crediting. In order to achieve emissions committed under particular standards, the project evicted about 8,000 project area inhabitants without proper consultation and compensation or firm evidence of substantial carbon benefits (Eraker 2000a). This resulted in protests and destruction of the plantation by dissatisfied local residents and the subsequent discontinuity of the project (Eraker 2000b). This additionally reinforces the fact that community engagement and transparency in benefit sharing is essential for the success of any REDD+ intervention.
5. *Future research.* Future research should link the global REDD+ institutional outcomes with local perspectives, particularly focusing on how land reforms and changing resource governance in Kenya, and in the wider SSA area, link to local land use aspirations and the resulting implications for REDD+. Ideally, policy process and research on REDD+ must not confine land reforms/land tenure security to individual entitlements but should widen its view, in recognition of the fact that there are cases where communal or traditional land tenure systems work better for REDD+ projects than do an individualised system.

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Appendix

REDD_agroforestry carbon projects

Project name	Y_cordinate	X_cordinate	Standard	Status
Kenya Smallholder Coffee Carbon Project	-1.17481	36.83041	VCS and CCB	Not approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	-0.416876	36.950981	Pan-Vivo	Approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	-0.659056	37.382723	Pan-Vivo	Approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	-0.3	38.016667	Pan-Vivo	Approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	-0.164158	37.018639	Pan-Vivo	Approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	-0.579682	37.776574	Pan-Vivo	Approved
Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project _ Nyanza	0.062629	34.287808	VCS	Approved
CARE Sustaining Agriculture through climate change (SACC) (2009)	-0.416667	34.833333	VCS and CCB	Not approved
Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project _ Western	-0.042806	34.549968	VCS	Approved
The International Small Group Tree Planting Program	0.035164	36.364292	Pan-Vivo	Approved

REDD_forestry carbon projects

Project name	Y_cordinate	X_cordinate	Standard	Status
Kikuyu forest Escarpment Environment Conservation Network (ESCONET)	-0.9166667	36.666667	VCS	Pipeline
Tree flights Kenya	-3.066667	39.883333	OTC	Approved
Kasigau Corridor REDD project	-3.85	38.75	VCS/REDD	Approved
Mau forest REDD pilot project	0.0833333	35.416667	VCS	Pipeline
Forest again	0.266667	34.883333	CCB	Approved