

**FORESTRY & BEEKEEPING DIVISION (MNRT)  
&  
IRINGA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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Matumizi endelevu ya misitu ya asili

**INITIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES**



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## Executive Summary

Since 1999 MEMA (Matumizi Endelevu ya Misititu ya Asili) has been working on Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Tanzania. Focusing on 23 villages in Iringa Rural District, MEMA's objective is to develop community-based sustainable management of natural forest and woodland in Iringa District, and through this effort to conserve valuable biological diversity and improve the welfare of rural poor communities. The purpose of this report is not to evaluate the extent to which MEMA has been able to achieve that, but rather to review the learning experiences gained during implementation and to highlight key lessons. The study was undertaken by a small team from Korongo Ltd., with the majority of the observations being based on field work in a selected number of villages. This report has been extensively reviewed by the staff of the District Natural Resource Office in Iringa.

Although the implementation period has been short, MEMA has made significant progress and obtained understanding of a range of issues relating to the implementation of PFM. The time has not been sufficient to allow for a thorough development and testing of a full institutional and technical package of Best Practices, but there is the basis for an analysis of practical experience.

The study has resulted in a number of observations:

- ✍ Communities like the concept of PFM. They see the point in managing their own forest
- ✍ It is possible to get perceptible changes in forest quality over a relatively short period
- ✍ PFM does not have a high priority with villages, especially during the early stages of implementation. Communities are much more interested in socio-economic infrastructure. However, once PFM can be seen to bring concrete benefits, the level of community interest increases
- ✍ Participation, awareness and representativeness are important to the success of PFM. It is crucial that as many people as possible understand what is happening
- ✍ Transparency and accountability are critical, and it is necessary that as many people as possible understand their rights and that the benefit sharing process is very open
- ✍ Although women have been a specific focus of support, they remain somewhat marginalised in the PFM process
- ✍ Socio-economic and institutional issues, not technical questions, present the greatest challenge to the implementation of PFM
- ✍ Ward Councilors can play a useful role in 'troubleshooting' local management problems
- ✍ In some villages the system of permits and fines works well, in others it does not
- ✍ If people can see positive results from the use of funds from permits and fines – especially development of social infrastructure - they will be willing to support PFM
- ✍ The concept of harvesting quotas is new to many villagers and more time is required before it will be able to operate effectively in most villages

- ✍ While knowing what benefits to expect and what rights you have helps villagers control the system, internal social pressures sometimes make it difficult for communities to control access to resources
- ✍ PFM has significantly helped many villagers clamp down on access to the forests by outsiders
- ✍ PFM needs to produce tangible and reasonably-quick-appearing benefits. Perceived improvements in forest quality are, for the most part, insufficient short-term benefits, while the non-forest benefits of social development are appreciated
- ✍ Income generating activities are important and need further support. Honey marketing, for example, is poorly developed, though charcoal makers claim that new PFM costs reduce their margins too much
- ✍ PFM work needs to start on direct implementation with communities, and not wait until all the baseline studies have been completed
- ✍ MEMA has supported a positive change in attitude from, and of, foresters. This has been significantly supported by strong national leadership for change
- ✍ Inter-sectoral linkages are important, though the driving force of integration remains access to funds rather than commitment to a more integrated approach to rural development and natural resource management
- ✍ Not surprisingly, communities are more willing to conserve a forest if they continue to have access to another forest that is not being 'conserved'. Levels of dependency of forest resources is therefore important in determining capacity to participate in PFM
- ✍ The CBFM Guidelines are generally useful, but need to be adapted to the needs of each situation
- ✍ MEMA has supported many technical surveys that have not involved the local communities. This has limited their use
- ✍ New systems for surveying and registering village forest reserve boundaries, based on the Village Land Act of 1999 have been developed which will contribute to a more effective, and ultimately lower cost, process of registering land for PFM.

Analysis of the observations has led to the identification of Initial Learning Experiences:

- ✍ PFM requires genuine commitment and understanding from district technical staff. This has been a crucial characteristic of MEMA support to PFM in Iringa
- ✍ National policy is generally supportive of PFM, though greater diffusion is required into the rural areas
- ✍ The wide range of skills required to facilitate PFM in communities means that professionals from many different sectors need to be involved in the process
- ✍ Good PFM takes time. Donors, the government, councils and communities must not be in a hurry to see direct benefits from PFM – especially JFM
- ✍ In 'new' districts PFM should be targeted at communities with enough forest land to make it manageable and profitable, and already endowed with some basic development skills and institutions
- ✍ Get started...but expect that some things will go wrong..... and be prepared to respond
- ✍ Despite carefully focused programmes to include women in the preparation for PFM, women's involvement in PFM activities remain limited in Iringa.

## ACRONYMS

CBFM	:	Community-based Forest Management
CD	:	Community Development
DKK	:	Danish Kroner
FBD	:	Forestry and Beekeeping Division
GPS	:	Global Positioning System
JFM	:	Joint Forest Management
MEMA	:	<i>Matumizi Endelevu ya Misitu ya Asili</i> , Iringa District
NGO	:	Non-governmental Organisation
PFM	:	Participatory Forest Management
SDC	:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
VC	:	Village Council
VNRC	:	Village Natural Resources Committee

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years in Tanzania, there has been the realisation that more responsibility needs to be handed over to local people for their own development, if goals of sustainable growth are to be achieved. This has already started in several sectors and has also been reflected in the Policy Paper on Local Government Reform of 1998 which has decentralised much of central government's power and handed it over to the districts. Thus there has been a move towards communities becoming more responsible for the use of their own resources. This again has been reflected in several recent acts, including the Village Land Act of 1999. Thus, following this wave of legislation all pointing in the same direction, the Forest Act of 2002 supports the empowerment of people to manage their own forest resources and recommends CBFM (Community Based Forest Management) (variations of which are PFM (Participatory Forest Management) and JFM (Joint Forest Management)) as one of the main strategies towards bringing forests under effective, cheap and sustainable management. At the same time, policies have also been drawn up which emphasise the need for people to support themselves through their own endeavours and especially by making use of what they have to hand – the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2000 and the Rural Development Strategy of 2001 both highlight this. This also has implications for the use and management of forests, in a way which will be productive and beneficial for local populations.

Now that the policy and legislation are in place, guidelines have been drawn up to support the development of Participatory Forest Management at community level (Community Based Forest Management Guidelines). The challenge now is to make it work and to implement it successfully, since it is a major change for communities suddenly to have such responsibilities thrust upon them. However, there are indications that it has begun to work, for example in the context of roads and water<sup>1</sup>, so it is expected that there is potential for it to work in the case of forests too.

MEMA (*Matumizi Endelevu ya Misitu ya Asili*) has been at the forefront of the efforts to tackle PFM in Iringa district. The two MEMA projects (Community Based Natural Woodlands Management Project and the Udzungwa Mountains Forest Management and Biodiversity Project) have as their common objective 'to develop community based sustainable management of natural forest and woodlands in Iringa district and through this effort to conserve valuable biological diversity and improve the welfare of rural poor communities'. Their joint immediate objectives are: firstly, to develop, test and implement widely replicable PFM models for environmentally sustainable production, use, management and protection of natural forests and woodlands in the pilot areas, and secondly, to support capacity development in natural forests, woodlands and biodiversity resource management in Iringa district.

Danish government support for natural resource management in Iringa region started with support to the HIMA (*Hifadhi ya Mazingira*) project in the early 1990s. The MEMA projects started work in 1999, with a total joint budget of DKK 36.11 million, supported by the Danish

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<sup>1</sup>**Village Travel and Transport Project** an SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) project working on rural roads with local people in the Uluguru mountains in Morogoro Region, and **Domestic Water Supply Programme**, a project funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy to bring water to rural households in Morogoro Region working closely with local people

government's Environment, Peace and Stability Facility. Initially planned to end in June 2002, the projects have been extended to the end of 2003. The projects are implemented by Forestry & Beekeeping Division (Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism) and the Lands & Natural Resources Office of Iringa District Council, though it involves a wide range of other partners in the public and private sector.

The main target of MEMA supported activities is the forests and the forest users in 23 villages. The basic strategy is to establish an appropriate village institution – the Village Natural Resources Committee (VNRC) – and through the development of five zonal planning teams, to help them to prepare forest management plans. The VNRCs are composed of a maximum of 11 members. The VNRC assume responsibility for the implementation of the plans and recruit local scouts to undertake surveillance in the village forests. Under the overall heading of PFM, MEMA is working with communities to develop Joint Forest Management in central and local government forest reserves (catchment forests on reserved land) and Community Based Forest Management in village lands which will eventually become declared village forest reserves.

In addition to working directly with the 23 village communities, MEMA has supported a number of other important activities. These include:

- ✍ biodiversity surveys in Udzungwa
- ✍ socio-economic surveys
- ✍ survey of Nyang'oro range
- ✍ mapping forest reserves and village boundaries
- ✍ a wide range of studies, including gender and marketing
- ✍ training and capacity building for district staff
- ✍ support for improved use of forest resources (such as tree nurseries, agroforestry, beekeeping, fish farming, fuel efficient stoves)
- ✍ support to marketing of forest products
- ✍ project management and monitoring and evaluation
- ✍ training and capacity building support to Iringa based and National NGOs.

The forests which the district team have been dealing with are moist evergreen forests in the highlands of Dabaga and miombo woodlands in the semi-arid hills of Ismani. However, most of the experiences would be applicable in any context and any type of forest, since they are predominantly institutional issues, rather than issues connected to the forest itself. This is also becoming clear from other projects working in the field of natural resources including coastal zone management and wetlands.

This report presents the results of an initial review of the lessons learnt in PFM by the MEMA project during the past four years of work<sup>2</sup>. The objectives of the review were:

- ✍ to analyse and describe the technical (forestry, marketing, tourism, wildlife), institutional, legal and socio-economic learning experiences gained during the implementation of the MEMA projects
- ✍ to highlight key lessons and recommend how they best can benefit future PFM activities. The lessons learnt should include an estimate of cost of PFM facilitation.

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<sup>2</sup> The work was carried out by a team from Korongo Ltd. – Jeffrey Lewis (Team Leader), Kate Forrester Kibuga (Main Consultant) and I.S. Madundo (Field Assistant) in March-September 2003

- ✍ to present the experiences gained to be easily accessible for different groups of stakeholders

The community based forest management guidelines stress that learning by doing is the key, and that progress is marked by practical problem solving. When a community is faced by a problem, it must try to deal with it themselves, initially with help from the project or district, but increasingly by themselves. It would be remarkable if the communities, in the short a space of time which the District and FBD have been implementing their project, had already completed this process – this report, therefore, documents where MEMA support is in the process: what problems have emerged and how these problems have been dealt with by the communities.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The consultants began by reviewing the relevant documents and by meeting the MEMA and district staff who have been involved in the implementation of the project. In order to come to a clear understanding of the issues, the consultants undertook a pilot analysis of some possible lessons. The analysis was initially conducted by the consultants themselves, and subsequently in a brainstorming session with key technicians who had been involved in the project. This was a way of gaining an initial picture of the types of issues which might be involved, and to test a process of analysis. This approach provided a framework to plan the field work methodology. The resulting framework consisted of topic identification followed by the issue coming out of that topic, and then lessons drawn out of the issue.

The field work was carried out by the main consultant and a field assistant. Seven villages, selected as being representative of a range of experiences, were visited in order to gather a variety of information. The main focus was on villages where the greatest successes have occurred in order to pull out more positive experiences. But villages which have experienced difficulties in implementing PFM were also visited since these experiences can add to the general picture. Villages in both project sites were visited to contrast the experiences from the catchment forests and the village forest reserves. Within the villages, discussion started with village council representatives, to get a general overview and the institutional perspective, and then with the VNRCs, who are key players in the village PFM. Different sectors of the community were also interviewed in order to hear a range of views. People interviewed included:

- ✍ men and women
- ✍ young and old
- ✍ people living near to and far away from the forest
- ✍ people living in central and distant sub-villages
- ✍ subsistence and commercial forest users
- ✍ specific groups such as charcoal burners, firewood collectors
- ✍ the poor and marginalised
- ✍ District staff and NGOs

The principal method of gaining information was to talk to groups and individuals, sometimes in a pre-arranged group, sometimes with casually encountered people, using a basic and flexible checklist of questions and issues. The field assistant and the main consultant met for regular discussions, which gave them the opportunity to review what they had found out, to add issues to the checklists and to identify other people/groups to seek out for interview.

Once the field work was completed and the findings analysed and discussed by the main consultant and the field assistant, the report was compiled. This report was then extensively reviewed by the district team and, after further discussion, revised accordingly.

On the basis of the initial fieldwork, the focus of the study was slightly altered. The original intention was to look for best practices and to draw out lessons based on these practices. However, after going to the field it was realised that it is still too early for definitive examples of best practices to have emerged, so the study examines the opportunities and challenges which have come out of the programme so far, and draws lessons from these initial experiences.

### **3. OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD**

This section of the report provides the consultant's observations resulting from interviews with communities and district staff.

#### **3.1 Impact**

##### **3.1.1 People like PFM**

People see the point of managing their own forests, even though there may be problems inherent in the way it's done. In principal they are in favour of the concept, although after so many years of top-down control and command systems, they may feel a little uneasy about the change. Communities appreciated the education and training they had received from MEMA about the importance of looking after their forests, and what valuable assets they are. In one village commercial users reported that their lives have become more difficult and expensive, but ultimately they expect to see some benefits.

##### **3.1.2 Positive results have been observed**

Many people said how, since the forest has been looked after by the community, they have observed changes in the forest and the wider environment. This was the case with almost everyone, both those who were opposed to the way the PFM was being carried out, as well as those who were in favour of it. Perceived changes included a thicker forest with larger trees, more rain, cleaner air, more animals, fewer fires, and a greater willingness to be mobilised to put fires out. If people have perceived that such changes have taken place, whether they have or not, then this is already encouraging, and shows that they are positive about the process. Examples of documented changes include fewer fires (VNRC reports) and increase in wild animals observations (District Game Officer).

##### **3.1.3 Demand for PFM**

Three villages in Dabaga, close to the NDU forest villages, have sent letters of demand to Iringa District Council, requesting that they and their forest (Kising'a-Lugalo) be supported to develop a PFM forest management system. Awareness, therefore, of the benefits of PFM has spread outside the pilot area. However, it is not clear whether the villages want purely and simply help with PFM, or whether they envisage hosting a project with all the associated benefits (especially transport, trips and seminars).

It is also apparent that even when villages have seen that PFM brings certain advantages, and assists in preserving their natural resources, priority will still be given to investment in social infrastructure such as a safe water supply, a new classroom, a new health centre, a road. Therefore PFM is more likely to succeed in the long term in areas where there is an income from the forest management activities. MEMA-supported villages with access to productive forest are now not only paying for their guards and forest committee but also making significant

contributions to basic social infrastructure. Examples include: digging new trench for water pipe (Migoli), purchase of school furniture (Makatapora), payment of masons constructing new classrooms (Mfyome) and maintenance of village tractor (Mfyome). In areas where there is a low demand for PFM, but a need to start the process, district authorities will need to consider proactive insertion of PFM into District Development Plans.

### **3.2 Participatory approach**

#### **3.2.1 How participatory is participatory?**

How participatory can participatory be, practically? It is impossible to involve everyone, in the actual planning meetings, all the way through the process, since it would be far too unwieldy. There will always be people who will say 'I didn't know' or 'they did it and we heard later'. especially in the more remote sub-villages which are often those nearest to the forest. Some people mentioned that they had attended meetings, but the main decisions had already been made previously and they were then informed about them rather than being asked to contribute their ideas at the time. Others said they had never been to any meetings. Although it is clear that all people can't be directly involved, it is also clear that the wider dissemination of information would have ensured that more people would have been better informed.

#### **3.2.2 Awareness**

The VNRCs reported that they explained everything to everyone, but it was found that many people are not aware of what has been and what is going on. The VNRCs are not yet aware of the difficulty of bringing information to people, the length of time it takes for people to be made aware, and have not identified it as an important problem that many people don't or can't attend meetings and therefore haven't had the opportunity to hear about PFM activities first hand.

#### **3.2.3 Representativeness**

All people in the communities were not fully informed about the PFM concept and the actual management plan before implementation started in July 2002. However, the plans and the planning process are not set in stone, and after a year there is the opportunity to review and revise the system. Many more people are now aware of what is going on, and therefore there is likely to be more participation, and more suggestions made from a wider base, so long as the VNRCs make it clear by words and deeds that suggestions and ideas are welcome, and make a point of collecting them and acting on them.

#### **3.2.4 Women and gender**

Although women have been involved in numerous MEMA supported meetings, trainings and study tours, and although they are significant forest users, they are less likely to know what is going on and why, and this was the case in most of the villages which were visited during the study. Some women didn't know who the forest belonged to, that the VNRC existed, who had set the regulations and that there is a management plan. Fewer women than men are on the VNRCs, usually one or two out of seven or eight. Reasons given as to why there were no women included that they aren't allowed to by their husbands, they are too busy, they don't really know anything about it, they don't like to be involved in conflict, the meetings are held too far from their homes. These are typical and well known reasons, but indicate that some additional village based gender sensitisation is required.

A gender report was produced by MEMA<sup>3</sup>, and at the end of 2002 two gender workshops were held, the purpose of which was to point out how to change the way of working with PFM to a more gender friendly way. One of the most important conclusions was that internal communication, both at village level and at household level, is very poor, because village leaders tend not to inform their people of recent issues, and men don't inform their wives and other household members. For this reason, women are often left out of the communication links and their awareness lags behind. But now that PFM activities have been operational for about a year, women will have become more aware through being part of the system. The district officers are therefore intending to make more effort to assist the villages to include them in the next round of planning, since having seen the PFM process in action, women are now likely to have opinions and ideas about it, and want to take a more active part in it all.

### 3.2.5 Transparency and accountability

Where there is income from forest resources, there is an opportunity to increase transparency so that people know money is coming in, where the money is coming from and what it is being used for. However, there were very few instances in the villages visited during the study of people who knew how much the VNRC had collected so far and where that money was going. Some even had completely incorrect ideas about what the money was being used for, including buying more medicine for the dispensary, a notion which the VNRC of that village seems to have chosen not to disabuse.

If people don't know what the VNRC is supposed to be doing then the VNRC can get away with anything. As well as educating the VNRC in their responsibilities, the people have to be informed of their own rights and responsibilities in the new system of decentralised natural resource management, and of the responsibilities of the VNRC – then they can hold them accountable for their actions.

In the case of Iringa, one VNRC was encountered which was dominated by one individual, who exploited his position for some months to his own benefit. The community raised the issue at a public meeting and shortly after the Village Chairman went to the District to ask for assistance and advice. District councilors, who were members of MEMA Steering Committee, were invited to look into the matter. The bank account was checked against the receipt book, and the individual in question was deposed, and he promised to pay back the money he had taken.

Likewise VNRCs may be tempted to avoid responsibility to their communities for what they are doing by saying 'it was the district which said we had to do this', which of course goes completely contrary to the spirit of PFM. In one village, the VNRC were telling people that the district had told them to make these bye-laws and had installed them to make sure they were obeyed, and there was nothing they could do about it. This returns to the earlier point that if the ordinary people in the community don't know what the VNRC is there for, how the system of PFM operates, and what the rights of the community are (such as the option to elect another VNRC) then they will not be able to hold them accountable.

One of the biggest problems in the villages is managing the money from the licences and fines. Systems need to be put in place so that the VNRC accounts are available for public scrutiny and comment, and so that people are given the opportunity to challenge the

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<sup>3</sup> Assessment of gender issues in participatory forest management Study report Vera Mugittu Nov 2001

VNRC. Accountability is the other side of the coin – if people are aware of what should be happening to the VNRC income then they will be able to hold the VNRC and even the VC to account. One of the major obstacles to transparency is that the VNRC and VC leaders are not paid, and thus are often tempted to pocket some of the income – this is perhaps an issue which could be tackled in the context of PFM and its associated activities, and which could smooth the way towards greater transparency.

### 3.2.6 Ownership

Many people, but especially men, were clear that the forests used to belong to the government, but it now theirs. Others, however, were not so sure, especially women. However, even those who were able to tell us that the forest belonged to them and had been handed over to their care, wanted to ask MEMA to let them designate areas inside their forests for cultivation. It is clear therefore that the implications of this ownership system have not yet been fully understood. According to PFM regulations, if the community feels that they should cultivate within their forest, then they can propose amendments to their management plan to allow it.

Popular wisdom has it that people are more likely to husband resources over which they have ownership and control. In this case, though, a verdict as to whether this is true or not cannot be reached until people in the villages actually realise that they are the ones who own the forests. And in some instances, members of the VNRC or VC were exploiting the forests for their personal benefit, even though they were clear that the community owns the forests. There is therefore the situation where a few know that they own a resource and exploit it quickly before others come to realise and the community puts pressure on them to stop. This will take time to resolve.

### 3.2.7 Local democracy doesn't happen overnight

A community running their own forest is a very new concept. People can't be expected to get it right first time. It is a long process with many snares on the way before it falls into place. Iringa District and FBD has been trying out PFM in Iringa for less than one year. This is a very short time for such a complex and different system to become established, and it is unrealistic to expect a rapid impact.

## **3.3 Institution building**

It is increasingly acknowledged that socio-economic and institutional issues present the greatest challenges to the implementation of PFM in Tanzania.

### 3.3.1 VNRCs and scouts

Some VNRCs are functioning well, others less well. The good ones knew what they are doing, are able to discuss village issues knowledgeably and are able to explain how they had sorted out problems. They prepare patrols and reports in time and according to the management plan and have transparent systems for income and expenditure management.

The less good ones had a variety of problems – in some it was clear that the committee had dwindled to a small coterie who were consciously excluding the others in order to reap personal benefits. In others there were conflicts with the village council, as the VNRC were identifying themselves more with the project and did not think of themselves as accountable to the VC.

Some were not willing to show us their books or explain about their bank accounts or the use of their income.

Many people in the villages, especially the more remote sub-villages, were not aware of the existence of the VNRC. They knew about the scouts, for those are the ones they encounter in the forests, and it is clear that the scouts are active in all the villages visited.

The intrinsic goodwill of community members towards each other cannot be taken for granted, and some VNRCs, or certain individuals of which they are composed, may see that it is not in their financial interests to empower their communities. In most communities this is not a problem, but it may occur in one or two.

### 3.3.2 Village council

The village council is an important institution which is already in place and which is available to work through. They can balance the VNRC and work together with them. The PFM process needs to build on this local institutional framework. But it can also be a liability at times, because village councils are often weak, partly because they lack training and knowledge in how to function as an institution and partly because the members of the council are not paid and are essentially poor, and therefore are often on the lookout for possible additional sources of income, legal or otherwise. Various examples of the VC and the VNRC having worked out a system together were found, such as the VNRC brings in the money through licenses and fines, while the VC may request some of the funds to support village activities such as making desks for the school. But in other villages there seemed to be rivalry and envy between the VC and the VNRC – either the VC was envious of the VNRC for having the right to make so much money, and therefore was making life difficult for the VNRC to operate, or the VC had completely taken over the financial functions of the VNRC.

### 3.3.3 Zonal teams

The five Zonal Planning Teams were involved in the project activities from the outset. The Zonal Planning Teams consisted of two members from each VNRC in each zone and was set up specifically to make the initial management plans. They discussed the initial survey reports and walked in the forests with the district teams and drafted the management plan. The management plan consists of a brief history of the forest in question, a description of the management system of the forest (boundaries, who is involved in the management, their roles and responsibilities), the rules and procedures, and the system of income and expenditure. They were facilitated by the district staff, but they clearly feel ownership of the plans, since they have a close knowledge of what is contained in them, and quote them often. Now there is a Zonal Coordination Team, comprising two members from each VNRC. It will be their task to revise the management plans. The district staff are planning to step back further in their facilitation to let the zonal teams do it much more on their own.

### 3.3.4 Troubleshooting by Ward Councilors

The MEMA Steering Committee is a group of 5 Ward Councilors plus four representatives from Government of Tanzania and the Danish embassy. Their brief is to approve MEMA's accounts, progress reports, annual plans and budgets. However, the five councilors in the committee came up with the idea that they should go round the villages inspecting the progress of the PFM activities at first hand, and at the same time, doing a bit of 'troubleshooting'. This is a good

example of a local initiative which has worked. The councilors are close enough to the mindset of the communities to be able to find out more of the real situation.

The councilors, who are taken from a variety of wards in the project area, have sufficient authority and command the respect to be able to take immediate action. Their reports are balanced and constructively critical. One example of action taken is that they were able to assist a community in removing an unpopular but apparently invincible treasurer of a VNRC who was taking money and preventing PFM from developing as it should. The group of councilors is accompanied in villages by a village-based extension officer (for example from forestry, CD, fisheries or game), who is able to add extra information during the meetings and verify what people are saying. However, this group of councilors is provided with transport and allowances by the project, and it is a challenge to the District Council and FBD to maintain troubleshooting assistance once the project has closed.

### **3.4 Permits and controls**

#### **3.4.1 Permits and fines**

The system of permits and fines is designed to ensure that the amount of wood cut and the extraction of other natural resources is sustainably controlled, and that the VNRC receive income to support natural resources activities. In some villages the system seems to be working. Permits are issued for commercial exploitation and the producer is guided to the area where extraction is allowed by the village scout, who will mark the trees that are allowed to be felled, sand allowed to be dug or the grass allowed to be cut. The producer will pay the products and a receipt will be issued before transport of the products out of the village. It is, however, difficult to predetermine what harvesting levels are appropriate as this will depend on forest type, threats and management objectives. Fines are used as an internal control system to check deliberate misuse without actually taking them to the court.

In other villages there are abuses. Several examples of misuse were encountered. For example:

- ✍ Permits being issued for one lorry-load of firewood, but 3 lorry-loads being taken away and the balance being pocketed:
- ✍ Villagers taking 10 donkey carts into the forest, allowing one to be caught and fined, and thus taken away to the village by the one forest scout, which then left the forest clear for the other 9 donkey carts to cut firewood as they pleased:
- ✍ Permits being issued and fines being levied without receipts,
- ✍ Permits being issued by word of mouth rather than on paper, and
- ✍ People streaming out of the forest with firewood for sale without any permits at all.

Some women in remote, distant sub-villages complained about the difficulty in getting to the main village to obtain permits. Local arrangements will need to be made to solve this type of problem.

If people see that the fees are going towards something which will help the development of their village, then they are much more willing to pay, than if they see their money disappearing into someone's pocket. For example, in one distant sub-village, a group of people said that they were happy to pay the license for making charcoal, because they had heard that the license fees would go towards buying iron sheeting for the roof of the school they are hoping to build for their children. However, they have become disillusioned since they see the VNRC stealing their money, and are thus more likely to try to beat the system by making charcoal without paying for a license.

### 3.4.2 Harvesting levels

The concept of having quotas for cutting firewood and timber is a new one, and will clearly take time to be understood and implemented fully. The quotas are based on conservative estimates taken from inventories carried out at the beginning of the project of how much can be taken out of each forest sustainably. We asked VNRC members whether when they are issuing licenses, they were aware of the relationship between the number of licenses issued and the capacity of the forest to be harvested. Few seemed to understand what we were asking, although we tried to ask in various different ways.

### 3.4.3 Who controls the managers?

The idea in PFM is that internal control will be sufficient to ensure that the plan is followed. That includes the system where VNRC issue permit and receipts and scouts controls the actual harvesting. The question is who should control the scouts if they are not doing their job properly or even misuse their positions.

Should there be external checks, or are internal ones sufficient? Can the licensing system be self-policing? The district realistically only has the capacity (once the project has left) to review the state of the forest on an annual basis. But much destruction can come about in the course of a year. The group of councilors, on the assumption that they are institutionalised as a body, can be called in, but again, they are not there to keep a check on day to day running of the forest. To an extent, whistle blowing on the part of members of the community will occur, but this gets entangled with social pressures in small closely knit villages – these pressures often forbid people from causing trouble for people who are likely to be related to them in some way or another, therefore they will remain silent.

### 3.4.4 Reducing the number of outsiders

Whether local exploitation of the forests has decreased or not, it seems that in many cases villages have managed to clamp down on outside traders, from Iringa town or even further afield, coming in to take forest products, or at least to regulate the level of exploitation. This is an important achievement, as some of these outsiders have influential contacts. In some villages, they said that those who used to come and use their forests have now gone somewhere else, after finding that things were more difficult or more expensive than in the past. But in several villages outsiders, often from neighbouring villages, were still coming in to steal from remote, unpatrollable corners of their forests, and villagers noted how difficult it was to locate them and do something about them. This increased awareness of the need to control access is an indication of the newly established sense of ownership.

## **3.5 Benefits and marketing**

### 3.5.1 Benefits and poverty reduction

To ensure that PFM is credible in the eyes of the community, there need to be tangible and reasonably quick-appearing benefits. In some villages, people have perceived benefits in the quality of their forests, but this is not directly benefiting them and their lives. Other places have started to tie the benefits accruing from PFM to social development in the villages, such as contributing to the furnishing of a new school. Examples of where PFM is assisting in the

reduction of individual income poverty are also emerging, such as employment of scouts and allowances for committee members.

Income derived from the forest may serve either as a stimulus to look after the forest or to cut it down completely for quick gains. Enough people have to want to do the former to put pressure on the few who want to do the latter.

However, in many cases income poverty may actually be increasing it due to an initial decline in access to forest products. However, in most villages in this area people have not been severely disadvantaged because there are alternative forests which people can make use of freely. One point that was made in one village was that as a result of money coming in to the village which can be used for village projects, the number of occasions on which village people have to contribute money for these projects has decreased, so indirectly people are better off, or at least the advantages and disadvantages have been balanced.

### 3.5.2 Income generating alternatives and marketing

Alternative sources of income are necessary if the amount of profitable activities such as charcoal making or pit sawing has to be reduced to fit in with new PFM regulations, and if benefits are to be perceived from taking on PFM. However, the income generating activities alone are not sufficient, and must be accompanied by support for processing and marketing, otherwise they aren't viable alternatives. For example, beekeeping has increased in many villages and it doesn't seem that there is a surplus of honey in the villages visited (the study team attempted unsuccessfully to buy some). In the case of MEMA, marketing support came later in the implementation plan, and although an initial marketing survey was carried out, district capacity has not been sufficient to ensure that it has got off the ground. Tourism, is another alternative income source which is just starting up now at village level. MEMA has supported the establishment of the Iringa Tourism Association with the intention to promote tourism (especially community based) in the region.

In the case of charcoal, it has not been necessary to assist with seeking markets, since the demand from Iringa town, and even locally is already present. What MEMA has done is to ensure that some benefits from the harvesting of the wood from the village forests return to the villages in the shape of permits and fines and can be thus ploughed back into natural resource management. However, some charcoal sellers were complaining that they can no longer make a living out of making charcoal, since 500TSh out of their selling price for a sack of 2500TSh is taken up with buying a permit, and this proportion is too great. This then raises the question of whether PFM disadvantages communities unless it is universally applied – if the price of charcoal is higher from PFM forests, then traders may choose to buy it from forests where there is no PFM for a lower price. Is it the case that only when PFM is universally applied will the price of charcoal stabilise to reflect the increase in price necessitated by paying for a license in the village?

The introduction of 'Luoga' fuel-efficient stoves has only started recently, but unlike many similar initiatives in Iringa which produced no impact, it actually seems to be a popular intervention. After a demonstration at the village centre people can build the stoves themselves at zero cost or employ another villager, usually a woman, to build it at affordable price. Adoption rates, 2 months after introduction, ranges from 10 to 60% of all households contacted. The progress of this initiative needs to be carefully followed.

### **3.6 Implementation strategy**

#### **3.6.1 Slow to start**

Much time was spent doing surveys and preparing the ground thoroughly before starting work on the management plans. In retrospect, it is agreed that it would have been better to start immediately on some sort of management plan, however basic, and then spend the rest of the project working on them and improving them on the basis of practical lessons learnt during implementation. As it is, the project now only has little over a year to sort out problems which have arisen since the management plans have come into operation.

#### **3.6.2 Change of attitude**

Villagers contacted during the study had mainly positive comments about the foresters they work with. They say that in the past foresters were like policemen and behaved aggressively towards villagers whom they found in the forest, but now they have changed their way of working, and have been able to shed their traditional role of guarding the forest to work together with people more constructively as advisors on boundary marking, tree nurseries and planting. Foresters themselves were initially afraid that they would lose their *raison d'être* and therefore their jobs. However, with some sensitisation they have come to realise that what was required was a change of role. At the same time, there has been strong and dedicated leadership for this change in roles from the FBD in Dar es Salaam, which has contributed to the positive acceptance of this change.

#### **3.6.3 Village-based monitoring**

Originally there were village diaries, like log books, for the VNRC to record incidents and observations for each patrol. However they were not kept up, perhaps because it was seen as a task imposed from above which had to be done, and thus it didn't work as a monitoring tool. Now a new system has been instituted, developed together with local extension staff, which has two strands – a form for the scouts to fill in, describing what they have seen in the forest (animals, signs of destruction.) and perception interview forms, which record the perceptions of village people about their forest, whether it is changing, and what changes they are seeing. The project reports that people at village level are becoming more interested in doing the monitoring because they find it interesting, and useful in their care of the forest. Scouts too have seen that it adds focus to their work – rather than wandering vaguely through the forest, they now have specific points to fill in on their forms, and in addition, in some villages, they don't receive their *posho* without producing filled in forms. However, although interest is beginning to be shown, VNRC members have not yet taken the step of discussing their monitoring findings together and to explore the implications for their work and their forests. It is therefore not clear whether this will actually become a useful monitoring tool, or whether it will just be a mechanical exercise which doesn't inform future activities in the forest.

#### **3.6.3 Linkages with other sectors**

The District Council organisation is undergoing reform and the administration is strictly split into technical departments, most of them only recently departing from line ministries and becoming a part of the Council. Experience shows that the driving source of integration and cooperation is access to funds, rather than commitment to intersectoral collaboration. Inter-sectoral cooperation is not well developed and often relies on projects to fund multidisciplinary team building and cross-sectoral approach to assisting the villages. It is a challenge to the District Council to

increase cooperation between the departments, especially where there is no project to facilitate this process.

This is a serious problem that will not be resolved overnight. It will require determined leadership to establish a new culture of better collaboration through improved departmental management.

#### 3.6.4 Wider application

In several villages in the miombo areas it seems that through the project, villages have been encouraged to set aside an area, with boundaries, onto which they apply PFM. However, in these villages, they seem to have applied the PFM rules to all the woodland in the village, distinguishing them with different terms – *hifadhi*, which means reserve, and which in several cases no-one is allowed to touch, and *matajiwazi*, which means miombo woodland, and which is often the *malunguru* (inherited land, usually large areas) of individual families, which people can use, but with licenses. These licenses are usually free for domestic consumption, but have to be purchased for commercial use.

Implementing bye-laws - for example limiting the number of trees they can cut down, having to get a license to cut down trees, make charcoal, - onto people's *malunguru* doesn't seem to be a big problem. No conflicts arising from the imposition of laws onto people's traditional land holdings were reported, although it was not possible to find any large land owners themselves to ask whether they object.

It is not clear why communities decided to extend the area of rules to a wider area of forest, but it seems that there is a tendency in villages to make rules more severe, imposing regulations more harshly or more widely, although the original guidance from District and FBD has been much more moderate. Possibly either villages decided that the PFM principles were valid for all woodland in the villages, or the PFM concept mingled with earlier land use planning carried out and the two were somehow amalgamated. But this provides a good example of villages adapting and interpreting outside initiatives to suit their own purposes.

#### 3.6.5 Conservation forests

It is easier to conserve a forest if there is an alternative forest resource which is sufficiently large to satisfy people's needs. This seems to be the case in this area. A group of women in a village next to a catchment forest were asked whether they had problems with the nearby forest being closed for use, and they said they didn't, partly because it had always been closed as a government forest (although there were a lot of illegal activities going on in the forest) and partly because they said they could collect firewood, vegetables and fruits from their own shambas, so they didn't need to go into the forest. The VNRC had issued one permit since they started functioning as a committee, to a traditional healer, for medicine. The main role of people in such a community, therefore, is to safeguard the forest from outsiders, and to report on members of the community breaking the regulations.

It is a challenge to FBD that so far no sustainable and continuous income source seems to be emerging in the case of conservation forestry. A continuous income is needed to sustain PFM agreements made. This is a fundamental challenge to the future development of PFM in Tanzania.

While there has been some success in developing eco-tourism, it is an income generating activity that needs to be approached with some caution, as it is not a simple and ubiquitous solution. The

village of Migoli is now benefiting from arranging village activities for the tourists visiting the new Chapuya Camp, and the village committee earns Tshs 80,000 per month from the land lease agreement. However, such options are relatively limited and eco-tourism should not be counted on as a major revenue earner.

### 3.6.6 PFM guidelines

It was generally agreed by implementing staff that the PFM guidelines provide the PFM practitioner with valuable ideas and information, but are too long and too complex to use in the way intended and that people in the villages would not be able to understand them as they are. However, they use the guidelines as a reference tool, making substantial adaptations to them as they work.

## **3.7 Land and surveys**

### 3.7.1 Baseline study

Several VNRC members reported that they know what is in their forests, that they were present when the MEMA staff was conducting surveys, and that they have had training in how to estimate the populations of animals and plants in their forests. This sort of capacity building and involvement from the beginning is important. The VNRCs in the Woodlands project were involved in the basal area measurement, in the identification of trees, recounting the history of the area, defining the sort of forest extraction which goes on at present.

Many other surveys have been carried out including biodiversity, marketing, and forest products. These have mostly been done by outside consultants with minimal involvement of local people. Although a large body of information has been accumulated, it is not clear how this has benefited the villages and their management of their forests, since most of the information has not been made available to local people, and they were mostly not involved in its collection.

### 3.7.2 Survey of reserve boundaries

The village forest reserve boundaries were surveyed and decided on by the people, including village elders and elders from pastoralist tribes who are key forest users at certain times of year. After deciding on the boundaries on the ground, GPS readings were taken, and maps prepared in the district offices. There were few complaints about the reserve boundaries, although in one village, a livestock keeper protested that the river where he used to water his livestock is now inside the forest reserve and he is now not allowed to take his animals there. He was not aware that there was the possibility of changing these boundaries or the regulations being changed for that river to accommodate a new pattern of use.

### 3.7.3 Village land certificates

In the light of the new regulations brought in with the Village Land Act (1999), MEMA has supported the development of a process for villages to apply for their Village Land Certificates. Eight villages now have these certificates, and others are beginning the process. The approximate cost of processing these certificates has been Tshs 4 million per village. These land certificates hand over to the village the responsibility to manage their own land, to issue individual land titles to people living in the village and to set aside areas in the village for various purposes. Thus the villages formally attain control of their land. MEMA supported a process which is new to Tanzania and has facilitated the development of possible ways for it to work. Firstly, village

boundaries are confirmed by walks and meetings with village leadership and village elders, and discussions with surrounding villages. Any boundary conflicts are sorted out. Then the Land Office comes to place beacons, and a GPS survey is done to fix the co-ordinates. The District Land Office produces a map which is sent to the Ministry of Lands and Human Settlement, who then sends it back to the District Lands Officer and thus it returns to the village, which is then legally registered

#### **4. INITIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

##### **4.1 Commitment**

On the part of district natural resources staff, there needs to be real understanding, and then commitment to the concept of PFM and the determination to try it out and persevere with it, and to believe that it will work. Setting up a viable PFM takes time, energy and resources.

##### **4.2 Policy**

The National Forest Policy of 1998 strongly supports PFM, and needs to be understood by all involved in natural resources management. However, the understanding of this policy and its implications is not yet widespread at either district or village level, although it is well understood in some districts where PFM is being implemented. As well as the policy framework, there must also be a legal framework in place.

##### **4.3 Capacity**

There are skills which those who are facilitating the PFM must have in order to ensure its success. These include primarily social skills, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, capacity building for community management (for example, how to run a meeting, how to do awareness creation, leadership), institution building, empowerment, gender awareness, marketing skills, and legal awareness. Technical forestry skills (for example, the capacity to survey a forest in order to understand the amount which can be harvested, counting wildlife) are also a necessity, although they are of secondary importance at this stage. Of course, all these skills do not need to be present in the natural resources department – expertise from other departments can be drawn on, such as community development, livestock, cooperatives, education as well as companies and NGOs.

##### **4.4 More time**

It cannot be emphasised enough that there needs to be time provided to allow for awareness building, follow up and solving of initial problems. People must be given time to come to an understanding and appreciation of the potential of PFM, to make mistakes and to develop the capacity to reverse those mistakes and try something different.

##### **4.5 Targeting**

For PFM to succeed, there must be exploitable natural resources – there must be enough forest land to make it worthwhile to try and manage it in a sustainable and locally profitable manner. Initially, while PFM is a new concept and district staff are becoming accustomed to its implementation, it is advisable to start in a few villages, which are well organised with proven experience in funds handling and record keeping. Once the system is in place, however, and

district staff are more confident about their ability to implement PFM, then more challenging areas can be tackled.

#### **4.6 Getstarted.....**

Even if time isn't limited, it makes more sense to get something started immediately in the field. If only a very basic management plan is drawn up with a small group of people, at least there will be something to build on and lessons to learn. And more people will come to realise what is going on if they see something in action, and thus the following year, the revision of the management plan will involve many more people who demand a say in the running of their forest. Not so much time should be spent on surveys before starting real PFM work in the villages.

In the very earliest stages, a simple, generalized approach for all villages can be taken to extension, awareness raising and initial planning. But there is a great heterogeneity of situations in villages, and after those initial stages, each village or forest will come up with its own vision, will adapt what it has heard to suit its own purposes, and problems associated with the situation in that village will emerge. District staff need to be aware of this, and helped to develop the capacity to identify the key points in each village early on and to react individually to them.

#### **.....but expect things to go wrong**

Things will go wrong. Participatory activities in villages rely heavily on individuals and their willingness to cooperate with others for the common good. In some villages individuals will seize the opportunity of power, such as being on a VNRC for personal gain. This can also happen in villages which are believed to be well functioning with transparent systems. A trouble shooting team is useful, who can go in to sort out problems when they arise. This can be district staff, but if they are the ones who have set up the PFM in the first place they may be too close to the people concerned, or, as in the case of Iringa a specially formed group of councilors. Conflicts over control of financial resources are almost inevitable thus concentration on institutional development must direct these conflicts into more positive channels – people through awareness of the processes and their rights can bring about changes by charging their VC or VNRC with mismanagement and changing the composition of either body, this therefore being an example of the development of good governance.

#### **4.7 Surveys**

It is advisable to establish a brief village baseline before starting the actual PFM work. That includes basic data on population, number of households, area, and economic activities. The baseline should also include present status of the forest area and present natural resource management systems, if any. Also village records in terms of natural resources income should be included. A lot of data can now be drawn from the 2002 Census.

Other surveys can be very expensive and consume a lot of time, especially inventory and mapping. In order for the PFM management to get started it is better to wait with these surveys until they are felt needed by the new forest managers.

#### **4.8 Awareness**

It is much more difficult than it seems to make the population of a village aware of something as new as PFM. The message must be repeated many times, even in several different mediums, and

a special effort must be made to reach those who classically miss out on information, especially women, the poor, the old and pastoralists. It is so difficult to get the message across about a concept as new and strange as PFM that it would be more effective to formulate a basic management plan and put it into practice even before most people have understood what it is.

After it has been in action for a year, people will learn about it by 'living' it, and therefore will have a much clearer understanding of it than if it was explained to them in a meeting. They will then be able to become involved in the second round of the management plan on the basis of practical knowledge. But in addition, the message must often be repeated that people are required to take part in formulating future management plans, and must contribute their ideas to the process. People must also be made aware of their rights in relation to PFM and the VNRC, especially where financial matters are concerned. People need to know that if they are not happy with their VNRC they have the right to vote them out and install a new committee, they need to know that they have the right to know what is being done with the VNRC income, and to take steps if it is being misused.

#### **4.9 Gender**

Women play an important role in forestry, therefore the whole issue of women and gender needs to be mainstreamed throughout PFM, particularly since there are very few women foresters in the districts or at village level. Effort is needed in the villages to include women: this includes women only meetings called by women on the VNRC, seeking out women who never come to meetings, more encouragement for women to give their opinions and contribute to the process.

#### **4.10 Benefits**

Benefits need to be tangible and quick, so that people can see that although they have to follow certain restrictive regulations and cannot use the resource as they please in another respect they are gaining something from this change. It would be useful to start looking into alternatives, so that when PFM regulations come into play, then some people will already be benefiting from new activities license.

#### **4.11 External support from the District and others**

If there are too many external agents such as district officers, extension officers telling people what to do, then once the project has left and the external agents are not able to come so often, the whole process is likely to collapse. It is better to be more sparing with people from outside, to observe the village dynamics, and how they work, and to go in to take some remedial action when necessary. Let the village get on with making the process work, learning by their mistakes, with the community coming to a gradual understanding of their own power and rights. But at the same time, villagers can't run a PFM system entirely by themselves, especially not in the initial stages. There must be some external support available, especially for checks on the state of the forest, problems which VNRC can't solve, facilitating other problem solving, and removing troublemakers from the VNRC. The district can provide a certain amount of support, but also a body such as the councilors team is useful if such a body can be institutionalised within the district PFM system.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it is clear that MEMA has gained significant practical experience with the implementation of the projects. These will not only feed into improved participatory forest management in Iringa District in the future, but also contribute to a nation-wide review of the lessons learnt by PFM which is being undertaken by the National Forest Programme.

## ANNEX 1

<b>Date</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Activities</b>
4-3-03	Kidabaga	VC, VNRC/scouts, distant sub-village next to forest – group of men, group of women
6-3-03	Migoli	VC, VNRC, Forestry officer, Mwanyengo subvillage (charcoal burning area) – group of women from different tribes
11-3-03	Migoli (additional issues to follow up)	VNRC chairperson, casual chats with men and women around the village
12-3-03	Chamndindi	Beekeeping officer, village executive officer, casual chats with men and women in centre and Kibaoni subvillage
13-3-03	Mfyome	VC, VNRC, VNRC treasurer, Matembo subvillage (near the forest, charcoal burning area) – subvillage chairperson, individual interviews with 6 men and women
21-3-03	Udekwa	Zonal team, village chairperson, village natural resources group representatives, ward executive secretary, divisional forestry officer
24-3-03	Mangawe	Hollo subvillage (next to the forest) – VNRC/scouts, group of men, group of women; village centre - VC
25-3-03	Itagutwa	VC, VNRC/scouts, group of men