

EC Partner

Government of Malawi
(Department of
Forestry of Malawi's
Ministry of Natural
Resources, Energy
and Environment)

Facts and Figures

- EC contribution: € 9 million (100% of the project)
- Duration: 2005 - 2009
- About 45% of the total wood supply in Malawi comes from non-sustainable stock cutting (Sectoral report on environment and natural resources, 2000)



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Forestry

Improving forest management to sustain livelihoods in Malawi

Participation to improve governance of forest resources

"I am a member of the firewood collecting club. Our club uses 15 hectares of the village forest area based on an 8-year management plan. I sell most of the firewood to a nutritional rehabilitation centre. I am happy that my efforts through this programme sustain my income and help to provide meals for malnourished children."

Efasi Ndaou, Mona village, Kasungu



Context

Forests in Malawi are generally public assets managed by the state, or common property resources on customary land. Poor stakeholder participation and weak implementation of the legal framework result in overexploitation of forest resources. The rural poor depend heavily on natural resources, in particular forests, for their livelihood. High demand for firewood in urban areas drives many to non-sustainable forest activities for survival.

Objective

- Improve the livelihoods of rural communities through the conservation and sustainable use of Malawi's forest resources
- Negotiate and secure access rights to state forest reserves under collaborative management arrangements
- Strengthen the natural assets of the poor to meet basic needs, through promoting better shared and equitable management of customary forests

Impact

- 23 858 hectares are now managed according to forest management plans, applying pre-defined harvesting schedules and quantities.
- Over 23 million trees have been protected on customary land and additional 1,9 million trees planted.
- 10 500 hectares of customary forests have been set aside for regeneration.

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Multiple benefits from co-management in Mtuluma, Zomba

The Zomba–Malosa Forest Reserve is classified as state land and therefore falls under the regulatory control of the central government and the authority of the Department of Forestry.

However, the Malawi Forest Policy (1996) and the Malawi Forest Act (1997) provide the Department of Forestry with the opportunity to engage in co-management of forest reserves. The Mtuluma block committee in the Zomba–Malosa Forest Reserve was one of the first communities to sign a co-management agreement with the support of the EU-funded Improved Forest Management for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme.

Fanny Mulonda, Vice-Secretary of the Mtuluma block committee, says:

"In the beginning we did not really know how to care for our forest. We think it was a brilliant idea of the government to work with the local people. It helped us so much because we would have failed without this help!

"We began managing the forest in June 2006. We were given guidance on how to take care of the forest. Looking after our forest has made a huge difference compared to when it was only the government looking after it."

"There are ten coups [harvesting plots] in our forest and we will harvest them according to an annual system. The coups were organised to ease the harvesting process. After harvesting, we sell the wood as firewood, construction poles and timber. The benefits go back to the village where the money is invested in development activities. Until now, we have harvested firewood and bamboo. We are selling firewood at 900 MKW (about € 4,50) per cubic metre and have already sold it to different customers."



Fanny Mulonda standing in front of Mtuluma Block, Zomba-Malosa Forest Reserve