



Tropentag, October 5-7, 2011, Bonn

“Development on the margin”

Can the Reforestation Projects Stop the Extraction of Timber from the Protected Forest Chongón-Colonche?

ALVARO CAÑADAS, ALEXIS ROCA CEDEÑO

Escuela Superior Politécnica Agropecuaria de Manabí (ESPAM), Research Institute of ESPAM, Ecuador

Abstract

In September 1994, the mountain range Chongón-Colonche was declared “Protected Forest and Vegetation” (PFCC) with the aim of achieving conservation of the Pre-mountain Humid Forest (pm HF), Tropical Dry Forest and protection of the micro-basins as water sources to the rivers in the area. As a strategy in order to compensate for the extraction of wood, forest plantations were promoted since 1998 underneath different systems in the area of the BsT in the region of the mountain range Chongón-Colonche. In those plantations a total of 45 species have been used, where most of them were native trees in an area of 2,231 ha. This investigation has an objective to present a growth development evaluation of the species with fast and moderate growth as well as a socio-economic analysis. The use of 45 species of trees shows that the project objectives of reforestation were not clear when speaking of: protected reforestation or the rehabilitation in terms of the management of micro-basins, commercial reforestation of the production of quality wood, or social reforestation that could be viewed as short and/or medium term compensation to stop the extraction of timber from PFCC. When the general objective of the project is not related to the management of the natural resources but instead linked to creating employment, it is not possible to achieve the objectives of conservation. Based on the analytical framework of benefit cost analysis, the only species that presented an economic benefit were those who grew fast. The short term economic returns of land and labour from forestation were substantially lower than those generated from cash crop production in the research area. The use of incentives is often attached to technical solutions defined by a top-down approach based on developed technologies with little participation. For this reason a participatory development of technology should be emphasised in range and education instead of direct incentives. Finally, despite the existence of de facto conservation (protected forest), on-farm conservation (as a public conservation strategy) could be a viable alternative for moderate and slow growing species with valuable timber.

Keywords: Annual mean increment, current annual increment, moderate and fast growing trees, protected forest, tropical dry forest