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“Development on the margin”

Permanence in REDD+ Projects: The Case of Eco-charcoal Policies

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Abstract

Permanence is a key issue in the global negotiations on REDD+. Our research project analyses the options for policies to increase permanence in a case study of the conservation in the worlds first REDD project to issue carbon credits under an internationally accepted standard, the Kasigau Corridor REDD project in Kenya by Wild Life Works.

In the Kasigau project, the main driver of forest degradation is illegal charcoaling. Despite being illegal, large parts of the local population rely on charcoaling as their main source of income. As the charcoal gets exported and trades even internationally, reducing local demand alone won't be enough to reduce forest degradation.

As a mitigation policy the project proponents aim to introduce eco-charcoal factories. At such a factory, charcoal is made from fast growing twigs and shrubs. This eco charcoal can be a full and equivalent substitute for conventional charcoal, but requires some capital investments for the production sites. This led to the idea of building village based factories for eco-charcoal, where the community can sell twigs and shrubs, thus replacing the income lost due to the enforcement of the charcoal ban.

We are using a stated time allocation experiment to predict the effects of several different policies for implementing such a community supported eco-charcoal project under varying charcoal price conditions in 1000 households. Some of the scenarios include a conditionality of the price paid for eco charcoal raw material on the number of people caught charcoaling illegally, thus introducing a collective action situation. Our main goal is to determine the effect of the price for eco-charcoal raw materials paid to the community on the level of illegal bush charcoaling. We are also investigating into intra household shifts in labour allocation.

Keywords: Case study, conservation, permanence, REDD