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Identifying success factors of forest landscape restoration: A case study of Tchamba prefecture Togo

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Abstract

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) is a current key approach to improving human well-being and recovering ecological integrity. There is a need to create a flexible and innovative approach to FLR that promotes participatory and adaptive management that considers the aspirations of populations. However, facing the challenges of FLR implementation, it remains important to identify success factors of this approach. The objective of this study is to identify the factors that contribute to the success of FLR activities based on the perception and preference for innovation among farm households in Tchamba Prefecture (Togo). The methodological approach for data collection was based on individual interviews and focus groups with agricultural households in the Tchamba prefecture. A representative sample of 494 households was surveyed. Descriptive statistics were performed. The results reveal that over 89 % of households perceive restoration through reforestation as an economic investment for the future, while 5.46 % perceive it as a means of safeguarding and enhancing the value of the land, and 4.08 % as a means of conserving species for future generations. Among respondents, 88 % agreed with the urgency of planting trees to slow down the decline in vegetation cover and the retreat of forests, as perceived by more than 66 % of respondents. Key local initiatives such as community forest creation, agroforestry, and forest planting account for over 90 % of FLR innovations. Also, the results indicate a strong motivation among farm households to adopt forest restoration innovation to test new opportunities and to be pioneers in the implementation of new restoration practises for improved economic returns. However, factors such as lack of land ownership, reduced cultivable space, and transhumance are the main demotivating factors for those involved in restoration in the area (‘non-natives’). These results imply an economic perception of restoration, an awareness of forest cover loss and local innovations of farm households in FLR. Consideration of community forestry strategies could help safeguard the biodiversity and native forests of the area. The strengthening of innovative agroecological practises can help to strengthen the economic level and the well-being of the farmers in the Tchamba Prefecture.

Keywords: Economic perception, forest innovation Tchamba Prefecture, forest landscape restoration