Effective strategies for improving policy implementation and law enforcement
At the community and district level in Tanzania

Learning Brief - 2019
Implementing effective conservation and development strategies requires that enabling policies and laws concerning natural resource governance are adhered to and enforced. The CARE-WWF Alliance seeks to ensure that communities, including poor women, have the knowledge, capacities and will to hold local leaders and government agency duty-bearers accountable for implementing policies and enforcing laws that contribute to livelihood security and ecosystem health. This learning brief shares strategies that have proven effective in improving good governance around resource management and use in the Alliance’s Nachingwea pilot project in southern Tanzania.

Community Score Card increases accountability

The Alliance has worked since 2016 to support Participatory Forest Management, including implementation of a sustainable harvesting plan. Early on in Mbonsdo village, competition between village leaders over the use of funds earned through forest management, and even conflicts due to misuse, were common. Further, lack of community and government support for the Village Natural Resource Committee (VNRC) resulted in low morale among that critical community-based natural resource management organization.

The Community Score Card (CSC), originally developed by CARE in Malawi, is a participatory governance tool that the Alliance successfully employed in the Nachingwea District pilot project to address these challenges.

Planning for the CSC requires strong relationships with relevant stakeholders and a deep understanding of the local context. The process begins with the formation and training of local CSC committees that the Alliance supports in leading community dialogue. The CSC committee facilitates three focus groups in parallel – discussions between community members, service providers and local government officials – to identify key areas that require change. Each focus group combines like areas, drafts an indicator that would show improvement for each area and then prioritizes the indicators that matter most to them.

As a result of this dialogue, areas and indicators are prioritized, local solutions are identified and an action plan of next steps and responsible parties is agreed.

Participatory monitoring at six-month intervals helps ensure that the plans are implemented and identify additional actions that may be needed to improve the prioritized areas.

In Nachingwea, the Alliance used this process to facilitate a dialogue around the quality of community-based natural resource management services by the VNRC and responsible District government officials. Through the CSC, community members and the VNRC registered their concerns about how the communities’ natural and financial resources are managed.

The CSC fostered cooperative problem-solving and action planning to address those concerns in Mbonsdo and another village. The process increased VNRC awareness about their responsibilities in transparently implementing sustainable natural resource management and empowered community members to hold the Committee accountable in fulfilling those responsibilities.

As a result of this dialogue, areas and indicators are prioritized, local solutions are identified and an action plan of next steps and responsible parties is agreed. The result was completion of agreed actions, including posting of forest revenues at the village offices.

In 2017, the government of Tanzania issued the National Guidelines for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). At that time, no investment had been made in building the understanding of government extension agents on the content of CSA practices or the importance of their roll out. CSA practices increase farmers’ capacity to adapt to climate change and build resilience in ways that improve food security and nutrition. However, widespread adoption of CSA requires investment in appropriate extension methods, and willingness of public agencies to allocate sufficient financial resources to CSA extension programs.

Invest in capacity for roll-out of agriculture regulations

While the CSC has proven effective in improving forest policy implementation at the community level, the Alliance in Nachingwea has taken a different approach to improving roll-out of legally-mandated agriculture guidelines at the District level.

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Through a capacity building workshop for agricultural officers and extension...
agents in 2017, the Alliance cultivated understanding of and champions for CSA within the District’s Agriculture Ministry. This strategic investment ensured that there were voices inside the Ministry advocating for the allocation of adequate budget to ensure implementation of the CSA guidelines. Through agreed next steps with participants, the Alliance successfully influenced budget allocations of more than 5,000 USD by 10 District Councils for CSA mainstreaming into the District Agriculture Development Plan for FY 2018/2019. The budget was, therefore, sufficient to roll-out the guidelines to Nachingwea farmers in ways that delivered, locally, on the national strategy for scaling-up CSA. As this example shows, strategic capacity building of district government officials can lead to greater understanding of, buy-in to, and advocacy for the human and financial resources necessary to effectively implement national policy guidelines.

Conclusion
From community to district levels, these anecdotes from the Alliance in Tanzania highlight effective strategies for improving the roll-out and enforcement of policies that affect the natural and financial resources on which local men and women depend for their livelihoods and well-being. The CSC facilitated good governance through dialogue between stakeholders that created a shared understanding of laws and roles, clarifying the legal rights and responsibilities of rights-bearers and duty-bearers. As a result, community members were empowered to hold the VRNC to account for realizing their natural resource management responsibilities.

Meanwhile, CSA capacity building with the District’s Ministry of Agriculture created internal champions who became successful advocates for allocating sufficient District budget to CSA guideline roll-out. As a result, the CSA National Guidelines were, in fact, rolled out to local farmers, increasing local knowledge and capacity to adopt more climate adaptive agricultural practices. In both cases, the Alliance employed strategic capacity building techniques to develop a deeper understanding among influential stakeholders of their roles in implementing or enforcing existing laws. These approaches increased the scale of Alliance impacts by creating the enabling conditions for community members and government officials to advance project goals of sustainable natural resource management, food and nutrition security and good governance.

This learning series was co-authored by EcoAgriculture Partners and the Alliance.

CARE-WWF Alliance
email: info@care-wwf-alliance.org
worldwildlife.org/partnerships/care-wwf-alliance

EcoAgriculture Partners
email: info@ecoagriculture.org
www.ecoagriculture.org

This couple celebrates their healthy harvest of cassava, thanks to application of climate smart agriculture practices and improved seeds.