

UK Land Policy Forum VII

Land, forests and climate

October 2018

This report was produced by the Knowledge Management team under the DFID-funded Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development programme (LEGEND)



1 Introduction

The seventh meeting of the UK Land policy forum was held on 9th October 2018 at ODI. The Forum is an initiative under DFID's LEGEND programme, convened by ODI as part of DFID's core land support team (CLST) secretariat.

The purpose of the forum is to provide a focus for debate, information and lesson sharing amongst UK stakeholders to inform DFID and wider UK policy and programming for strengthening of land governance and land rights protection. Participants included CSOs, practitioners, academic researchers, professional and private sector organisations concerned with land, including the Knowledge Management alliance and other consortium members that make up CLST,¹ and DFID representatives.

2 Summary of the discussion

Background

Africa's remaining forests and woodlands are under heavy pressure from growing populations, agricultural land use, logging, and commercial development. Forests provide an important basis for livelihoods and environmental protection and have untapped economic potentials, but land rights are generally undocumented and governance is weak. This UK Land Forum meeting will explore how forest protection, secure land rights and responsible investment in forest areas can be combined, and the roles that DFID programmes are playing.

Key messages from presentations

After a brief introductory comments by DFID and CLST, the forum heard presentations from Palladium, the Partnerships for Forests (P4F) programme, and the programme's private sector partners, including Touton and Miro Forestry. To provide a civil society view, The Forest Trust (TFT) was invited to give a presentation as well.

- **Commercial agriculture has driven land-use change over the last decades.** This forms the backbone of P4F's Theory of Change, which focuses on innovative forest partnerships in four regions in the tropical forest belt and in certain supply chains, including cocoa, oil palm, rubber, beef and soy. Case examples include Brazilian brazil nuts, Ethiopian wild forest coffee, Sumatran rubber and Ghanaian cocoa. However, different supply chains need to be treated as one, owing to the overlapping/spill-over effects, especially when it comes to deforestation. It has been very difficult to exclude deforestation-based commodities from supply chains owing to the multiple drivers of deforestation.
- **A common focus between land and deforestation is the government's aim to influence company practice, especially around the uptake of guidance.** However, the incentives for companies to adopt guidance differs. For deforestation, there is a pull factor for companies in that pressure to stop deforestation is consumer-led, which P4F has tried to amplify using various interventions. For land, it is around strengthening governance. P4F has done some work on 'enabling' conditions around policy and regulatory reforms, most notably by adopting a 'landscape' or 'commodity ecosystem' approach

¹ The CLST comprises KPMG as programme manager, the Land KM Alliance members including ODI, NRI and IIED.

(mainly by using industry-level initiatives such as RSPO, as well as regional/global initiatives).

- **There are many other drivers of change in corporate behaviour.** Including security of supply, reputational risk, customer demand, investor demands, corporate strategy and practical constraints around the availability of large plots of land. But there also needs to be a focus on smallholders (e.g. securing access to inputs/finance) as well as laws, regulations and rules. At present, 40 million hectares of land in the Amazon can still be legally converted and more is being illegally converted. The political economy around land and deforestation is riddled with vested interests, money politics and power imbalances.
- **Strengthening the forest, land and tree rights of indigenous communities is essential to close the forest frontier for intact forests.** Working to improve agricultural supply chains (i.e. with the private sector) serves a different part of the forest curve (e.g. disturbed, mosaic landscapes).
- **Challenges.** Proliferation of migrant farmers, lack of sustainable finance, inadequate sensitization and awareness, lack of legal mandates to enforce laws and inadequate incentives, not only for companies and investors, but for communities and farmers for whom the highest conservation value areas are also the ones where productivity is highest. Touton achieved this by providing Rural Service Centres (RSCs) which were used as hubs to provide services to farmers (e.g. inputs, training, technology). Other challenges mentioned by presenters included unclear tenure arrangements, increased encroachment following logging trails, lack of women at negotiations, questions over data ownership (e.g. during participatory mapping) and distrust between traditional authorities, local governance and the private sector, often created by confusion over land ownership (e.g. cutting deals with chiefs) or because one community benefits more from an investment than another.
- **Key lessons.** From the P4F programme include the long pathway they experienced to impact, the need to make interventions culturally sensitive/appropriate and making landscape governance jurisdictional, using platforms to cover the multifaceted nature of deforestation that spills across several regions and commodity value chains. There is also a need to provide more sustainable financing mechanisms to drive change.
- **Changing attitudes can take time.** As Touton experienced with Ghanaian cocoa farmers, who need to be convinced of the benefits of grafting, diversification and even planting food crops. In reality, every plot of land in Africa is owned by a community, and it takes time to disentangle and clarify this for companies. There is a fundamental need to go from the macro- to the micro-level and speak to communities who possess the land
- **There is a need to map land,** regardless of whether it is being used for the investment or not (as Miro Forestry did by mapping community land). This can help incentivise farmers (e.g. using mapped land to apply for credit), to track deforestation (through satellite monitoring) and to identify land that is suitable.

Key points of discussion from Q&A

- **How to tackle the issue of land and deforestation beyond the consumer-facing brands?** The Oxfam “Behind the Brands” campaign was highlighted as an example of how to drill down right to hidden growers.
- **What is the incentive for traders like Touton to adopt responsible investment practices?** While there is no price premium associated with sustainable products, companies are increasingly recognising the triple bottom line return of financial, social development and environmental returns, even if they are not consumer-facing. In addition, there is a huge economic cost of social conflict, much of which is driven by land. Clarity over land rights is also essential when it comes to ensuring the sustainability of an agricultural investment. However, companies also expressed that they cannot continue following practices without further contributions.
- **How can programming be improved to support responsible investment?** Especially around the participation of national and local government, who are often the missing stakeholders at the table.
- **How can community legal empowerment (e.g. the work done by Namati) be done at scale?** One way is to build capacity, but there is always an issue when it comes to guaranteeing the independence of a service delivery.
- **How do we resource the interventions needed?** Does it need to continue coming from international donors, or are there other more innovative ways? Perhaps the role of international donors is to concentrate on upstream companies, rather than consumer-facing ones.