Participatory Monitoring and Forest Landscape Restoration

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RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Forests, Trees and Agroforestry

Why participatory?

- Quantifying deforestation vs. reforestation "from above" is becoming less of a sharp dichotomy
- Even with sophisticated tools the involvement of local people in monitoring helps to discern what drives either success or failure
- Forest Landscape Restoration aims at regaining both ecological integrity and human well being





Connecting stakeholders across scales

NATIONAL

Meet restoration targets Compare progress across sites or projects "Upscale"



LOCAL

Track progress to restoration goals Ensure benefits and incentives for locals Catalyze learning and adaptation





"Disaggregating" participatory monitoring

(modified from Danielsen et al. 2009)

Category	Primary data gatherers	Primary users of data
Externally driven, professionally executed	professional researchers	professional researchers
Externally driven with local data collectors	professional researchers, local people	professional researchers
Collaborative monitoring with external data interpretation	local people with professional researcher advice	local people and professional researchers
Collaborative monitoring with local data interpretation	local people with professional researcher advice	local people
Autonomous local monitoring	local people	local people

Key messages

- Local involvement is necessary for long-term restoration success
 - Creates sense of ownership, buy-in and trust
 - Increases speed and effectiveness of local decision-making
 - Catalyzes social learning and adaptive management



Success from the ground up Participatory monitoring and forest restoration

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- Local monitors can provide reliable monitoring data with appropriate training, motivation and crosschecking
- Local monitoring can be cost effective – but it requires investment
- Planning and implementing a localybased monitoring system is a slow process
- Generating and maintaining local participation can be challenging







Essential elements

- Set up a monitoring <u>system</u> and a mechanism to oversee it
- 2. Make the monitoring plans at the beginning
- 3. Dedicate funds for participatory monitoring (at least 10%)
- 5. <u>Collaborativelly</u> set goals and identify a <u>small</u> number of shared indicators
 - Pick locally appropriate technologies that collect data adequate for decisionmaking
 - Involve women and marginalized groups
 - Encourage social learning
 - Do not impose excessive costs locally



A few "reality checks"

- Only 10% of ~ 3 700 river restoration projects in the USA carried out monitoring (Bernhardt et al. 2005)
- 94 % of 301 articles on ecological restoration focused on biophysical outcomes (Wortley et al. 2013)
- 96% of 119 ecological restoration projects in Colombia only monitored short-term goals and involved minimal local participation (Murcia & Guariguata 2014)
- Across Andean-amazonian countries lack of political will to fund monitoring in national restoration plans (Murcia & Guariguata, unpublished)





Upscaling: challenges ahead

- Participatory monitoring as a multi-scale, multi-site system may involve a dedicated, centralized (possibly government-led) platform
 - governance bottlenecks across scales may hamper progress
- A participatory monitoring system can face challenges in balancing national vs. local needs and goals
 - "locally collected" does not necessarily equate "participatory"







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- Learn from the past
 - Indicators that represent <u>drivers</u> of (reforestation) success are usually ignored
 - Consider a participatory monitoring system that integrates both indicators and local drivers of success
- Instead of focusing on indicators at the outset, construct questions on what information is needed for decision making to support restoration objectives





Restoration starts on the ground



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