

Project *brief*

Thünen Institute of International Forestry and Forest Economics

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Zambian Miombo ecoregion: No international forestry agenda without the chiefs?

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- Customary rules are better implemented than state law in most forests of the Zambian Miombo.
- This needs consideration in the implementation of the international forestry agenda.
- Governance processes show regional patterns that do not follow provincial borders.

Background and aims

Good forest governance is a prerequisite for sustainable forest management and the successful implementation of the international forestry agenda including REDD+, CBD, SDGs and other forest related policies. Zambia has adopted policies and initiatives taking this into account. Like in many African countries, both customary and formal governance mechanisms are part of Zambia's forest legislation.

We apply the Governance of Forests Initiative (GFI) Indicator Framework from the World Resource Institute in 24 communities spanning three provinces, Copperbelt, North-Western and Eastern, to examine Zambia's status in this respect. For this, we designate different arrangements according to the tenure and restrictions on access and use. We then compare the performance of different governance indicators between the different arrangements. We also examine whether patterns of community clusters reflect the governance structure of the provincial local government administration.

Key findings

Indicator scores are generally low across all arrangements (Figure 1), indicating a weak de facto forest governance performance. There is a clear differentiation of the formal and customary rules and institutions on the ground. Generally, customary law enforcement by the chiefs records a higher score than formal law enforcement. As well, tenure rights recognition and protection is evaluated higher in the customary than in the state forests (Figure 1). The results imply the possibility for conflicts between the customary (chiefs) and formal institutions resulting from unclear institutional mandates for customary forest management. Governance processes do not spatially depict the provincial administrative structure.

Conclusions

Customary and formal governance processes have to be better harmonized, otherwise implementation of the national and international forestry agenda will not be feasible. The participation of the chiefs is necessary to achieve the international forestry goals. Implementation of policy goals needs to take into account regional differences in governance processes.

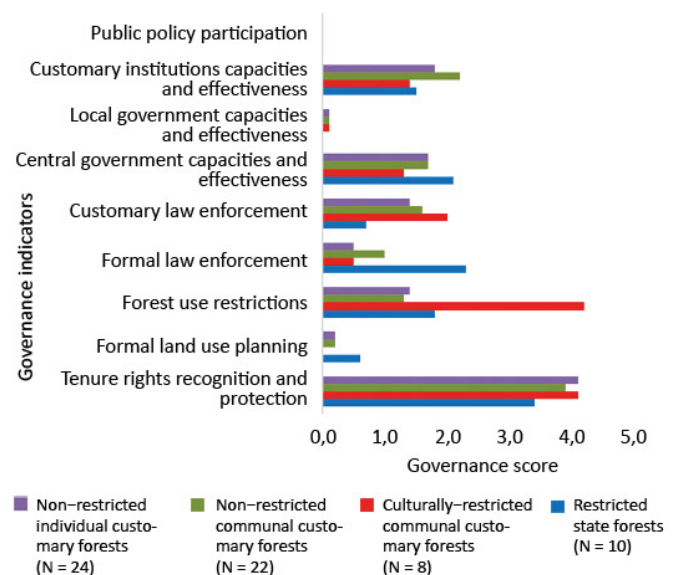


Figure 1: Indicator scores for the different arrangements. 0 = non-existent; 1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = average; 4 = high; 5 = very high

Further Information

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Support

