How does it work?

- Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFRs) are established by councils with the rights to harvest timber products, collect and retain forest royalties
- Land use planning and the allocation of land units for both production and protection purposes is undertaken to obtain a Certificates of Village Land
- VLFRs are managed by committees established under village councils
- Income is generated from harvesting licenses
- Income used for forest management, village infrastructure developments and social services in the village
- Village members are indirectly employed and finically benefit from VLFR income.

Five keys to success

1. Timber sales must increase almost tenfold to be economically viable and to become independent of external donations.
2. Increased training and capacity.
3. Capped community payments.
4. Added timber value.
5. Involvement of politically savvy non-profit organizations advocating for land rights and providing technical support.
6. Diversification of revenue streams

Extractive Timber Enterprises

WWF Tanzania has supported the establishment of over 25 Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFRs) in the Ruvuma Trans boundary Landscape which are at different stages of development as well as levels of benefits derived. Four villages in Tunduru and Kilwa Districts have harvested 160 m3 of standing trees and 2,396 pieces of sawn timber generating US$ 80,806.4 in 2019 and seven other villages generated US$ 218,000 between July-December 2017. This shows potential for income generation with proper marketing strategies for certified timber.

Advantages & Strengths

Decentralization of forest resource management
Enabling legislative framework
Opportunity for communities to benefit from forestry.
Establishment of VLFRs can achieve conservation targets, reduce deforestation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Risks and uncertainties

Lack of power transfer to communities.
Potential for elite capture.
Corruption and political interference.
Heavy reliance on technical forestry management.
Lack of capacity at local as well as government level.
No national assessment of forests
Projected wood deficits.

Financial viability

Opportunities in value added industries exist.
Costs of establishing a VLFR and the technical expertise required for the enterprise are out of the reach of communities.
Market distortions, lack of revenue collection and the limited benefits is concerning.
A lack of financial data related to enterprises make financial viability difficult to determine.
Limited business models and arrangements to facilitate investments.
Supply deficit projected to increase into 2035 compromises the viability of the business model.

Enabling context

Enabling legislation
Enabling policy framework
Conducive economic liberalization policies
Conflicting mandates
Weak regulatory frameworks
Conflicting policies
Uncertain government support

Supporters & Partnerships

Government agencies
Non-government agencies
Research entities
Education partners