Landscape Restoration in Kenya
Stocktaking of Key Innovations and Strategies
1. Introduction

In Kenya, forest and landscape restoration (FLR) is a high priority on the government’s agenda, reflected by the large number of initiatives, legislations and policies associated with addressing degradation. These government policies, when implemented with strong communities’ participation, can also be part of a national strategy to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While these initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to FLR and associated ecosystem services, implementing them at scale requires careful planning and assessment of the existing opportunities and resources. Towards this end, the Government established a multi-stakeholder Landscape Restoration Technical Working Group (LRTWG) in 2014 led by the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) to spearhead this planning and assessment process. The LRTWG carried out an assessment of potential restoration opportunities and identified the regional land use challenges, restoration options and opportunities. This study is part of this process and sought to undertake a survey of a selection of successful FLR projects in Kenya, from which lessons can be drawn and scaled up to the national level. With focus on key innovations, this work aims at providing a key building block towards a National Restoration Strategy, which is the following of the Kenya’s stated ambition to restore 5.1 million hectares of land – including forests, rangelands and croplands – by 2030.

2. Process

2.1 Project selection

This process set out to undertake a national survey of restoration initiatives that are considered successful from which lessons on key initiatives for successful restoration, particularly scalable innovations, could be learnt. Ideally, the process should have included:

- Land tenure: ideally a mix of public, communal and private lands
- Spatial scale: preferably bigger, but at least 10 ha restored area
- Temporal scale: preferably longer, but a minimum of three years of operation
- Restoration goal: ideally a mix of environmental, economic, socio-cultural goals
- Geographical and administrative coverage: preferably covering multiple eco-agricultural zones and diverse habitats, straddle several counties
- Nationally-determined landscape restoration options: ideally have a representation of most if not all seven options: Afforestation/ reforestation, Rehabilitation, Agroforestry, Commercial plantation, Silvicultural plantations, Watershed/catchments, and Roadways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case#</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Land Tenure</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>NLR Option</th>
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<tr>
<td>CS01</td>
<td>TST</td>
<td>Meru</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation</td>
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<td>Kambiu</td>
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<td>Bungoma &amp; Vihiga</td>
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<td>Agroforestry</td>
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</table>

Table 1: The key elements of the 10 projects included as Case Studies in this stocktaking exercise

2.2 Indicator selection

The key question for scaling up is what determines the success or failure of landscape restoration efforts. These key drivers have been classified into three thematic areas which were used to formulate the indicators for this study:

1. Clear motivation: all key stakeholders aware of the need for landscape restoration and be inspired or motivated to support it, i.e., have a shared vision.
2. Enabling conditions: ecological, legal, social, and/or political conditions to be in place to create a favourable context for landscape restoration at scale.
3. Effective implementation: adequate capacity and resources need to be mobilised to implement the restoration activities on a sustainable basis on the ground.

3 Key findings and recommendations for the National FLR Strategy

There was widespread agreement on most of indicators for the selected projects, and despite their variation in activities and desired end-points, all the project implementers felt that the process methodology could be considered successful. Success was determined by effective implementation of project activities because they did not have a pre-defined ecosystem or social end-points they were aspiring for. Further, all the projects had some key hallmarks of sustainability including policy backing, strong motivation driven by both need and benefits, multiple stakeholders involving in partnership, innovative mechanisms, dedicated champions/leaders and stable funding.

This is a programme where communities are engaged in rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands. They are offered a place of land for farming for free (in gazetted forest areas) and in return provide labour for plantation management and completion of the plantation activities. This demonstrates the importance of the community and the farmer in the process of restoration.

3.1 Major innovations

Amongst the strategies the projects employed, all had one that stood out as the key one: These strategies involved schemes and projects where

3.1.1 Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)

This was mainly through certification and offsetting projects, where the drivers of degradation were not only identified but also a potentiostor motivator that propelled restoration, especially on private and communal land. However, revenues from carbon sales were generally low so this had to be carefully promoted to the right stakeholders to avoid false expectations. Nonetheless, there seems to be a positive stated-ambitious goal for smallholder carbon payment schemes and projects where besides the carbon farmers, are helping control soil erosion and improving soil fertility, leading to improved productivity which ultimately results in improved food security and improved livelihoods for rural people. Kenya can earn a lot from the PES area as the Kazimia Corridor REDD+ Project (Annex 1: Case Study 10 in the detailed report) which has been actively selling verified carbon credits for close to 10 years now.

3.1.2 Plantation Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme

This is a programme where communities are engaged in rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands. They are offered a place of land for farming for free (in gazetted forest areas) and in return provide labour for plantation management and completion of the plantation activities. This demonstrates the importance of the community and the farmer in the process of restoration.

3.1.3 Commercial forestry

This provided a strong economic incentive for reforestation. While trees are primarily grown for timber products, it could be structured in a way that also enhances the environment and provides some social goals too, like soil improvement and livelihood improvement from fodder, fuel and nuts.

3.2 Key strategies

3.2.1 Dealing with previous degradation drivers

Most of the restoration initiatives had to deal with more than one driver of degradation and thus required different strategies for addressing them. The drivers of degradation identified were predominantly associated with overuse (overhastening and overstocking) which was mostly addressed by a combination of awareness and reshaping the resource rather than removing the threat per se. A wide variety of restoration actions were undertaken for the selected projects, which was expected because different stages of degradation call for different strategies and actions, ranging from abiotic, to biotic or management-related. For these projects, most of the degradation was at the biotic barrier level, mainly requiring biotic and management-related interventions for restoration. There were only few projects that involved abiotic level actions, mainly soil stabilisation. This points to the importance of national restoration efforts understanding the nature of the degradation factors they were trying to address before designing the restoration strategy.

3.2.2 Sustainability or exit plan

That most of these restoration projects were voluntary schemes not anchored or required by any policy demonstrates that with the right set of incentives, people on private or communal land can easily engage in restoration towards the national target. To this end, it is important to align the restoration goals with the community or landowner’s goals. This is important because several of the selected projects were designed to grow trees without a predetermined restoration area; they are driven by farmer-to-farmer learning which is based on agreed goals. It was also clear that there was a vital need for a restoration champion for each restoration site or exercise, and have a portfolio of funders for stability. While the selected projects all had strong champions behind them and consistent funding, the diversity of champions and funders demonstrates that the identity of the champion or funder is not as critical as their presence. Projects with a diversity of funders (e.g., receiving private or public-sector peer-to-peer financing or donor grants to develop the proof-of-concept, then harnessing private sector funding including carbon markets seemed most stable and able to expand organically by attracting new participants.

3.2.3 Costs and benefits distribution

All selected projects had three major costs: funding, labour and some opportunity costs often involving use of land, but several also had Research and Development (R&D) costs. While the funding and labour opportunity costs are often factored into restoration costs, the opportunity costs should also be included as they sometimes play a vital supporting role that could make or break the restoration programmes. Similarly, all selected projects had a diversity of economic participants, some environmental goals, but others and it was also clear that the structure should ensure benefits accrue to the lowest level (individual) before propagating to the household and eventually broader community and these other stakeholders that were involved (Government, NGO, private sector). To implement this, there needs to be a flexible but robust monitoring system that enables all stakeholders to benefit to the degree they participate or in proportion to their effort.
4 Potential models for scaling-up restoration

This study generated several important considerations for scaling up restoration across the different sectors and national restoration options towards achieving the national target. These were classified into the following three land ownership categories: public, communal and privately-owned land:

4.1 Public land: mainly forests

4.1.1 National landscape restoration option(s)
Activities under this category will largely fall under afforestation or reorestation, rehabilitation, waterbodies or riparian, and roadways, and to a lesser extent, commercial plantation, silvo-pastoral or rangelands and roadways.

4.1.2 Key motivations
These are characterised by having the environment as the chief restoration goal and a pre-defined restoration area. There are likely to be only a few opportunity costs brought in by the restoration initiative as the areas will have already be designated for their intended use.

4.1.3 Key enablers
These are typically linked to some government policy, and are likely to have a combination of government and donor (e.g., bilateral grants) funding. In addition, engagement with the local communities living around any target landscape will still be critical for their long-term success.

4.1.4 Keys to implementation
Programmes such as PELIS seem to present an opportunity for deep engagement with the community, building in social goals to the programme, and potentially cutting project costs and risks. Likewise, encouraging community participation e.g., by provision of labour or sale of seedlings seems to be a good way for these projects to build ownership and critical grassroots support.

4.2 Communal land: mainly rangelands

4.2.1 National landscape restoration option(s)
Activities under this category will largely fall under silvo-pastoral or rangelands and rehabilitation, and to a lesser extent, afforestation or reforestation, waterbodies or riparian, and commercial plantations.

4.2.2 Key motivations
These will be characterised by having multiple restoration goals, and often a pre-defined restoration area. These landscapes will predominantly be unprotected areas that are often organised as group ranches or similar other community land designation (former Trust Lands).

4.2.3 Key enablers
Although they will often not be linked to a specific government policy or legislation, they have potential for a cross-section of funding sources, spanning public and private sector, as well as donor (e.g., NGO) funding.

4.2.4 Keys to implementation
Restoration would need to combine socio-economic and environmental goals and there will be moderate opportunity costs, both land-related but also related to economic displacement. For long-term success, these projects will require a champion within the community who is committed to the initiative and helps mobilise support and funds for the project.

4.3 Private land: mainly croplands

4.3.1 National landscape restoration option(s)
Activities under this category will largely fall under afforestation or reforestation and rehabilitation (especially soils), and to a lesser extent, riparian zones, commercial plantations, and silvo-pastoral or rangelands.

4.3.2 Key motivations
Restoration initiatives in this category are characterised by having the socio-economic goals as the primary goal, and typically happen over an indefinite restoration area.

4.3.3 Key enablers
They will often not be linked to a specific government policy or legislation, but their open-endedness gives them immense potential for growth. They will often have a combination of private sector and donor (e.g., NGOs) funding, with great potential for government funds too.

4.3.4 Keys to implementation
Private lands introduce an important challenge due to their use: they are typically agricultural lands that are the primary source of livelihoods for the owners. As such, dealing with drivers of degradation will perhaps be most intricate in this category. This also means that restoration initiatives will have to work closely with the landowners from the outset to ensure that the restoration goals align with their objectives for the land, and that opportunity costs (which are high in this category) do not outstrip the potential benefits. For long-term success, these projects also require champions—often positive deviants within the community—who are committed to drive support for the project within their communities.

5 Conclusion

The restoration initiatives included in this stocktaking exercise provide a pointer of the major ingredients that should be considered when looking at scaling to sub-national levels. It is also worth remembering that depending on the land ownership, the goals, or at least primary focus, of restoration might be different to ensure acceptance and sustainability. Either way, based on the goals of the restoration initiative, there should be some monitoring effort to ensure progress is made and help adaptively improve the project during implementation because they will typically be long term projects. As such, in line with the national FLR roadmap, after the initial mapping, the current stocktaking and assessment of enabling conditions should naturally lead to the design of potential restoration strategies at the national level, including monitoring frameworks.