

## Project Update: January 2015

The project started in September 2014 with a series of meetings between the project team, community forest association and the Kenya Forest Service representatives at the forest station level. We have successfully mobilised the community and member of the Community Forest Association (CFA) which now stands at 400 people is excited about the process of developing a management plan for their forest reserve. We visited four villages' blocks namely Sigowet, Sinendet, Mulima and Koige to initialize the process by educating the community what exactly the process entails.



Figure 1 - Community mobilization meeting at the village

We then held a launching workshop attended by all the stakeholders at Sinendet where Local Planning Team (LPT) was nominated by the community members. We now work with this team as representatives of the bigger group. They attend all the consultative meeting on behalf of the entire CFA. They also help the project team collect information from the members and they pass back information to the community. Development of the Participatory Forest Management team according to the policy should involve the local community that will participate in the management of the natural

resource. The LPT has been at the core of the project and this has promoted ownership the process.

The composition of the local planning team

Name	Area/group represented
David Richu Munyoko	Mulima
Esther Wanjiru Gachau	Mulima
Roselyn Chepkoech	Sinendet
Solomon kipng'etich Sigei	Sinendet
Philip Koech	Big 15
Bernard Tonui	Tabora farm
Harrison Njuguna Wainaina	Kiptuget Forester
Nancy Chepng'etich Rotich	Women/elderly
Paul Kipkorir Kemoi	Ogiek community (minority)
MoALF	Co-opted member (technical)

We have completed livelihood and resources assessments of the people around the forest both members and non-members. All of them ideally benefit from the forest and are the primary target to participate in the joint management. The Forest Act 2005 that guides participatory forest management proposes that community members that live within 5 km radius of the

forest reserve should form a Community forest association (CFA). Joining CFA is however not mandatory therefore there are few people in this vicinity that may not have joined the CFA. They however affect the forest and their livelihoods were considered too. Focused group discussions and household's questionnaire were the main tools used for the survey. This stage helped understand the community and the forest resources as a first step to planning. We have analysed data from the survey showing description of forest adjacent communities, characteristics of respondents, local economic activities and income levels, land and other property ownership, energy sources and water sources.

We have also assessed the Kiptuget forest reserve. The forest neighbors Maji Mazuri Forest to the north, Sabatia forest to the east, Koibatek forest to the south and farmlands and settlement areas of Mau Summit and Kamara locations to the west.



Views of the forest and surrounding areas from one of the towers at highest point of the forest

We have started putting together the collected data in the draft forest management plan that is the ultimate output of this project. We are currently carrying out biodiversity survey.