Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Adenle .A. Ademola
Project Title	Community-based ecosystem services and livelihood security as a tool for restoration and conservation of human degraded landscape in Niger state, Nigeria
Application ID	36655-2
Date of this Report	01.06.2023

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Assessing land degradation around the community, including the perception and attitude towards native savannah			☑	
Assessing and valuing(provisioning) ecosystem service and its effect on livelihood security.			☑	
Investigating the conditions for poor adoption of land management practices		☑		This objective was partially achieved due to the high level of insecurity at selected community location.
Examine the processes/pathways to strengthen community-based land restoration and sustainable land management.		☑		This study objective was partially achieved due to the high level of insecurity at selected community location.
Draw insights on Land degradation Neutrality for rural degraded communities.		☑		This study objective was partially achieved due to the high level of insecurity at selected community location.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). Medium scale Land Use Land Cover Change (LULCC) in the periods of interest for Niger state which serves as the basis for linking greenness status and changes with LULCC in the period to understand ecosystem services and changes.

b). Analysis of community (respondent) perception of local LULC and ecosystem services and change including the implication for livelihood.

c). Insights for community-based measures to address land degradation.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

Communication barrier: Depending on the zone, some of the local communities/dwellers prefer or are more comfortable speaking their local languages than any other language including Hausa which is a dominant language in northern Nigeria. To tackle this challenge, the research employed the services of local language translators to translate from English/Hausa to local languages such as Nupe, Gwari. This delayed the time per questionnaire administration.

Insecurity challenges: Most of the rural communities in north central Nigeria are prone to the insecurity of life and properties due to the activities of bandits, farmers-herdsmen attacks and the Boko haram insurgency in northern Nigeria. This affected the research in terms of data gathering, and the number of communities sampled and visited for PRA including decreasing the motivation for the research by the team. However, the coping measure we adopted was to focus on a more secure study area in Niger state and quick exit from insecurity-threatened communities including work with locals who understand the local terrain in each area. The lasting solution and strategy to this problem will be to move our future research into a more secure neighbouring state in the Nigerian Guinea Savanah (NGS).

Logistics challenges: The rural settings and focus of the study exposed our research to logistic challenges. This involved increased transportation costs and the difficulties of moving from one community to another safely and the ability to reach research sites. The bad road condition such as Minna-Bida Road, Minna-Tegina including Bida-Agaie-Lapia-Labata road and ongoing road construction in Niger state further escalated logistic challenges. We had to spend more hours and days before reaching our desired and identified communities for data gathering. A way of coping was effective planning and frequent communication between partners and within the team including ensuring that research instruments like vehicles are in good condition.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Local community involvement
The method adopted that is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tends to involve community participation rather than just asking them for data. This strengthened the involvement of the selected local communities in the three zones in Niger state. While the focus group discussion and survey accommodated more random respondents from communities, communities for PRA were purposely selected from land degradation-affected villages in Niger state identified from the pre-analysed map. For more community involvement, we ensure the communities created their own maps (community land use land cover map and greenness map) rather than relying on a pre-analysed one by the research team. The PRA along with the community ground truthing exercise further drives the involvement of local communities by providing the basis for preferable insight for effective local land governance from the communities.

Local community benefits

For community benefits, the created and analysed maps enabled learning for action to help stakeholders collect, analyse, and present their own data and information. Follow-up activities such as seedling distribution are proposed for communities close to protected areas.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Land degradation is a wickedly complex problem, and the Guinea savannah is extensively degraded beyond just Niger state. Thus, there are still plans to continue scale up and replicate the research idea, especially the pathways to strengthen community-based land restoration and sustainable land management as well as land degradation neutrality (investment) at the community level across the Guinea savannah. Thus, there is still a need to model ecosystem services and their implication for achieving land degradation neutrality at all scales. Therefore, the whole research idea is expected to be replicated and extended to other neighbouring states in the geo-political zones of Nigeria.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Publication in peer-reviewed journals to circulate to a wider audience.

I plan to publish the findings of the study on my blog page. (http://adeadenle.blogspot.com/) to make it sharable and searchable for similar. researchers working on the same topic.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

I plan to address scientific gaps and consolidate previous research in Nigeria Guinea savannah (NGS), especially among human degraded local communities and their archetypes.

Further, there is an ongoing plan to develop a new funding proposal to scale up and carry out a comparative study in other states in the NGS such as Kogi, Abuja, Benue, Kwara, Nassarawa and Kaduna. This aims to broaden participation in the restoration and conservation of the NGS in view of promoting land degradation neutrality including providing the basis for a comparative appraisal between land-degraded affected states and their communities in the NGS.

Also, the gaps identified from the study like the need to understand the pathways by which other sensitive pristine ecosystems such as forest patches, riparian vegetation and corridors, including wetlands in the NGS can be sustained or serve as a response to land degradation proposed for future research.

Further, there is a need for an understanding of land degradation and other environmental problems like climate change and drought and the role of critical land actors like small-scale farmers and deforesters in the NGS.

Promoting scientific and state-of-the-art approaches such as system dynamics modelling, and machine learning of landscape to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) for the Nigerian Guinea savannah.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, that is the idea of things to do.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Nda Ali (Team driver)-He provided the car for movement during the period of fieldwork.

Abubakar Huye Saidu (Field assistant)- a graduate of the College of Education .

Minna - He speaks Nupe, Hausa and English.

Inuwa Abdulkadri (Field assistant)- a graduate of the College of Education Minna. He speaks Nupe, Hausa and English.

The team members are persons that have worked with me previously on similar projects.

Other Ad hoc local field assistants- Other field assistant living in the local community that was drafted into the fieldwork activities that understands the prevailing local conditions such as the culture of the communities in Niger state. They include but are not limited to the following people.

Tosin Asonibare (Community expert)- Resource person. He speaks Yoruba and English.

Bala Yusuff (Zone A)

Kuta Inua (Zone B)

Nurudeen AkA Mr commissioner (Zone C)

10. Any other comments?

The publications from this study are at the development stage and the support from The Rufford Foundation for research project 36655-2 in Nigeria would be acknowledged.