

23. Community based forest management plans in the Brazilian Amazon: *current barriers threatening long term economic viability*

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Community-based forest management (CBFM) projects are often seen as an alternative to protect forest and at the same time to provide incomes for small landholders. Since the mid-1990s, the number of CBFM projects has increased in the Brazilian Amazon although most of them face several difficulties despite significant public support. Four CBFM plans were analyzed between 2005 and 2010 to assess the evolution of the socioeconomic arrangements and the main barriers threatening their long term viability. The CBFM plans are located in the State of Acre (West Amazon) and in the State of Para (Eastern Amazon). The community forest producers studied live in settlements. The tenure rights model over land and forests varies from one type of settlement to another. New federal regulation issued in 2010 has added more bureaucratic steps to communities applying for rights to explore their portions of forests. The first important barrier to successful implementation of CBFM is the complex legal framework: it currently takes at least 2 to 3 years to get a plan approved. Moreover management plan elaboration and implementation process is costly. None of the CBFM plan could have been successfully implemented without external national and international financial supports, as well as technical assistance. Community forest certification has decreased and stagnated in the period analyzed. Finally, in the current Amazonian market context, timber harvest only represents a limited complementary income for small farmers, even if forest covers 80 % of their landholding. Market access is very uncertain and small holders communities do not systematically succeed in selling their timber at remunerative prices. Minimum remunerative public prices should be guaranteed for timber from such CBFM plans to make them a truly economic alternative for the Amazon smallholders.

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