PhD Abstract

Prospects for operationalizing an integrated landscape approach in northern Ghana

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Problem definition

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) in Ghana were developed in the 2000s as an alternative to the exclusive and centralized model of wildlife governance, and as a means to reduce human pressure on national parks and wildlife reserves. The scheme has empowered local communities around protected areas to govern their landscapes. The scheme was designed with a view to reconciling conservation objectives with those related to community livelihoods. However, like any community-based natural resource management scheme, the CREMA model also faces constraints related to the plurality of actors with different interests, objectives, perceptions and expectations. Hence the call for integrated and adaptive landscape approaches, through which different landscape actors negotiate the trade-offs between different land uses.

Research Questions

What are the prospects of operationalizing and implementing an integrated landscape approach that reconciles biodiversity conservation and development aims in the governance context of the CREMA in northern Ghana?

Theoretical Framework

Applying the ten landscape approach principles by Sayer et al. (2013) as a guiding conceptual framework, the study will analyse multi-stakeholder dialogues across multiple sectors and decision-making scales aimed at negotiating trade-offs and synergies between different land uses in multi-functional landscapes.

Methodology

Data collection encompasses primary and secondary data. Primary data will collected through semi-structured questionnaires, key respondent interviews, focus groups, workshops, participant observation and participatory mapping. Secondary data will be collected through a structured review of literature using a specified research protocol and including reports, working papers, manuals and policy documents, pee-reviewed papers and books.

Expected Results

The expected result encompass insights into (i) opportunities for creating common frameworks for dialogue and negotiation of trade-offs between various landscape actors with different interests, as a basis for implementing a landscape approach to govern CREMAs, and (ii) how a landscape approach can be operationalised in the governance context of CREMAs, for the benefit of biodiversity and the wellbeing of local population.

Expected Graduation

October 2022