

## Can Small-Scale Livelihood Projects Deliver Both Livelihood And Conservation Benefits?

**Reconciling sustainable development with forest conservation is a major challenge for policy makers**, especially in rural areas where poor communities depend on forests for their livelihoods. In many regions, small-scale livelihood projects are implemented to improve the livelihoods of people living adjacent to forest areas and reduce pressure on nearby forests. Although small-scale livelihood projects are widely used, there is limited information on how well they actually deliver both livelihood and forest conservation outcomes. Even less is known about how local communities perceive the benefits and costs of these livelihood projects.

**We examined local perceptions of the livelihood and conservation benefits of small-scale livelihood projects implemented in the Ankeniheny-Zahamena Corridor in Madagascar, to determine whether these projects are effective at delivering both conservation and livelihood benefits.** We also compared the benefits delivered by different types of livelihood projects.



### Conclusions:

- Small-scale livelihood projects varied greatly in their ability to deliver benefits to communities. However, some projects delivered important livelihood benefits over multiple years, suggesting they have the potential for impact, if implemented successfully.
- The small-scale projects were generally viewed as important for contributing to conservation goals (especially by reducing tavy and improving forest management), irrespective of the type of project implemented.
- **Overall, our study suggests that small-scale livelihood projects have the potential to both provide livelihood benefits and contribute to conservation outcomes. However, there is a need for more careful project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to ensure projects deliver the intended outcomes and meet local peoples' expectations.**

**Study details :** We conducted >600 household surveys to understand local perceptions of the livelihood and conservation benefits of small-scale livelihood projects implemented in the Ankeniheny Zahamena Corridor. The livelihood projects included four types of activities (support for agricultural production, beekeeping, fish farming and small livestock production) and had been implemented by Conservation International and its partners. Using a standardized survey, we asked participants a) whether the projects had provided them with livelihood benefits, the importance and duration of these benefits, and the distribution of benefits among participants; b) whether the projects had had negative impacts on their livelihoods; and c) whether the projects had helped achieve conservation outcomes.

**Results:** Local perceptions of the livelihood benefits delivered by small scale livelihood projects varied greatly across participants, depending on the type of project and the success with which the project was implemented. Of the 611 respondents, 58% indicated that the projects had provided them with livelihood benefits. The most commonly mentioned livelihood benefits were increased community cooperation, strengthened community institutions, increased food security, and overall improved household wellbeing (Figure 1). Of the participants who received benefits, 50% indicated that they are continuing to receive benefits from the microproject activities, years after the project had been completed. Most participants (>90%) indicated that the projects did not have any negative impacts on their households or communities. There were significant differences across project types in their ability to deliver livelihood benefits, and the types of benefits delivered. In general, agricultural, livestock and fish farming projects were considered to be better at delivering benefits than beekeeping projects. Interestingly, many participants felt that the livelihood projects had made specific conservation goals and had made significant contributions to forest conservation outcomes (Figure 2), irrespective of the type of project implemented.

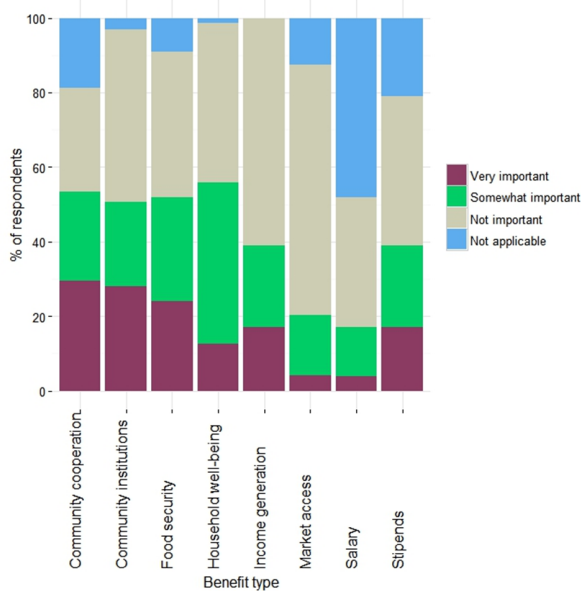


Figure 1. Participant perceptions of the relative importance of different types of livelihood benefits delivered by small-

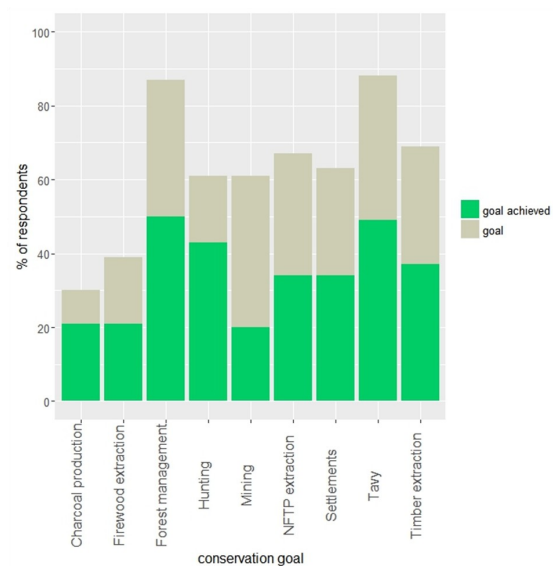


Figure 2. The percent of respondents (n=611 participants) who thought that different conservation goals were a goal of the livelihood project (entire bar) and that the microprojects helped to achieve these conser-