

Project *brief*

Thünen Institute of Forestry

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„Mix it“ – how to combine and implement policy instruments for tropical forest conservation

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- In addition to protected areas and controls of illegal logging, reforestation measures were rated as most effective policy instruments.
- Similar instruments need to be implemented in country-specific mixes that consider local interests and power relations.
- Over 100 stakeholders were interviewed in Ecuador, the Philippines and Zambia.

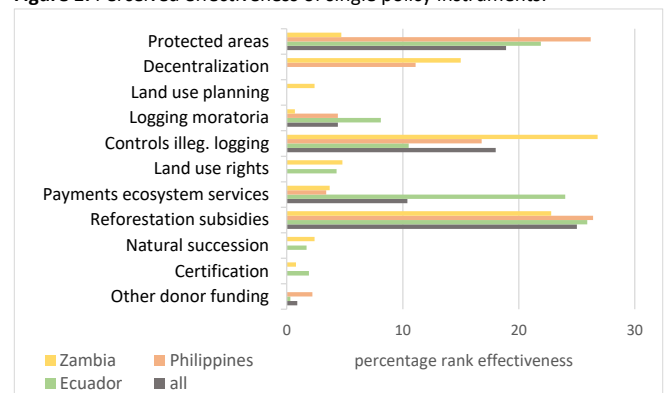
Background

Effective policy instruments and their implementation are needed to stop further deforestation and degradation of tropical forests. Single instruments can only be successful if accepted by individual actors with their differing interests. The focus of previous studies has been more on individual instruments and less on their interactions and combinations. In a new study, 108 stakeholders in Ecuador, the Philippines and Zambia were interviewed about their perceptions of single policy instruments. Possible combinations of instruments were evaluated using principal component analysis. Power relations between the respondents were examined using social network analysis.

Results

Policy instruments: The effectiveness of most policy instruments is perceived similarly by the stakeholders across the three countries (see Fig. 1). In some cases, different scores within the countries point to possible conflicts (not depicted), e.g., regarding decentralization between the government and indigenous organizations in Zambia or regarding controls of illegal logging between international organizations and indigenous organizations for the case of the Philippines. Also, the preferred policy instrument mixes, and thus the political contexts, differ between all three countries. **Power relations:** National governments are the most powerful stakeholders in all three countries, mostly because of their regulatory power; followed by financially strong international organizations such as institutions of the United Nations. Indigenous groups, non-governmental organizations, enterprises and academic institutions lag far behind, even with regard to informational power.

Figure 1: Perceived effectiveness of single policy instruments.



Conclusions

Even though there is no “silver bullet” for reducing tropical forest loss the results show an astonishing consensus on necessary policy instruments. This can be interpreted as support for corresponding international programs. These support individual instruments such as reforestation (e.g., ‘Bonn Challenge’), legality of forest use (e.g., FLEGT program) and protected areas (e.g., Convention on Biological Diversity). However, single instruments need to be implemented in country-specific policy instrument mixes, that consider the respective political context and conflicting interests. Sufficiently powerful (as well as legitimate and stable) national governments are important for successful implementation. But governments need to consider the differing interests of less powerful actors in order to avoid conflicts.

Further information

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