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Title: Dynamics of timber value chain in the southern highlands of Tanzania

This paper is a result of the activities of the project titled the Timber Rush: Private Forestry in Village Land which is implemented in Makete and Njombe districts (in Njombe Region) and Mafinga District in Iringa Region. The main objective of the study was to describe the dynamics of the timber value chain in the southern highlands of Tanzania. Specifically, the study strove to identify key actors, their roles, functions and interactions in various nodes along the timber value chain. The study employed a cross-sectional design, and a mixed research methods for data collection was employed including: key informants interviews, focus group discussions and researchers’ direct observation. During the fieldwork, various value chain nodes were identified: land, inputs, production, harvesting, processing, transportation and marketing. Actors identified were village government, villagers, tree growers, seedlings producers, middle-men, institutions, district government, traders, saw millers and porters. The paper describes timber dynamics by pointing out outstanding differences and similarities across the three study districts. Preliminary results revealed that there is a considerable variation (dynamics) in the study districts in terms of seedling quality, tending operations, timber harvesting age, transportation modes, distance from the market, marketing aspects, government regulations and taxations (cess). Further, the governance of value chain in the study areas is examined and issues related to regulations, quality and standard setting are described. The paper recommends that since there are variations timber value chain-related activities, one-size-fits-all approach should not be used to address existing challenges of the same. The paper finds it prudent to location-specific initiatives to improve timber value chain in the study area.