Evaluating the impacts of integrated conservation as a REDD+ strategy in Mato Grosso (Brazilian Amazon)

Presenter: Adriana Molina-Garzon; University of Colorado at Boulder
Presenter Email: adriana.molinagarzon@colorado.edu
Authors: Francis Kamangadazi; Lusayo Mwabumba; Edward Missanjo; Francis Phiri

For decades, integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP) have attempted to simultaneously reduce deforestation and improve livelihoods, by creating alternative employment options, introducing land-sparing agricultural technologies, and reducing rural poverty. ICDP-like strategies also prove to be at the core of many subnational REDD+ programs to mitigate climate change. Here we examine one such program, implemented in northwestern Mato Grosso, in the so-called Arc of Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon. Interventions have aimed to improve agricultural productivity and livelihoods of beneficiary communities, without establishing direct conditions of conservation outcomes in exchange (non-performance-based incentives). Based on before-after control-intervention (BACI) surveys of 240 households (53% intervention, 47% control group), we first identify household-level drivers of forest clearing, and then examine early conservation impacts after four years of program implementation. Our preliminary findings stress the importance of male adult labor for households’ self-reported forest clearing: female-dominated and elderly households clear significantly less forest, as do more educated households that likely have higher opportunity costs of labor. In principle, the ICDP focus on household use of labor thus the main goal would be to redirect male adult labor into more sustainable activities. Nevertheless, the intervention has so far not mitigated forest clearing: the difference-in-difference (DID) impacts between intervention and control groups are insignificant, both for the entire program as for selected subcomponents: either its conservation impacts need more time to pan out, or the ICDP approach was locally inadequate, compared for instance to performance-based alternative forms of intervention.