Community Based Governance Arrangements For Charcoal Production

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Characterized as informal, community-based governance arrangements (CBGA) bridge formal charcoal governance gap but at varied temporal and spatial scales. As evidence suggests, recent government attempts to regularize the charcoal sub-sector imperils these CBGAs with implications on locals’ access to wood resources, local economy and livelihoods as well as relationship between state and customary governance structures. Yet, not much is known about the form and operations of these arrangements as well as the interests and needs they serve in regulating charcoal production. Therefore, the need to examine the effectiveness of the arrangements and to explore how they have evolved overtime. This was done through extensive literature review and information gathering through interviews, focus group discussion, PRA techniques, etc. on charcoal governance arrangements in the Atebubu-Amantin District. Findings are that, charcoal producers are aware and acknowledge the arrangements in their activities though the exact date for its institution remains unknown. Consolidation of traditional authority and the need to benefit from commercial charcoal production were some reasons for initiation of the arrangements. The arrangements are dynamic with changes mainly driven by national directives, emergence of conflict situations, exposure to practices elsewhere among others. High adherence/compliance, less bureaucracy and flexibility are typical strengths of the arrangements. On the contrary, lack of recognition for the arrangements by state institutions, poor accountability and cultural differences constraint the arrangements, leaving stakeholders with some level of uncertainty on its effectiveness towards achieving sustainable charcoal production. To address this, sector institutions should consider and align informal arrangements with national development strategies and management priorities as well as interventions targeting sustainable charcoal value chain.