

Case Study: Making reforestation “climate-smart”

Peter is chair of the Community Water Users Group (CWUG) made up of representatives from his the community’s many stakeholder groups. He works with farmers, women’s cooperatives and other stakeholders in the catchment area to ensure sustainable use and equitable allocation of water resources through sound management practices.



The river basin where Peter’s village is located is one of several water towers in his country and its health is of great importance to region. The area was once covered by the forest, but in the 1960’s much of this land was allocated for settlement by the national government. As the population grew, farmers began to settle the area and cleared trees to make way for crops, even on slopes that were unsuitable for farming. The result has been massive erosion, depletion of soils and a sharp decrease in water quality. Peter says, “In the 1990s, the local river and its tributaries were clean and

flowed throughout the year. Now some rivers disappear altogether during the drier months of October through March.” He attributes this situation to unsustainable land use practices, deforestation and water extraction.

Recently Peter participated in a community-wide climate change vulnerability assessment that included stakeholders, both women and men, that have been affected by changing freshwater conditions. They learned how the climate has changed in his area. Average temperatures have increased by about 2°C over the past 50 years while the number of rainy days as decreased. When the rain comes, it tends to fall with greater intensity, which leads to even greater soil erosion, flooding and mudslides. Community members also observed increased incidences of frost and that the timing of these events is unpredictable.



Through the vulnerability assessment workshop Peter and his community realized that with the changing climate, conditions in the catchment have become worse and that this trend will continue. Collectively they decided to take immediate action to reforest the area to protect the watershed and the livelihoods of the local people who depend on stable and secure supplies of water. He is applying for a \$10,000 grant from your foundation to raise community on the importance of forests and water conservation and to plant 16,500 trees on the hillsides surrounding his village. Through this project CWUG plans to plant 10 native tree species that were present in the 1960s before settlements cleared the forests.

You must decide whether or not to give the grant to Peter and CWUG for their project. Consider these questions.

1. Is this project an example of ecosystem-based adaptation? Community-based adaptation?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this project?
3. Is the project climate-smart?
4. What questions would you ask Peter before making your decision to fund the project?
5. What recommendations would you make to strengthen the project?