



# How strong internal governance is supporting a community forestry network in Tanzania

Producer organisation: Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania (MJUMITA – Tanzania Forest Community Network)



## Internal Governance Case Study 4: Tanzania



Edward Gerald Ndilanha, Rahima Njaidi and Daniel Lukas

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Cover photo: MJUMITA members measuring a stem size (left) and MJUMITA members and their beehives (right) © MJUMITA

Corresponding author: Edward Gerald Ndilanha

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>List of figures and tables</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1 About MJUMITA</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 MJUMITA's background, vision and mission .....	6
1.2 Location and membership.....	7
1.3 Products and patterns of land use .....	8
<b>2 Evolution of internal governance structures, systems and practices</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 Organisational structure .....	10
2.2 Organisational systems.....	11
2.3 Organisational practices.....	19
<b>3 Tactics that improve MJUMITA's internal governance</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1 Tactics that improve members' trust and sense of belonging.....	21
3.2 Tactics that improve external relationships with banks, markets and government .....	21
3.3 Tactics that improve the delivery of MJUMITA's vision and purpose .....	21
<b>4 Future plans to improve internal governance</b> .....	<b>22</b>
4.1 Future plans .....	22
4.2 Prospects for replication.....	22
<b>5 Main conclusions</b> .....	<b>23</b>
5.1 Innovations.....	23
5.2 Lessons learnt.....	23
<b>References and bibliography</b> .....	<b>24</b>

## List of figures and tables

Table 1. MJUMITA's annual general meetings and key themes.....	11
Figure 1. Map showing the six geographical zones where MJUMITA operates.....	7
Figure 2. Structure of the local MJUMITA network.....	8

## Acronyms

AGM	Annual general meeting
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CBFM	Community-based forest management
CCRO	Certificate of customary right of occupancy
CSOs	Civil society organisations
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPOs	Forest and farm producer organisations
MJUMITA	Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Mimitu Tanzania (Tanzania Forest Community Network)
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
OYE	Opportunities for Youth Employment project
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TFCG	Tanzania Forest Conservation Group
VLCs	Village land certificates
VLFRs	Village land forest reserves

## Summary

This case study documents the tactics used by Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Mimitu Tanzania (MJUMITA – the Tanzania Forest Community Network) to improve its internal governance. MJUMITA is an apex-level forest and farm producer organisation (FFPO) representing multiple FFPOs, Indigenous Peoples' groups and local community groups.

As a national network, MJUMITA operates in 14 regions across 30 districts, 143 wards and more than 452 villages, representing about 500 forest-based local community groups and village forest-management institutions with more than 15,000 members across the whole of Tanzania. Its vision is to see Tanzanian society sustainably managing and benefiting from natural forests. The primary role of MJUMITA is to build the capacity of local communities, to give them a common voice and to advocate for forest benefits and equality in forest management. To achieve these objectives, MJUMITA mobilises resources and works with different stakeholders and actors at local, national, regional and even global levels. It acts as a liaison point with other interrelated sectors and engages with government ministries and agencies.

As an apex-level FFPO, MJUMITA is transparent and inclusive. Ideas are shared with the village government and interested communities are given the opportunity to establish local-level FFPOs, become members of MJUMITA and take part in capacity-building interventions. In recent years, efforts have been made to promote the participation of women and youth, which has enabled them to take part in FFPO activities and assume leadership positions. The key tactics employed include establishing clear communication channels and feedback mechanisms, promoting transparency and participation, and promoting social connections through meetings, workshops and community forums.

MJUMITA works with stakeholders who come from diverse backgrounds and some with competing interests on the use of forestry. To ensure there is a common goal and a shared vision among these multiple stakeholders, local-level MJUMITA FFPOs are established in a transparent and inclusive manner. To ensure sustainability and to allow for the realisation of its vision and purpose, MJUMITA's governance structures and decision-making processes are governed by its constitution and guided by a five-year strategic plan. This document outlines all interventions that are required to enable MJUMITA achieve its vision and purpose and is shared with all stakeholders including donors.

MJUMITA also regularly undertakes monitoring and evaluation of project interventions to understand the performance of the interventions and to make any necessary changes. MJUMITA also plans to strengthen its board of directors by adding three additional members with expertise in financial management, resource mobilisation and fundraising, and natural resources management. The new membership will add value to the existing board which is solely made up of community members from the six geographical zones. With this new board, MJUMITA is expecting to increase its fundraising portfolio, enabling it to expand to other parts of the country.

Finally, to build trust with external partners, MJUMITA has put in place robust financial management systems to handle donor funds, maintains clear and transparent communication channels with donors and government officials, and has demonstrated its commitment to legal and ethical standards.

# 1 About MJUMITA

## 1.1 MJUMITA's background, vision and mission

Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Mimitu Tanzania (MJUMITA or the Tanzania Forest Community Network) was established in 2007 as an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) and is legally registered under the NGO Act of 2002. MJUMITA is an apex-level forest and farm producer organisation (FFPO) made up of multiple FFPOs, including Indigenous People's groups and local community groups.

Its vision is to see Tanzanian society sustainably managing and benefiting from natural forests. When it was first established, MJUMITA sought to address inefficiencies in state governance structures, including the lack of accountability, unclear roles and responsibilities, ineffective information flows and weak institutional decision-making processes. MJUMITA aimed to promote economic growth while addressing the increased deterioration of natural forests on village land, environmental destruction and social inequality within the Tanzanian forestry sector. Specifically, MJUMITA aimed to address challenges related to weaknesses in forest-sector policy formulation, its members' lack of awareness of environmental issues and low levels of education, insufficient technology, and the lack of innovative ideas for problem solving.

The primary role of MJUMITA is to build the capacity of local communities to participate effectively and benefit from forest management in Tanzania. MJUMITA was established for the purpose of empowering local communities by giving them a common voice and advocating for forest benefits and equality in forest management. MJUMITA has the potential to be a powerful voice for the rural poor of Tanzania and has already had considerable success in advocating for improved forest governance in Tanzania.

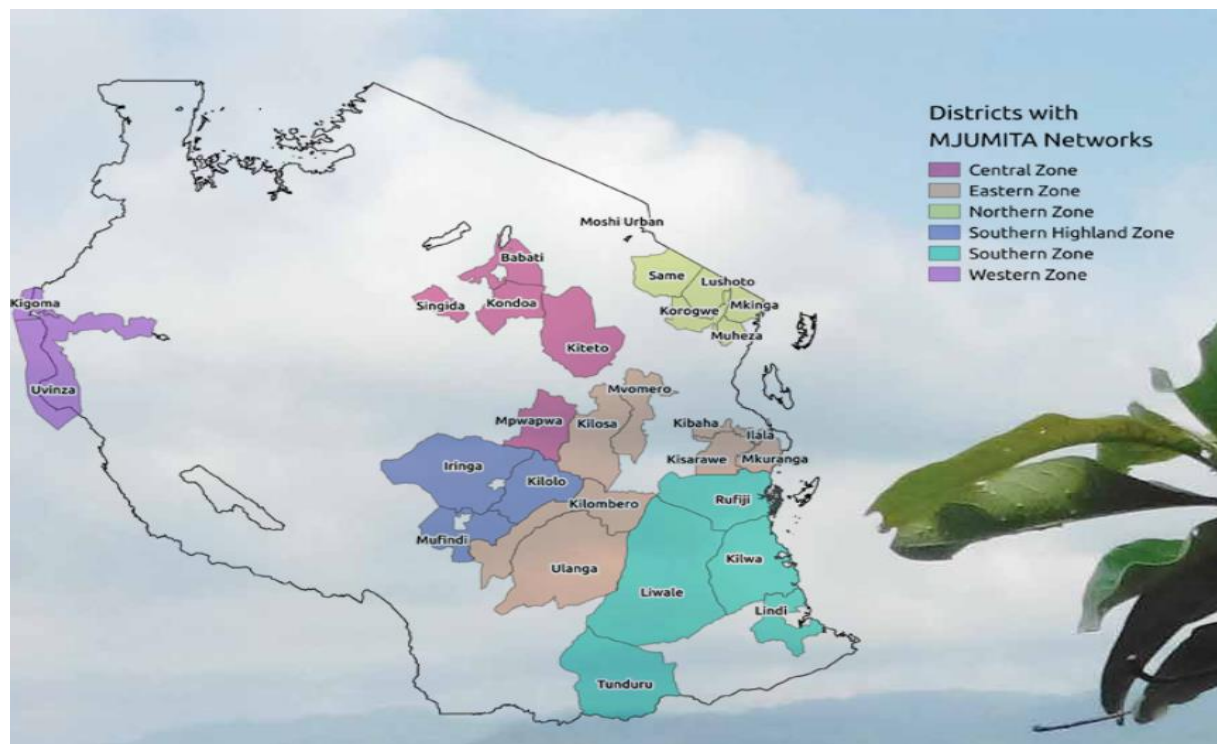
MJUMITA's secondary role is to act as a liaison point with other interrelated sectors through multisectorial and multidisciplinary teams. This is important because the governance and regulations of the forestry sector in Tanzania involve the participation of multiple stakeholders, including national state government ministries and government agencies such as the Tanzania Forest Service Agency (TFS), Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), Ministry of Minerals, Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements. MJUMITA also facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to participatory forest management (PFM). PFM is considered to be important because forestry provides livelihoods to local communities across the tropics, supplying basic resources, protecting water and soil quality for human agriculture and food production, while also harbouring some of the most biodiverse wildlife on earth. The core objectives of MJUMITA are:

- To recognise and help communities living adjacent to forests and natural reserves to improve their livelihoods through several support programmes.
- To sensitise them about sustainable development and management of forests in mainland Tanzania through research, training, advocacy, networking and developing the capacities of MJUMITA members and other stakeholders.
- To provide opportunities for MJUMITA members to exchange ideas and experiences on various issues related to sustainable forest management in mainland Tanzania.
- To support MJUMITA members to work and make meaningful decisions regarding their roles in participatory forest management and increase the capacity of Tanzanian citizens living adjacent to forests.
- To seek funding and other resources for implementing its core objectives and other interventions to help MJUMITA realise its vision.
- To build the capacity of local communities to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes for sustainable national conserved and non-conserved forests.
- Most programmes implemented within the MJUMITA are gender based and focus on strengthening the capacity of youth.

## 1.2 Location and membership

As a national network, MJUMITA operates in 14 regions across 30 districts, 143 wards and more than 452 villages, representing about 500 forest-based local community groups and village forest-management institutions under PFM programmes, representing more than 15,000 members across the whole of Tanzania (MJUMITA undated). Currently, MJUMITA operates in six geographical zones: central, eastern, northern, southern highlands, southern and western zones (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map showing the six geographical zones where MJUMITA operates



Source: MJUMITA (undated)

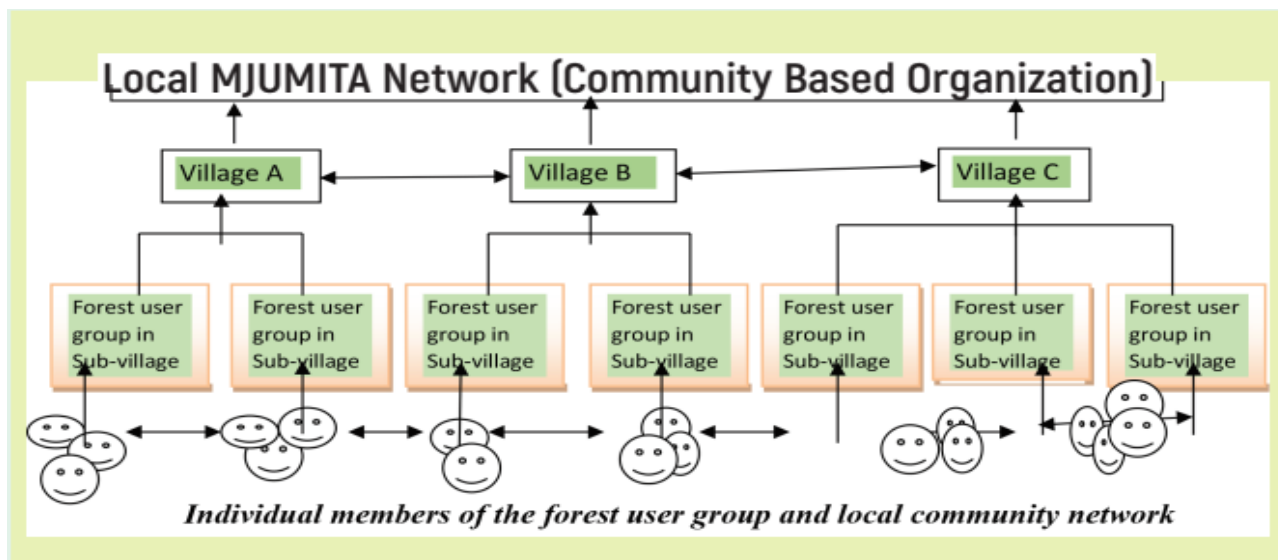
MJUMITA's members are community-based organisations (CBOs) that practice participatory forest management (PFM) through community-based forestry management (CBFM). CBFM is a policy tool designed by the Tanzania government to promote community involvement in the sustainable management and use of forest resources on village lands (Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania, TFCG and MJUMITA undated).

There are three types of membership:

- **Ordinary membership:** Ordinary members are all members living adjacent to forests and who have followed the procedures of registration as per MJUMITA's constitution.
- **Corporate membership:** Corporate members include any person other than ordinary and honorarium members. This type of membership is acquired upon being recommended by the board and approved by the annual general assembly (AGM).
- **Honorary membership:** Honorary members include reputable persons as approved by the AGM after having been proposed by the board.

MJUMITA's membership system is built around local MJUMITA networks (Figure 2). These networks are associations of forest user groups, village natural resource committees (VNRCs) and other individual forest producers. The local MJUMITA networks provide a forum for capacity building, advocacy and communication among the villages participating in CBFM at the village and ward levels. MJUMITA's constitution strongly states that every person can apply to be a member (men, women and youth). It also stipulates how membership can cease or be terminated.

Figure 2. Structure of the local MJUMITA network



### 1.3 Products and patterns of land use

MJUMITA's members engage in different income-generating activities from small-scale farming, from producing forest products (timber and non-timber products such as medicinal plants, fuelwood, building poles and food, including ming'oko and mushrooms), charcoal production and hunting. Like other FFPOs, MJUMITA members are smallholders with farms of less than five hectares producing 70% of the calories in the regions where they predominate (although the farming landscape is now changing as the focus shifts from food production for local consumption to commercial farming). In addition, as a result of the impacts of climate change, members are also increasingly diversifying their income-generating activities to include raising cattle, and processing and trade activities. These activities are part of efforts geared towards reducing the pressure and dependence on forests and natural resources.

Participatory forest management (PFM) and community-based forest management (CBFM) are policy tools designed by the Tanzania government to promote community involvement in the sustainable management and use of forest resources on village lands. They were designed to address challenges related to shortages of staff in the forest sector and limited financial resources to invest in sustainable forest management. The approach is grounded in Tanzania's National Forest Policy 1998, National Forest Policy Implementation Strategy (NFPIS) (2021–2031), CBFM Action Plan (2022–2032), National Forest Act 2002, Local Government Authority (District Authority) Act 1982, and Village Land Act 1999.

For decades, Tanzania has been at the forefront of CBFM, whereby communities are granted tenure and user rights over forested land on the condition that it is sustainably managed (RBGE undated). Village lands are secured by implementing CBFM which applies statutory provisions to formalise ownership and management of these forests by establishing village land forest reserves (VLFRs), community forest reserves (CFRs) or private forest reserves (PFRs). This is provided by policy statements in the National Forestry Policy of 1998 and the Forest Act of 2002. CBFM is a village-level governance system responsible for ensuring each village establishes VLFRs. The process for establishing VLFRs involves agreeing the location of the village forest reserve, and preparing a management plan and bylaws using a participatory approach facilitated by the district forest officer. The plans and bylaws are presented first to the village assembly and then to the district council for review and approval.

Land tenure is governed by the Village Land Act of 1999. The act defines village land to include lands that are registered under Section 22 of the Local Government (District Authorities) Act or those designated by the Land Tenure (Village Settlements) Act of 1965. Village land certificates (VLCs) formalise village land boundaries and affirm the occupation and use of village land by the villagers

under and in accordance with customary law. The law empowers village council to allocate (and manage) parcels of village land or grant customary rights within the village to individuals, households, families, clans, communities or others. Village councils are responsible for adjudication, registration and titling. They are also mandated to establish a committee to advise and make recommendations on the management of village land. However, these committees have no power to take any decisions concerning the management of village land. Section 14 of the Village Land Act of 1999 defines land which is or may be held for customary rights of occupancy, and the conditions for the granting of customary right of occupancy (CCRO) to persons or groups of persons.

According to Rahma Njaidi, the current MJUMITA executive director, the increase in MJUMITA's membership over time can be attributed to the perception of the key role that MJUMITA plays in addressing its member's challenges. For example, she points out that MJUMITA recently advocated for the removal of Government Notice 417 which made an attempt to centralise control over forests and to militarise the enforcement of that control under the Director of Forestry and Beekeeping Division. The issuance of Government Notice 417 on 24th May 2019 was cited by CBFM stakeholders as an example of a move towards recentralisation because it outlined the following:

- Recentralising communities' rights to prepare sustainable forest harvesting plans in the VLFRs so that preparing these plans was relocated to the director of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division
- Recentralising community rights to make decisions regarding issuing sustainable harvesting permits in VLFRs so that the approval of buyers was relocated to the district harvesting committee, and
- Removal of royalty exemptions for VLFRs, contrary to provisions of the Forest Act of 2002 – Section 78 (3), Section 65 (3) and Section 97 (1)(b) – so that villages can no longer sell their forest products at prices chosen by themselves but are compelled to follow the national government's royalty rates.

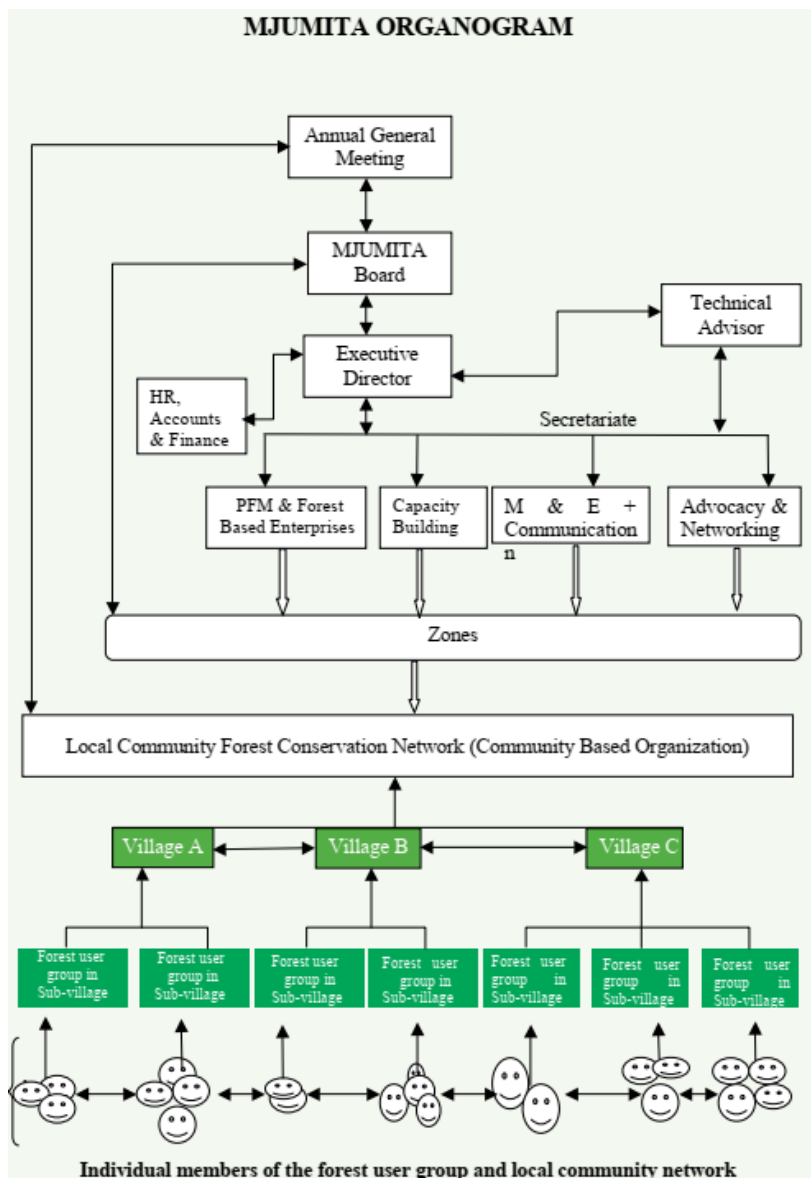
These concerns are also related to concerns about poor governance practices across all levels of government, as well as the potential for top-down decisions to convert village lands to municipal lands, which would further erode forest governance and contribute to land grabbing of community forests, including VLFRs, by urban elites.

## 2 Evolution of internal governance structures, systems and practices

### 2.1 Organisational structure

MJUMITA is governed by a board of directors comprised of community representatives of local MJUMITA networks from the six geographical zones where MJUMITA operates (Figure 3). The board is elected by MJUMITA members every three years during the annual general meeting (AGM). To ensure institutional memory and continuity in leadership, the whole board is not replaced at once. For the positions of board chairperson and vice chairperson, MJUMITA has a requirement that one of them must be a woman. Women and youth are also encouraged to contest.

Figure 3. MJUMITA's organisational structure



MJUMITA has three levels of decision-making:

- The first level is the AGM, which is the highest level where all strategic decisions of the organisation are made by members (including men, women and the marginalised). Once decisions are made at the AGM, they become final and members are encouraged to share these decisions with their network members.
- The second level of decision-making is the board of directors. The board meets four times a year to deliberate on key organisational issues before they are submitted to the AGM. Decisions made by the board are shared with the staff through the executive director, who is the secretary to the board.
- The third decision-making level is at management level. Decisions made at this level are communicated to the board and ultimately to members during AGMs.

MJUMITA's AGMs involve at least 200 CBFM stakeholders each year, with the objective of sharing experiences and advocating for better CBFM policies at the national level. A specific theme is established for every year and messages related to the theme are presented in order to raise awareness at national level. A guest of honour is selected based on the theme and journalists are also engaged in order to amplify MJUMITA's key messages. Recommendations are also made for improving CBFM policies and practices.

Table 1. MJUMITA's annual general meetings and key themes

Year	Forum	Theme
2018	18 <sup>th</sup>	Creating an enabling environment for community-based forest enterprises in village land forest reserves
2019	19 <sup>th</sup>	Creating an enabling environment to facilitate the establishment of village land forest reserves for economic development, improved livelihoods and improved forest management
2020	20 <sup>th</sup>	Investments in formalising more forests of village land for sustainable development
2021	21 <sup>st</sup>	Restoration and conservation of nature for improving our lives
2022	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Gender inclusion in conservation and adaptation to climate change

Source: MJUMITA (2022)

In 2022, the AGM passed a resolution that allowed the board to be expanded to include other members who are not local communities. These members are professionals in the following fields: natural resources management, accounts/financial management and resource mobilisation. This change is intended to diversify the board and to give it more strength to be able to provide effective oversight. These professionals do not have the same decision-making power as the other board members because they are not elected by the communities during the AGM. These professionals are appointed by the board and serve for a period of three years which can be renewed to another three years. Board members can serve a maximum of two terms (six years).

## 2.2 Organisational systems

### 2.2.1 Constitution, strategic plans and annual work plans

MJUMITA's vision statement is enshrined in its constitution and strategic plan, the development of which was participatory and involved MJUMITA staff, members and partners. The constitution was later translated in Kiswahili for the local communities. If any section of the constitution requires amendments, this proposal is communicated during the AGM and the views of members are taken on board. MJUMITA's day-to-day activities are governed by annual workplans which draw on the strategic plan which is revised every five years. The strategic plan for the period under review for this case study was 2019–2023. MJUMITA's broad objective during this period was to contribute to improving governance of forest-management institutions in villages served by the network.

### 2.2.2 Finance systems

MJUMITA has finance regulations governing MJUMITA's financial operations. The regulations aim to ensure MJUMITA's operations are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, are effective and efficient, and align with its constitution, mission and values. The regulations provide clear guidance to all employees regarding financial operations and their roles, powers, rights and responsibilities within MJUMITA. The financial regulations define standards to uphold the highest professional standards in accounting and auditing functions while maintaining complete, clear and accurate financial records at all times:

- **Governance and accountability:** MJUMITA's financial policies establish a framework for financial governance and accountability within the organisation. This includes defining roles and responsibilities, approving financial decisions, and ensuring transparency in financial matters.
- **Financial stability:** One of the primary objectives of MJUMITA's financial regulations is to ensure the financial stability of the organisation. This involves maintaining a healthy balance between income and expenditure, managing cashflow effectively, and having sufficient reserves to cover unexpected expenditure or economic downturns.
- **Cost control:** The regulations aim to control and optimise costs within the organisation. This includes setting spending limits, cost-reduction strategies and monitoring expenditure to ensure they align with the organisation's budget and objectives.
- **Compliance:** Ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is a key objective of financial regulation. This includes adhering to accounting standards, tax laws, international public-sector accounting standards relevant to NGOs, and other financial regulations relevant to the organisation.
- **Financial reporting and transparency:** MJUMITA's financial regulations emphasise the importance of accurate and transparent financial reporting. This includes defining reporting standards, timelines and responsibilities for financial reporting.
- **Continuous improvement:** Financial regulations encourage a culture of continuous improvement in financial management processes. MJUMITA regularly reviews and updates its financial regulations to adapt to changing circumstances and to improve financial performance.

To ensure that all the above objectives are met, MJUMITA uses the financial accounting system QuickBooks which ensures work is done on time and donor reports are generated on time, reduces errors and promotes transparency.

- **Participatory planning and budgeting:** Each project undertakes participatory planning twice a year for project budgets and workplans. The planning includes the project staff, finance team, executive director and administration department to ensure the whole team is informed about the project. This plan is then communicated to the support team who are the project drivers to ensure they also understand what is expected of them in that period.
- **Preparation of quarterly, biannual and annual financial reports:** MJUMITA prepares quarterly, biannual and annual financial reports to submit to donors. These reports are also used to inform MJUMITA of the progress made against budget allocation. Changes to plans can be made based on these reports.



Producers from the Chinyemi women's group in Maguha village, Kilosa district with their bee products © MJUMITA

### 2.2.3 National-level dialogues

In order to facilitate knowledge sharing and exchange, MJUMITA organises dialogues with different stakeholders at national, regional and local community levels. The following are recent examples of successful national-level events in 2022:

- MJUMITA sensitised 64 members of parliament (from the land, natural resources and tourism committee and the business, industry and environment committee) on CBFM and sustainable forest-based enterprises.
- MJUMITA supported local network leaders (led by the MJUMITA national chairperson) to conduct a dialogue with the minister for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) about the consequences of Government Notice 417 in CBFM.
- MJUMITA and partner civil society organisations (CSOs) conducted a dialogue with the permanent secretary for MNRT and the director of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division to discuss key policy issues related to the challenges and opportunities for scaling up CBFM.
- In addition, MJUMITA and other CBFM CSOs had a comprehensive meeting with MNRT and the President of the Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) on the development of a national CBFM action plan, which would promote scaling up CBFM, including financing mechanisms.



An awareness-raising meeting with members of parliament from the land, natural resources and tourism committee and the business, industry and environment committee © MJUMITA

#### 2.2.4 Local-level dialogues

At the regional and local levels, a total of 19 active network leaders conducted eight dialogues with the Ruvuma regional administrative secretary (RAS), Tunduru and Rufiji district commissioners, Tunduru and Kilwa district executive directors and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) to amplify community voices on CBFM governance. MJUMITA supported local networks to prepare technical reports on CBFM governance challenges and successes for sharing

and discussing with officials. Also, MJUMITA provided technical backstopping on how these communities should engage with officials and monitor the progress of key agreements.

Besides this, MJUMITA conducted four forums that brought together 74 CBFM village leaders with district security committee members and other government officials in Tunduru and Kilwa districts. The forums discussed CBFM governance challenges such as the delay of village leaders responding to audit queries, the involvement of some village leaders in the embezzlement of village financial revenues, and the lack of common receipt books for village councils' revenue collections.

### 2.2.5 Engaging with district internal auditors and media as strategic partners

MJUMITA has worked strategically with district internal auditors to identify and analyse CBFM governance issues in 22 villages and to develop recommendations for improvements. The project engaged the media to analyse critical CBFM governance issues whereby more than 30 stories related to CBFM governance were published or broadcast through TBC Radio (a popular radio station in Tanzania), The Guardian newspaper, Independent Television Limited (ITV), Azam TV, Channel Ten TV, Clouds TV and Muungwana Blog.

### 2.2.6 Local network meetings

MJUMITA engaged nine district officials (three district forest officers, three district internal auditors and three district community development officers) and conducted six local network meetings that involved community leaders, village leaders, network members, ward executive officers and ward councillors in Tunduru, Kilwa and Rufiji. A total of 269 (137 men and 132 women) community leaders were acquainted and sensitised to advocate for the harmonisation of emerging policy issues and related guidelines (Government Notice 417) that undermine the rights of local communities to benefit from natural forests within their village lands (MJUMITA 2022).



A meeting between MJUMITA, the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG), the permanent secretary of MNRT and the director of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division © MJUMITA

In addition, in October 2020, MJUMITA and the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) met with Dr Aloycia K Nzuki (the new permanent secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism) and Dr Ezekiel Mwakalukwa (director of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division). The aim was to introduce the new permanent secretary to the work done by MJUMITA and TFCG, including their achievements in implementing CBFM, opportunities and key challenges facing the forest sector in Tanzania, and proposed recommendations on how to improve forest conservation on village lands, including scaling up CBFM to more villages.

### 2.2.7 Village land-use planning

MJUMITA also supports communities to establish VLFRs to promote the sustainable management and use of forest resources. VLFRs enable communities to receive tangible benefits through sustainable harvesting of trees, carbon credits, ecotourism and other environmental and ecological benefits. MJUMITA supports villages to develop village land-use plans in order to promote sustainable land use and natural resources management.

While facilitating land-use planning, MJUMITA uses guidelines provided by the National Land Use Planning Commission. Each village prepares a land-use management plan using participatory tools, modelled on the integrated approach to land-use and CBFM planning practiced by MJUMITA. The planning processes are facilitated by the district participatory land-use management team. The plans specify the geographical distribution of land uses for the community and the mechanisms to ensure implementation. The plans are reviewed and approved by the district council. The plans are widely communicated within the community through awareness-raising activities, by training village leaders and by installing information boards in key locations.



Members participating in the establishment of a village land forestry reserve and land-use planning  
© MJUMITA

The village land-use management committees are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the planning project. Within each of the village land-use plans, current and planned land uses are described and mapped. The land-use categories include areas for permanent agriculture, settlements, public services, grazing, village sustainable forest reserves, forests for unrestricted use, and areas for shifting agriculture interspersed with housing. In general, there are patterns of allocating lowland areas for agriculture and settlements, with forest areas remaining on the plateau tops. The expected outcomes are that:

- Community-owned forests are managed in a participatory, effective and equitable way
- Communities have more secure land tenure, and
- Soil erosion is reduced.

All villages have developed and are implementing village land-use plans which guide the community on the agreed locations for different types of land use including forests and agricultural land. Communities benefit because water and other ecological services are maintained as a basis for more sustainable livelihood activities. Land tenure is strengthened and conflicts over land are reduced. This ensures more effective, equitable and sustainable management.

### 2.2.8 Enterprise planning and development

MJUMITA also engages its members in enterprise planning and development, outlining the options and risks involved in setting up a business. It shows how to avoid this failure by focusing on the

planning stage and building on this framework as the business develops. Over time MJUMITA has implemented two enterprise development plans: the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) project and sustainable charcoal production.

From 2009 to 2015, MJUMITA implemented a REDD project with three key objectives:

- **Climate:** To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from unplanned deforestation on village lands through sustainable forest management and to enhance the carbon stock within village forest reserves by allowing natural regeneration.
- **Community:** To maintain forest ecosystem services and a sustainable supply of forest products through an equitable and effective system of participatory forest management; to generate individual cash incomes from REDD for investing in improved agricultural practices and other enterprises and for livelihood diversification with a particular focus on poorer households and women; and to improve the quality and availability of public services and infrastructure.
- **Biodiversity:** To conserve threatened and endemic species and to conserve an extensive area of Eastern African Coastal Forest.

Under the REDD project, MJUMITA developed and trialled a benefit-sharing model across 17 CBFM villages from Kilosa, Mpwapwa and Lindi districts which implemented REDD+ project in Tanzania. The model provides transparent and accountable procedures for sharing and administering revenues accrued from CBFM-based enterprises among village institutions and local authorities. A total of 49,025 local communities (about 25% women and 43% children and dependents) benefited from the model and performance-based REDD payments of US\$485,361. In Lindi district, communities benefited from performance-based REDD payments for reducing annual deforestation in their entire village areas from -1.99% to -1.57% between 2012 and 2013.

Between 2012 and 2019, MJUMITA and TFCG implemented a project known as Transforming Tanzania's Charcoal Sector (TTCS) which later came to be known as Conserving Forests through Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprise Support in Tanzania (CoForEST). The project aimed to establish a commercially viable value chain for legally and sustainably produced charcoal and timber. Working in 35 villages in Morogoro Region, the project partners piloted integrated forest-based enterprises such as sustainable timber harvesting and charcoal production. The project resulted in improved forest management, rural employment and community-led development projects.<sup>1</sup>



Members participating in the sustainable charcoal project jointly implemented by MJUMITA and Tanzania Forestry Conservation Group Source © MJUMITA

<sup>1</sup> See: [www.tfcg.org/what-we-do/develop/coforest](http://www.tfcg.org/what-we-do/develop/coforest)

MJUMITA developed a sustainable charcoal model and trialled it in 21 CBFM villages with 112,379ha of VLFR land in Morogoro. The model promotes sustainable forest management and contributes to poverty reduction by providing opportunities to diversify community-based forest trade and maximise benefits to the poor. The model is the only sustainable tree-based biomass energy production system from natural forests in Tanzania. By 2017, over 1,053 charcoal producers and village governments collected more than US\$562,000. In addition, 30 community development facilities were constructed (including classrooms, health facilities, water and road infrastructure) worth about US\$357,000, accrued from sustainable charcoal production in VLFRs in 13 villages in Kilosa district. The deforestation rate in these VLFRs in 2016 and 2017 was 0.82%, far below the respective district and national averages of between 1.7% and 1.8%.

- To establish sustainable charcoal production, villages prepare a village land-use plan including land designated as VLFRs. Around 20% is allocated for charcoal production. Charcoal producer associations formed.
- Based on a 24-year rotation, every year 1/24 of the charcoal management unit is harvested for charcoal in a chequerboard pattern. Annual charcoal quotas per village are set based on biomass assessments, with oversight provided by DFOs.
- Village natural resources committees and village councils receive training on forest management, governance and financial management. Governance and monitoring systems are also established, with links to local government authorities. Charcoal producers also receive training on compliance, efficient harvesting and production techniques, and business skills.

In addition, MJUMITA's youth members have participated in Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE), a project which is jointly implemented by the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and MJUMITA. The OYE project provides youth with coaching and training in life and business skills and matches with them with employment opportunities (SNV 2021). MJUMITA entered into a two-year contract with SNV to implement OYE Phase 2 in 18 wards in Kilosa district, from July 2021 to June 2023. The assigned objective target for MJUMITA was to improve the livelihoods of 720 rural and peri-urban out-of-school youth between the ages of 18 and 30 through business opportunities in agriculture and renewable energy sub-sectors.



A Kilosa youth participating in the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) project © MJUMITA (2023)



Kilosa youth participating in the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) project © MJUMITA (2023)

## 2.3 Organisational practices

### 2.3.1 Diversity, equity and the working environment

MJUMITA's organisational practices clearly mandate, list and call for the need to implement and enhance gender-sensitive approaches throughout its operations. Its gender policy was introduced in 2022 as part of MJUMITA's commitment to addressing the different needs, interests, rights and opportunities of women, men, youth, elders and marginalised groups. The gender policy also guides recruitment and allow all types of people to join the organisation (regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or physical ability).

In addition to the gender policy, MJUMITA has human resources policies and equal opportunity policies which are used to support equity in the work place. These practices allow all members and employees to participate equally and include flexible working hours, paid annual leave, childcare arrangements, dress codes and measures to reduce power differences between staff. Flexible working hours allow people to enjoy their work environment, and align their personal and working values. Specifically, with this policy, employees are able to achieve a better work–life balance. Employees can also work from home at least once a week so long as their work targets are achieved.

### 2.3.2 Community practices

PFM has been adopted to support all project and programme design, development and implementation. PFM allows members and employees to get to know one another, recognise each other's strengths and build team efforts during project and programme design, development and implementation.

### 2.3.3 Meetings and reflection

MJUMITA conducts three types of meeting each year: staff biannual meetings, retreat sessions and biannual planning sessions. These meetings allow all members of the organisation to be able to reflect on and contribute to how the organisation's vision, goals, workplans and activities are developed irrespective of their position.

### 2.3.4 Coaching, creativity and communications

One-to-one coaching sessions are undertaken throughout the year, to train and mentor MJUMITA's staff to help improve their performance and to support them to fulfil their potential. MJUMITA also encourages creativity at all stages of its work, from concept and proposal development throughout the entire process of project and programme design, development and implementation. MJUMITA recognises and rewards creativity because it encourages employees to experiment at all levels to

deliver better services and functions within the organisation. On an annual basis, MJUMITA hold an end of year party for its employees where everyone is given a gift to recognise their efforts for that particular year.

In terms of internal communications, MJUMITA also has a WhatsApp group that it uses to applaud employees who have done a great job. This creates a sense of being appreciated, motivates employees to do better and allows members or employees to celebrate good practice and learn from one another.

### 2.3.5 Safeguarding policies

In 2000, MJUMITA initiated a whistleblowing policy. This is a form of safeguarding allows members and employees to feel able to voice concerns related to unacceptable stress or demeaning practices within the workplace. Network members and MJUMITA partners are informed about this policy and are encouraged to report any malpractice perpetuated by MJUMITA staff or MJUMITA board members.

## 3 Tactics that improve MJUMITA's internal governance

### 3.1 Tactics that improve members' trust and sense of belonging

As an apex-level FFPO, MJUMITA is transparent and inclusive. Ideas are shared with the village government and interested communities are given the opportunity to establish local-level FFPOs and take part in capacity-building interventions. The FFPO then becomes an official member of MJUMITA and is required to pay an annual membership fee so that it can continue to benefit from programmes and interventions. In recent years, efforts have been made to promote the participation of women and youth, which has enabled them to take part in FFPO activities and taking leadership positions. The key tactics employed include establishing clear communication channels and feedback mechanisms, promoting transparency and participation, and promoting social connections through meetings, workshops and community forums.

### 3.2 Tactics that improve external relationships with banks, markets and government

Three tactics that MJUMITA has employed have brought positive benefits in working with external partners and building a positive reputation: putting in place robust financial management systems to handle donor funds; maintaining clear and transparent communication channels with donors and government officials; and MJUMITA's commitment to legal and ethical standards.

### 3.3 Tactics that improve the delivery of MJUMITA's vision and purpose

MJUMITA ensures consistent and effective communication of its vision and purpose to all staff in the organisation. These are made visible in communication materials and on notice boards in all offices. The vision and purpose are also communicated to MJUMITA members during daily operations.

MJUMITA is also guided by its five-year strategic plan. This document outlines all interventions that are required to enable MJUMITA to achieve its vision and purpose and is shared with stakeholders including donors. MJUMITA provides capacity-building interventions to empower its employees to contribute to delivering the vision and purpose. MJUMITA also regularly undertakes monitoring and evaluation of project interventions to understand the performance of the interventions and to make necessary changes to allow the realisation of its vision and purpose.

## 4 Future plans to improve internal governance

### 4.1 Future plans

MJUMITA plans to strengthen its board of directors by adding three additional members who are not community members. These additional members will have expertise in financial management, resource mobilisation and fundraising, and natural resources management. The new membership will add value to the existing board which is solely made up of community members from the six geographical zones. With this new board, MJUMITA is expecting to increase its fundraising portfolio, enabling it to expand to other parts of the country.

MJUMITA has also reviewed its internal governance policies to further improve its policies on conflicts of interest, anti-corruption and anti-fraud, financial management and legal compliance. MJUMITA has already begun strengthening its internal control systems to ensure effective financial management and reporting, safeguarding organisation assets and ensuring compliance with organisation policies and regulations.

### 4.2 Prospects for replication

Setting up an internal governance system for an organisation is a complex and multifaceted process that requires careful planning, commitment, and ongoing effort and great team work within the organisation. FFPOs should see this as a continuous process. Replicating this in other FFPOs will depend on the size of the FFPO, organisational culture, availability of resources and the commitment of its leadership. Problems FFPOs might encounter could include resistance from employees if internal governance mechanisms do not operate in their favour, a lack of commitment from its leadership, and the lack of resources to facilitate the process. To succeed, the FFPOs should engage with experts on internal governance, learn from best-performing FFPOs, and fundraise for the process.

## 5 Main conclusions

### 5.1 Innovations

MJUMITA is using online banking to minimise cash transfers and associated risks. This is a good innovation that allows MJUMITA to pay employees more efficiently and reliably. In addition, the use of the accounting package QuickBooks makes the organisation more trustworthy to donors because the system ensures effective management of donor funds. Finally, the decision to incorporate new professional board members will have a positive impact on the organisation. The new board members will increase fundraising efforts and create more strategic partnerships.

### 5.2 Lessons learnt

- MJUMITA works with stakeholders who come from diverse backgrounds and some with competing interests on the use of forestry. To ensure there is a common goal and a shared vision among these multiple stakeholders, local-level MJUMITA FFPOs are established in a transparent and inclusive manner.
- MJUMITA works with different interdisciplinary institutions and across different sectors (including land, water, forestry, beekeeping and the environment). To ensure that their common goals and shared vision remain sustainable, MJUMITA conducts advocacy for policy, law, regulations and structural reforms targeting different stakeholders including local government, central government, ministries and departments, and parliament.
- MJUMITA promotes the participation of youth and women in FFPOs activities including taking on leadership positions. To achieve this, it has been necessary to create enabling governance structures, outlining new roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes which are supported by clear communication channels and feedback mechanisms.
- MJUMITA's work involves mobilising resources and efforts through collaboration with a range of actors and stakeholders at local, national, regional and even global levels to address global agendas such as climate action, biodiversity conservation and food security. To ensure a consistent and sustainable flow of resources, MJUMITA has worked to build a positive reputation and working relationship with government and funders.
- To ensure sustainability and to allow for the realisation of its vision and purpose, MJUMITA's governance structures and decision-making processes are governed by its constitution and guided by a five-year strategic plan. These documents are shared with all stakeholders including donors. MJUMITA also regularly undertakes monitoring and evaluation of project interventions to understand performance and make any necessary changes.

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