

6 Managing the restored sites

Restored sites provide many benefits, some of which are available within a few months after restoration activities and interventions have taken place. More importantly, herbaceous species are specifically included in the planting materials for large-scale restoration to provide fodder readily within the first year of planting. Fodder planting in restored plots and harvesting it for animal feed, a very coveted resources mainly in the eight-month dry season and sometimes a source of tension, have been one the success stories with the beneficiary communities, who are combined farmers and herders in the Sahel. At the same time, controlling browsing of livestock in the restored sites has been one of the challenges. If left un-managed, the new fragile vegetation cover can rapidly be reduced or even disappear. Hence, the beneficiary communities (ownership) commit active measures that are needed for maintaining and protecting the restored plots and for reaping the benefits.

Setting up a Community management committee

In the large-scale restoration approach, surveillance and maintenance of the restored sites are more efficiently carried out through continued community mobilization, or so-called “social fencing”. The installation and maintenance of physical fences is very costly and unrealistic when weighed against the magnitude of the millions of hectares to be restored throughout the GGW. Social/community mobilization requires a collective management and decision-making mechanism in order to avoid conflict and allow the equitable distribution of restoration benefits.





In its intervention model, the consultation and discussion framework set up by AAD actively encourages communities to establish community management committees or “COGES” (from the French “*Comité de Gestion*”) for the restoration sites. The COGES are responsible for sensitizing and mobilizing community members for their active involvement in restoration and management activities. Collective decisions are also taken for their contributions to and the objectives of restoration, site surveillance and on how to use the restored areas and organize its management.

The COGES is composed of about ten members including a chairperson. Youth and women participation is at the heart of the AAD approach and their representation is required in each COGES. This has given an opportunity for many women to step forward, be considered (some as chairperson) and have their say in the restoration activities, thus enabling their empowerment.

In the AAD program, fodder production and sale (or self-consumption) was the first most direct and most important benefit to participating communities. This thus, becomes a powerful incentive for community members to take part in restoration activities. Along with other non-timber products and value chains promoted through the program (see Sacande and Parfondry, 2018), such incentives have allowed significant socio-economic impacts on communities (Part II of this manual details how to assess such impacts through household surveys), guaranteeing their continued involvement throughout the restoration process.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 6

Continued social mobilization and the equitable share of restoration benefits is at the heart of the AAD approach for restoration governance and success, and for the sustainability of the interventions.

The Community management committee allows collective management and decisions on the surveillance, maintenance and exploitation of the restored sites.

Women and youth participation and representation in restoration management committees provide a great opportunity for their empowerment.



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