

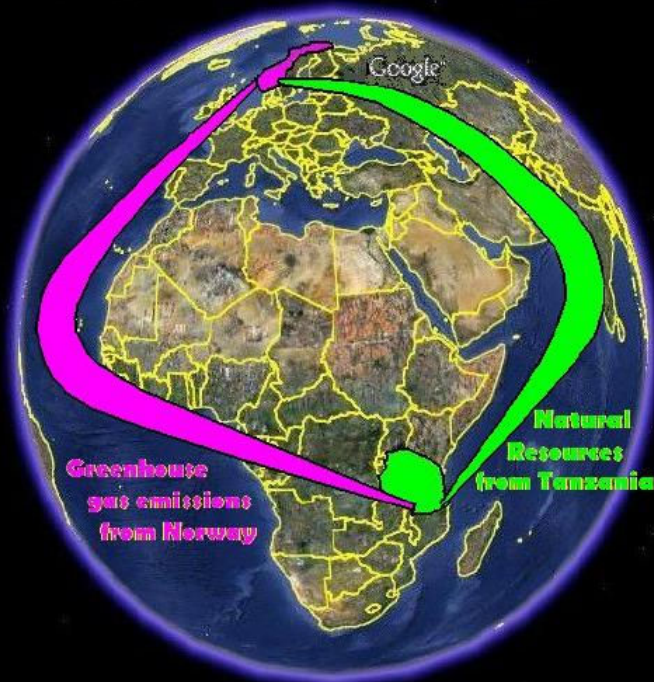


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The Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa
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THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM Recycling Carbon? - Recolonising Africa?



**A Preliminary Report on the Potential Impacts of
 Norwegian Carbon Sink Plantations in Tanzania**



Summary

As a precursor to a comprehensive report to be produced in 2010, this preliminary report raises critical questions about the sustainability and viability of tree plantation carbon sequestration projects under the rules of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), of the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which commits industrialised nations to cut their overall carbon emissions by at least five (5) percent of 1990 levels in the period 2008 – 2012.

It looks at a proposed tree plantation CDM project at Idete, in the Mufindi district of Iringa Province, southern Tanzania, where Norwegian timber company, Green Resources Ltd hopes to obtain Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) generated from establishing monocultures of alien pine and eucalyptus trees in natural grasslands.

Norway is a major oil producer and exporter, and contributes substantially to global greenhouse gas emissions. But its government wants it to be seen as a moral superpower, and seeks to position itself as progressive in social, environmental, and human rights issues. The Norwegian government has committed itself to climate mitigation projects around the world, and plans to buy 6 million carbon reduction units (credits) for the purpose of offsetting domestic emissions. Through the Green Resources Ltd plantation projects in Tanzania, it hopes for at least 400 000 of these units. This arrangement should simply have been a deal between a private investor and a host country, but became an event in intergovernmental diplomatic affairs, with the Prime Minister of Norway participating at the launch of the project agreement.

Timberwatch has studied the social, cultural, political and economic impacts of industrial timber plantations in South Africa and Swaziland, and believes that in an African context the monoculture tree plantation model is unsustainable, even with market-based mechanisms such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in place. Findings from this research show major problems with land alienation from displaced local communities, poor working conditions, destruction of biodiversity upon which the local communities depend for food, fuel and medicines, reduced water availability, and many other things that can impact negatively on the livelihoods of affected communities.

The industrial plantation model is based on corporate financial accumulation, and often leads to the marginalisation of local communities. In this case, the governments of Norway (via Green Resources Ltd) and Tanzania do not appear to be able to guarantee an adequate level of participation in decision-making by affected communities. Also, the government of Tanzania may not have capacity to protect communities from possible abuse and marginalisation during the course of the project. Equitable distribution of income from international and foreign direct investment projects is not one of the strong points of developing country governments. The government of Tanzania would have agreed to this project in the hope of receiving investment that would create sustainable employment for affected communities, whilst preventing environmental damage.

The full programme and final report of this project will be completed during 2010, and will assess existing and potential social and environmental impacts of the Idete tree plantations. These will include economic viability, social and ecological sustainability, and effects on biodiversity of the project. Also, social and cultural opportunity costs to the community will be investigated. A key aspect of this study will be to ascertain whether claims of carbon sequestration made by Green Resources Ltd are valid or not.

Download the preliminary report (PDF 1 MB) at www.timberwatch.org

Potential Impacts of Tree Plantation Projects under the CDM An African Case Study

This project will gather information about a carbon sink tree plantation project of a Norwegian company, Green Resources Ltd, at Idete in southern Tanzania. The company aims to obtain registration under the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) in order to sell carbon credits to the Norwegian government, and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, to justify the establishment of industrial tree plantations that will destroy nearly 7,000 hectares of grassland

By Blessing Karumbidza and Wally Menne

Download the report from www.timberwatch.org



The Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa

"The CDM was created to tackle climate change. It has, instead, become a cheap way for developed countries to avoid making real emission reductions"

Jaisel Vadagam from the Centre for Science and Environment
 India, New Delhi, 16 November 2009

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