

## Indigenous people's perceptions of forestry resources and implications for climate change mitigation

This research intends to document local perceptions of forestry resources and/or woodlands<sup>1</sup> from selected areas that are inhabited by indigenous people with long history of interacting with the environment. The desired areas are Binga, Mbire/Muzarabani and Mudzi. We propose to interact with elderly participants, preferably balancing the number of male and female respondents at each site. The targeted group should be people of at least 55 years, who can give rich accounts about traditional/indigenous values they give on the environment from their long periods of stay in the area. These will be selected through chain referrals (i.e. each participant identified will give leads to other experts in the subject area) to participate in focus group discussions (FGDs) with 6-10 participants meeting the specified age and expertise background. The research is purely qualitative. As such, we should capture as much data as possible from the accounts/narrations of participants. Overall, the study hypothesizes that indigenous knowledge system (IKS) is useful in climate change mitigation<sup>2</sup>.

At each site, we intend to collect data to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any observed changes in the local environment?  
*[Here, respondents are to give detailed accounts of how they perceive changes in their local environment. Probe further to establish when such changes have been noticed, e.g., over the last 10, 20, 30, 40 years]*
2. What are the observed changes in forestry resources in particular?  
*[Here, capture indicators in change in forestry resources and/or woodlands. What is it that they have observed over time that makes them sure/aware that the forests/woodlands have changed?*  
*Pay particular detail to the distinction between timber and non-timber resources. Record them separately]*
3. What are the drivers of the observed changes in landscape?  
*[Probe to gather their views on what they think could be causing the reported changes, or the forces behind degradation of forests/woodlands*  
*Try to record direct and underlying drivers separately]*
4. How do the local communities value the forestry resources, woodlands or trees?  
*[Here we should understand their deep thoughts about these resources. In other words, how do they relate to forests/How do they see the forests/How significant are the resources to them?*  
*Pay particular detail to the distinction between timber and non-timber resources. Record them separately]*
5. What ecosystem services (benefits) do the people derive from forests?  
*[Gather all the benefits they report despite them appearing strange to you]*
6. What do they do to continue enjoy the benefits mentioned? How do they enforce the measures?  
*[Here, we intend to gather measures/practices in place for maintaining forestry stocks. Probe for detailed information on how they enforce the measures]*

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<sup>1</sup> Note that we are using the terms forests and woodlands interchangeably

<sup>2</sup> This study defines mitigation as measures or practices that enhance GHG sinks

7. What is mainly explaining the continued existence of these forests/woodlands?  
[Here we need to understand the extent to which their IKS influence maintenance of the resources]
8. What are the constraints/challenges in preserving the forests/woodlands? How can these challenges be addressed?  
*[Here, we intend to understand what could be affecting their indigenous ways of preserving/conserving the resources]*