



Payments for Environmental Services as source of development funding for small-scale farmers in northern Namibia: preliminary results

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Studies in Africa suggest that improving Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) on cropland soils increases yields, but also offers the opportunity of earning carbon credits. However, at the current price for a ton of carbon, the potential to earn significant carbon credits is limited. Therefore carbon storage should not be seen as a goal in itself. Potential for earning carbon credits and generating further benefits lies in an integrated approach to landscape carbon management, including shrub land and pasture used for grazing and timber supply. Therefore, soil management has to be addressed from a holistic understanding of the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. This includes a detailed understanding of the constraints in farming, as well as the motivation behind farming.

The aim of this study is the identification of intervention mechanisms to improve the livelihood of small scale-farmers and reducing land degradation with the support of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the communal regions of northern Namibia. The main objective of the first part of the field work was to develop an overview of soil quality, farm management and the constraints and motivations regarding farming. Initial results confirm the potential to increase productivity of land while at the same time building up landscape carbon stocks. They furthermore show the importance of carefully choosing the way new farming techniques are introduced, as many farmers are afraid of trying something new.