

Supplementary Materials included in this document:

- **Supplementary Material 1:** List of interview questions: project developers, policy makers and academia (p. 2)
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Supplementary Material 1. List of interview questions: project developers, policy makers and academia

Background and stakeholder analysis

- Background data and statistics on study area and project sites (size, inhabitants, geography, land ownership, weather, vegetation, environmental problems).
- Description of the organisation, mission, objectives, including details of all relevant projects implemented.
- Stakeholder analysis: identify all key stakeholders, their roles and relationships, draw a stakeholder matrix.

Project/policy drivers, objectives, achievements

- What objectives did the project(s)/policy set in terms of: mitigation, adaptation, development?
- What objectives did the project(s)/policy achieve in terms of: mitigation, adaptation, development?
- What are the challenges in achieving the objectives, and the trade-offs in achieving the 3 dimensions
- What are the drivers of the project/policy objectives? Have the project objectives changed over time in relation to these drivers: how and why?
- Why Spekboom - what made you decide to promote thicket restoration through spekboom and not other dominant large shrubs? Is Spekboom the way forward? Has Spekboom worked as the catalyst of restoration? What are the challenges? What can be achieved (provide figures and evidence on carbon sequestration potential, success rate of planting methods, etc).
- Focus on Spekboom and carbon sequestration vs other dimensions in future projects?

Community engagement

- When did you first engage the local communities?
- How did you decide which communities to work with, how did you make sure that everyone is represented, how did you engage with them, how do you mainstream community perspectives in your operations? What role community members play in project development and implementation? What will their role be in the project's long-term sustainability?

Project monitoring and evaluation

- Who is charged with the overall monitoring of the project/policy both during and after implementation? How and at what frequency is the project/policy monitored, what methods and metrics are used?

Policy implications

- What are the government's goals/priorities for the sectors related to the project's desired outcomes? How does the project align with these goals?
- What lessons can be learnt? Can they be replicated elsewhere? How can they inform better policy?
- Who are the relevant people who should be engaged in such process? What do you think would be the best channels to share your lessons and ensure effective communication?
- How can our research project contribute to improve such process?

Supplementary Material 2. List of interview questions: land owners

- Name, gender, age.
- How long have you been living in this farm / owning this land for.
- How big is your farm (ha)? What are the activities carried out in your farm: agriculture; livestock (what type, how many, over how many ha), discuss management strategies and sustainability; other income generating activities.
- Have your farming practices changed since you've started farming? What were the reasons of these changes?
- What environmental challenges do you face and what are their causes?
- Do you think that the climate (rainfall, temperatures, variations, intensity) has changed in the past 10/20 years? If yes, do think that this changes impact on the health of this land and how do you adapt?
- When and how did you find out about Living Lands / J4C?
- How did they engage with you?
- Did you set aside or donate some of your land to serve the purposes of their project? How many ha? Under what type of arrangement? For how long are you willing to make your land available to test new approaches to land management and restoration?
- What is the purpose of your involvement with the project (both through setting land aside and getting involved with other activities, such as essential oil production), and what do you expect to achieve (carbon sequestration, land restoration, income generation, climate adaptation, water retention, tourism generation, other benefits)?
- How long will it take to achieve your objectives? What are the main challenges in achieving them? How long is your cooperation with the project expected to last?
- Why is Spekboom being planted? What is the success rate of your plantation? Is Spekboom the way forward to restore your land? Are the planting methods correct? How were the planted areas selected?
- Have your farming or land management practices changed (or are they expected to change) as a result of your engagement with the project?
- Do you think that the community of land owners is sufficiently engaged with the decision making and implementation process of the project? Is your communication with them satisfactory? Through what kind of structures does the farming community communicate and interact? What could be improved?
- Do you believe that the project has the potential to generate socio-economic benefits to the wider community? What are the challenges in engaging with the most vulnerable people who do not own land?
- Looking forward: what are the opportunities for future land uses in the community?
- Overall, what can be done better or done differently by the project?

Supplementary Material 3. List of interview questions: field workers

- Name, gender, age.
- When did you start working with Living Lands / J4C?
- How did you find out about them and how did you get this job?
- Do you know what Living Lands / J4C does, why are they here, and what kind of problems are they trying to solve?
- What are your duties within the project?
- Did you receive any training (if so, what did you learn, how long was it). Did you learn anything new since you've started this job?
- What was your previous job? If you compare it with the current one, do you think that this one is better, same or worse (e.g. in terms of salary, work relationships with supervisors and peers, personal motivation)?
- What do you expect from Living Lands / J4C in the future? Do you expect the project to stay for many years to come, or do you think that it might end?
- Let's say that the project ends tomorrow. Can you apply the new knowledge and skills gained so far to find another job? If so, how and where?
- If you have any question or issue that you want to discuss about your job, who do you talk to? Is he/she always available (how often do you see him/her) and easy to approach and talk to?
- Is this your only job or do you have other sources of income?
- Why is Spekboom being planted by the project, what are they trying to achieve? Do you think it works? What are the main difficulties?
- Do you think that the state of land where Spekboom is being planted is good or bad? If bad, do you know why it is bad? What are the causes of degradation?
- Do you think that the climate (rainfall, temperatures, variations, intensity) has changed in the past 10/20 years? If yes, do think that this changes impact on the health of this land and how do you adapt?
- What are the most pressing problems that the community is facing (apart from the environmental ones and the lack of jobs)? Do you think that Living Lands / J4C can help address these problems? How?
- Is there anything that you would like to improve in the work with Living Lands / J4C? If "no": are you overall happy with the project and think that they should keep operating exactly in the same way in the future?
- Is there any other aspect related to your job, land and life that you wish to discuss?