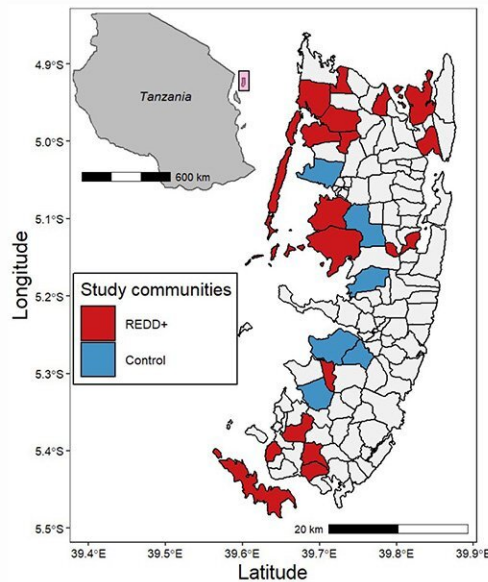


# The value of failure in conservation programs

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In a recent paper, SFI Professor Monique Bergerhoff Mulder and co-author Jeffrey Andrews modeled how exposure to a failed conservation project in Zanzibar affected people's willingness to participate in future programming. Credit: *Ecological Economics* (2024). DOI: 10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108155

Conservation programs need—and often incentivize—community involvement. For example, a program in Zanzibar, Tanzania, asked communities to protect their village forests in exchange for access to the

carbon credits market. Despite community enthusiasm for the program, the international partners failed to secure accreditation. To the extent failed projects may disincentivize future participation, such outcomes are concerning, and yet the impact of project collapse on future engagement has received little attention.

[In a paper](#) published in *Ecological Economics*, SFI External Professor Monique Borgerhoff Mulder (UC Davis) with Jeffrey Andrews (MPI-EVA) modeled how exposure to this failed project in Zanzibar affected people's willingness to participate in future programming.

The study surveyed people who participated in the program and those who didn't. Surprisingly, even though the intervention failed in its primary goal, those exposed to it were actually more willing to engage with future conservation programs than those unexposed.

The most heavily forest-dependent households demanded higher compensation to participate, but even their concerns were lowered with exposure to the failed program.

Sustained income, rather than one-time pay, could further increase participation, write the authors, who suggest that [conservation programs](#) enable alternative incomes that reduce dependence on forest produce.

**More information:** Jeffrey Andrews et al, The value of failure: The effect of an expired REDD+ conservation program on residents' willingness for future participation, *Ecological Economics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108155](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108155)

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