Chapter 7: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Utilising the chapter, I seek to synthesise the findings of the study by outlining the key insights, drawing conclusions in relation to the research objectives, and proposing actionable recommendations for the sustainable alignment of forest management and carbon trading in Zimbabwe. This analysis is grounded in empirical evidence and aims to influence governance, conservation practice, and carbon market development for a more equitable and effective climate strategy in the region. The preceding chapter presented, analysed, and interpreted the collected data, bringing the research study to its concluding stage. The chapter consolidates the study's final components—namely, the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations. These sections collectively offer clarity on the research problem under investigation, the methodological choices and their limitations, the core findings, and the implications of these findings for the governance of forest management and carbon trading in Zimbabwe. The recommendations offered are directed at key stakeholders, encouraging practical incorporation into national climate action strategies.

The study investigated the nexus between forest management and the operational viability of carbon trading in Zimbabwe, employing both empirical and applied research approaches. With a response rate of 83.16%—well above the acceptable 70% threshold—the study generated a robust data set from structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholders including Carbon Green Africa (CGA) staff, community leaders, and government officials. Findings indicate that forest management significantly influences carbon trading volumes. Participants overwhelmingly linked sustainable forest management practices with the capacity to generate carbon credits, affirming that poor forest governance undermines credit generation and market access. Furthermore, the research revealed that current legislation exerts considerable influence on the compulsory purchase of

carbon credits by local firms. However, these laws remain underdeveloped and non-punitive. There was minimal application of economic governance tools such as carbon taxation, privatisation incentives, and compliance mandates.

In relation to global carbon prices, the study established that Zimbabwe's carbon market operates almost entirely within voluntary frameworks and is largely unregulated. Trading volumes remain low, and Zimbabwean carbon credits are only traded internationally, often at undervalued prices. Despite this, evidence from respondents confirmed a relationship between global prices and local carbon trading volumes, suggesting that international pricing directly affects the demand and viability of forest-based credits. The need for a comprehensive national policy framework emerged strongly, one that aligns forest conservation activities with verified carbon standards while addressing social and ecological justice gaps. This should include community incentives, legal clarity, and enforcement mechanisms to facilitate sustained forest conservation.

From these findings, several conclusions were drawn in line with the research objectives. Firstly, forest management directly affects the volume and quality of carbon credits generated. Participants perceived forest-based carbon trading, especially in Africa, as dependent on intact forest ecosystems. Yet, the contribution of forestry to global carbon markets remains marginal due to multiple risks—such as leakage, carbon permanence, and the difficulty of measuring sequestration accurately. These factors, compounded by risks like forest fires and pest outbreaks, continue to deter investor confidence.

Secondly, the study concluded that no binding legislation exists in Zimbabwe to compel local firms to purchase carbon credits. Participants highlighted that companies showed limited interest in voluntary offsetting, largely due to the cost burden and lack of regulatory pressure. As a result, the carbon market remains weakly subscribed, with

communities receiving minimal incentives to engage in forest conservation efforts.

Thirdly, the research confirmed a link between global carbon prices and trading volumes. Most large-scale carbon emitters face limited legal obligations to purchase credits, while voluntary markets—such as those driven by individuals or corporations offsetting travel emissions—remain too small to drive significant trading volumes. Participants called for the introduction of regulated minimum carbon credit prices to stimulate market participation and guarantee returns to local communities. Incentivised pricing structures would, in turn, encourage rural villagers to conserve forests and shift from unsustainable energy sources.

Insights from interviews reinforced this conclusion, with respondents emphasising that price fluctuations directly affect conservation willingness. Communities expect tangible compensation for forgoing forest-based energy options. Therefore, the study concluded that large emitters must be compelled to purchase carbon credits at levels proportionate to their emissions, ensuring both environmental justice and financial viability for community-based forest management initiatives.

The study concludes that the community would want to see Carbon Green Africa and other players expand carbon trading and forest conservation projects. This is necessitated downstream direct benefits in rural communities. The communities can get more farming inputs under the conservation farming programmes, boreholes and more community nutritional gardens. Consequently, more rural energy solutions can be availed for communities to forgo the use of firewood as energy sources. A good source of energy would be the construction of biogas digesters. The participants reviewed that local polluting companies should be compelled to pay their carbon emission through buying credits from companies like Carbon Green Africa.

Based on the research findings and conclusions; the study concludes that: there is need to educate stakeholders on the socio-economic benefits of carbon trading. This act as an incentive to communities and the CGA campaigns of promoting climate conservation.

It is important for there to be stakeholder education and awareness programmes on the importance and benefits of carbon trading. The study established that forest management in Zimbabwe is done by most companies and other stakeholders even though most of them are not aware or under obligation to take up carbon trading. There are information gaps as what carbon trading is and its socio-economic benefits for the concerned stakeholders and local communities, such as the ability to create employment, generate profits and conserve forests. Educating stakeholders is beneficial to enhance such sustainable forest management practices as afforestation, emission management and improved forestry. Enhance the teaching of forest management and carbon trading practices at all levels of education both formal and informal.

Based on the research findings and conclusions; the study concludes that the government needs to enact laws which are pro-carbon trading. This is in addition to the current forests' conservation initiatives. These laws compel local companies emitting CO^2 to invest in the conservation of the environment. There is a need for the Zimbabwean government to formulate and enforce legal policies which are informed by the principles of carbon trading for sustainable forest management in the country. In particular, the government should make full use of such strategies as privatizing carbon trading, putting in place carbon taxes and incentives, using other governance mechanisms and natural capital valuation.

It is important for the government to put in place a definitive and operational legal framework to guide carbon trading as the study has seen the level of carbon trading in the country to be very low and rather

insignificant. It is suggested that the following principles must be included and used in the formulation of the country's legal carbon trading policy:

- Need for improved forest management
- Credit-generating Forest management activities
- Reconciling the generation of forest carbon credits with law requirement
- Need to address the social and ecological justice gaps in global carbon market and forest governance
- Use of appropriate accounting for emission reductions
- Policy prescriptions to support conversion of production forests to conservation forests
- Reducing logging in forests
- Develop a national capacity which can access different carbon financing schemes to implement and support carbon projects in Zimbabwe.
- Institutionalise a forestry management response governance framework at national, provincial, district and ward level.

Based on the research findings and conclusions; the study concludes that there should be mandatory compliance to carbon trading. In particular, organisations should be made to buy carbon credits on a mandatory level.

The study established that most stakeholders are not obliged to buy carbon credits owing to the absence of a legal framework to compel them to do so, even though most of them are polluting and using forests and forestry resources. As a result of the lack of mandatory carbon purchasing laws, Zimbabwe's carbon trading market is mostly voluntary and is not regulated. This has also led to the unavailability of a local carbon market which harms not only the carbon trading firms like Carbon Green Africa but also leads to wanton deforestation and the failure to preserve the environment. As such, a law making the purchase of carbon credits mandatory would be helpful. The government should

come up with legislation and statutory instruments which demarcate those forests which are zoned as carbon forest areas for the protection of those areas.

Future studies must focus on the use of larger sample sizes. The study was limited in terms of time and financial resources which made the researcher resort to using a smaller sample. As such, to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, future researchers on the topic are advised to make use of larger sample sizes. Further research can assess the contribution of forest carbon credit projects to addressing the effects of climate change challenges.