



Results and lessons learned on IUCN interventions on REDD+ in Cameroon

July 2013



CONSERVATION PROGRAMME OF FORETS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMES

AGR	Activités Génératrices de revenus
OSC	Organisations de la Société Civile
PA	Peuples Autchtones
PFN REDD & CC	National Platform for REDD and Climate change
PPA	Principles of Pro poor approach)
REDD+	Réduction des Emissions dues à la Déforestation et à la Dégradation
R-PP	Readiness Proposal Project
TNS	Tri Nationale de la Sangha
TRIDOM	Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe
UICN	Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature
GV	Groupe Vulnérable

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INTRODUCTION

The “Towards Pro-Poor REDD” project is implemented in 05 countries namely Cameroon, Ghana, Uganda, Guatemala and Indonesia in three continents, Africa, Central America and Asia. It targeted 03 major components, namely: (i) the synergy between the pro-poor REDD mechanism and good governance, (ii) the relationship between the local and the national level of the REDD process, (iii) information and necessary communication means for the implementation of REDD+. Funded by the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA) this project has been executed by IUCN from 2009 to 2013.

In Cameroon, it was focused on multi-stakeholder dialogue, data and knowledge production required for the elaboration process of a REDD+ national strategy, links and connections between the local and national level. The project aimed at improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, the protection of their rights on forest resources, their participation and involvement in the decision-making process of REDD+, improving their rights of being informed and consulted so as to ensure that their interests are taken into consideration in the REDD+ process.

Based on the Cameroonian national context on natural resources management and on activities already carried out, this project wants to facilitate :

- a consideration of prerequisites for multi-sectoral reforms, the involvement of minorities and local communities and capacity building for the development and implementation of the REDD+ national strategy ;
- the adoption of social and environmental safeguard measures as a guarantee that REDD+ is not an additional burden on the natural resources dependent poor ;
- the national REDD+ process is developed on the principles of participation, inclusion and equity particularly to vulnerable groups.

1. A GLANCE ON THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The forestry regulation provisions in Cameroon confer hegemony on all lands to the state. Customary laws exist de facto. The legal and customary systems superimpose themselves on the field. This situation leads to conflicts between the customary use and the allocation of forest concessions by the state. Efforts to improve on the legal system through the development of the 1994 forestry law were undertaken. This law has encouraged the involvement of local communities and municipalities in the management of forest resources. Presently, there is the existence of Community Forests (CF), community hunting zones (CHZ). In addition, the zoning plan was carried out in the South-East part of the country. This was done without any consultation of the local people. It divides the forestry land in either the permanent forest property or State private property and non-permanent forest estate which can be used or developed into community forests.

The 1994 Forestry law also initiated a process promoting good governance, through the implementation of participatory approaches and management tools. Structures are mandated to exercise powers transferred to village communities on both the biophysical resource and financial benefits resulting thereof. For the creation of a community forest, community members have to be organized as “a moral person”. For other mechanisms, such as the forest revenues management committee, members are representatives of the chain of actors involved in the management of resources. This includes administrative and municipal officials, forest exploiters and community members, etc. It should be noted however that, in most of the forest revenue management committees, local communities are poorly represented and their real needs seldom taken into consideration.

In Cameroon, there exists the Special Fund for Mutual Assistance to Councils (FEICOM). It is a public institution with a legal personality and a financial autonomy placed under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization and the financial supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Its aim is to rationalize the allocation of funds from logging destined to councils and village communities.



The definition of an effective and efficient participatory democracy: lessons from the multi-stakeholder framework of cooperation on REDD in Cameroon

The principle of participatory democracy is seen as fundamental in the REDD process, but its content is not clearly specified.

The platform foretells what may really and usefully be this content. As of now, it is based on three key elements :

1. The official recognition of partners especially CSOs, women, the IPs and the private sector
2. The institutionalization of this recognition i. e the creation of a specific body (see Box 2 on the process of creating representative of partners), its compulsory participation in the decision making process, the training and funding of this participation
3. Advocacy formulation and consideration by public and inter-state authorities.

The future operation of this platform will help to complement constitutional elements of an efficient participatory democracy

A SWOT analysis of these agreements on participation and benefit sharing in the management of forest resources brings out positive and negative aspects. On a positive note, there is improved collaboration, communication and the subsidiarity in the management of forest resources by the various actors. This organization has promoted the development of basic infrastructures at the level of some communities. It should however be noted that these agreements are the result of laws and official orders developed within the companies they represent and not local initiatives. Therefore, the committees seen are not organically rooted in the collective organization of forestry companies on which they have been attached. Thus, there is a low/lack of monitoring provisions on the use of these funds at the local level and their low contribution to poverty reduction. In addition, there are different types of conflicts existing in communities on the ownership and control of forests and land, revenue control and project selection. There is no synergy of interventions and the system has been captured both by local elites and the intermediary level actors. They have turned the process into a source of predation and accumulation.

At the institutional level, the areas of environment and forests are managed by two different ministries: MINEPDED in charge of the area of the environment and sustainable development and MINFOF in charge of the entire forestry sector. Regarding climate change and REDD+ issues, the MINEPDED is the department that represents the Government of Cameroon at the UNFCCC, and is considered the technical and operational Ministry that will execute most of the strategies of adaptation and mitigation.

With regards to REDD+ significant challenges are to be noted in forest governance in Cameroon. The model of participatory forest governance of the forestry law which seems to provide an entry point for the implementation of REDD+ at the local level has failed to produce the locally targeted developmental goals. It was thus necessary to promote a pro-poor approach to REDD+ in Cameroon. This initiative undertaken by IUCN through the "Towards Pro Poor REDD+" project is concentrated in the Eastern region of Cameroon, mainly in the TNS (Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkébé) and TRIDOM landscapes. As part of the implementation strategy of this project, IUCN has developed significant institutional links with government institutions charged with the implementation of REDD+. In addition, IUCN has strengthened its partnership with the civil society, donors and technical partners in order to better coordinate its activities in the process on the way.

2. THE « TOWARDS PRO-POOR REDD+ » RESULTS

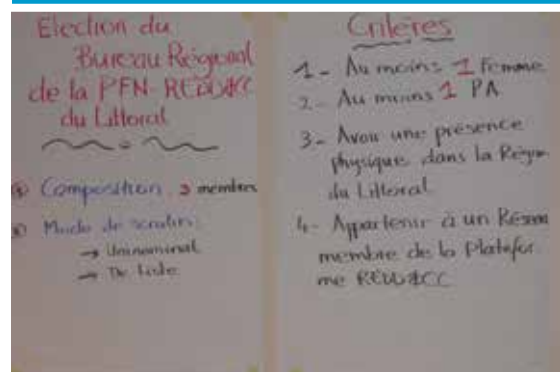
2.1. Contributions to the REDD+ process

IUCN's intervention through this project was done at local and national levels. Its support focused on technical aspects (training, studies, reporting, sensitization, etc.), as well as financial, institutional and social aspects.

2.1.1. The Preparation of a Data base for the National REDD+ Process

The project provided technical and financial support to the REDD process through the implementation of a certain number of studies based on :

- The analysis of the participation of vulnerable groups ;
- The causes of deforestation in Cameroon (TNS and TRIDOM) ;
- The Participatory analysis of governance in REDD+ ;
- Analysis of benefit sharing mechanisms ;
- Analysis of the dependence of communities on natural resources ;
- REDD+ capacity needs assessment of pilot community-based natural resources ;
- Strategic investment options in the REDD+ national strategy.



2.1.2. Civil Society Involvement in the National process of REDD+

Civil societies with diverse ideologies were mobilized and organized in a National Platform of REDD and Climate Change. This platform is made up of several organizations in which we find women organizations and indigenous people's organizations. Decentralized structures were put in place at the regional levels and will go right down to Councils and even villages. This platform serves as an interface between the government and the civil society. With institutional support from the pro Poor project, this platform was able to actively take part in all the meetings organized for the elaboration of the R-PP, and published a civil society position on the process in support of Government's action.

2.1.3. Women's Mobilization and Gender Mainstreaming in the National REDD + Process

- At least 30 gender-sensitive organizations were trained and are involved in influential debates on REDD+ in Cameroon.
- 30 government representatives and 30 CSOs were trained on Gender and REDD+ related issues;
- 2 national training sessions were carried out for women and government representatives.
- 1 Road Map on gender mainstreaming in the REDD+ process has been elaborated;
- Women have contributed in the revision of the Forestry law through the production and transmission of concrete gender proposals in forestry administration to be taken into consideration in the elaboration of the new forestry law.

2.1.4. The Mobilization and Involvement of Indigenous People (IP)

Financial and technical support helped to improve on the involvement of minorities and to build their capacity. Thus, IPs and IP's network organizations were trained on REDD+. They contribute to the national REDD + process through the NPF REDD&CC. Moreover, with the support of the Towards Pro Poor project and of other organizations promoting their rights, they have contributed to the revision of the Forestry law through the elaboration of proposals aiming at improving their involvement in the new forest law.

2.1.5. The Project's Commitment to National REDD Institutions, notably MINEPDED

- Technical and financial support was provided to the Cameroon's Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development for the preparation, launching and the elaboration of the Cameroon R-PP.
- The conception of the REDD Technical Secretariat and the drafting of the decree creating the REDD Steering Committee.

2.1.6. Strengthening the Collaborative Framework for REDD+

- Activities carried out under this project have led to the strengthening of partnerships between IUCN and the civil society, donors and other technical partners.
- These partnerships create favorable conditions for better coordination of activities in the REDD+ process.

2.1.7. A better understanding of the forest governance

Works and studies carried out by this project have helped to improve the knowledge on arrangement of the different categories of land use for the indigenous peoples in forest concessions, community forests, community hunting zones etc., to tenure rights and forest cover changes. Moreover, the functioning of existing benefit sharing mechanisms, their level of intervention, their fairness towards vulnerable groups such as women and Indigenous peoples were also better understood. It should also be noted that the mode of dependency of local communities to forests, their present management systems, their capacity building needs and their commitment in the REDD process were better understood.

The process of creating partners representative body

Considering our experience in the setting up of a platform on REDD and Climate Change, the creation of a true and useful body for partners' representation will require :

1. An identification of all civil society organizations concerned with the thematic purpose of the creation of the representative body
2. The clustering of these CSOs according to thematic network (for REDD: CF, Mangroves, women, CC, IPs, Youths, traditional rulers ...)
3. The structuring of these networks according to thematic
4. The education and training of the government, the civil society and the private sector on the principle of participatory democracy and its institutionalization through the representative body of partners.
5. The setting up of the representation body with :
 - a. A national coordination made up of at most tree networks;
 - b. That partners design an operating charter;
 - c. That they be decentralized at the national, regional, municipal and village levels.
6. The signing of a collaborating agreement between the representative body of partners and the Ministry in charge of the thematic;
7. The preparation of an involvement program of CSOs of the concerned country in line with the various supports they shall need from donors.

Note : The members of the national coordination and different branches of the representative body are elected in workshops for the setting up of governing bodies. Each submitted list must tie with the criteria of having at least one IPs and women's network per list.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

The aim of the Towards Pro Poor REDD project was to ensure that the post 2012 strategies of climate change, mitigation and reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation are built on the basis of the consolidated process of forest governance reforms and are in line with strategies of poverty reduction. Its implementation helped to test a certain number of fundamental principles which can promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the poorest in the REDD+ process; these are the seven Principles of the Pro-Poor Approach.

3.1. Ensure participation by involving vulnerable groups and other forest dependent communities

An important aspect in the REDD+ process that needs to be improved upon is participation. All stakeholder groups have to be identified and taken into consideration, the role and importance of each one of them in the process as well as their capacities. This helps to set a good base of appropriation and effective involvement of all stakeholders in the process. Particularly vulnerable populations for whom they should :

- Provide a clear institutional framework to facilitate their participation;
- Invest in legal capacity building and in technical support;
- Develop processes that promote barrier reduction in tenure and in participation;
- Strengthen their structuring;
- Organize restitution activities in communities;
- Improve their representation in the REDD+ National Committee;
- Develop affirmative actions aiming at accessing decision-making positions.

In addition, for all stakeholders there would be the need to :

- Develop a clear communication plan and ensure its proper implementation;
- Fund communication activities at the grassroots (in local languages);
- Conduct a study/survey on the communication needs and channels accessible to various local actors / CSOs;
- Develop appropriate communication and information tools and channels;
- Initiate a sensitization and information process with traditional rulers.

3.2. Having social objectives by developing a REDD+ strategy based on consolidated reforms

This is about adapting the regulation to the national context by imbedding local realities in texts. It is about taking into consideration issues related to poverty, gender, livelihoods, culture, etc... Ensure that this reformulated regulation is applied in order to create suitable and favorable conditions adapted to the acquisition of favorable social impacts of the REDD+ process. To achieve this, it will require to :

- Support the implementation through good governance and appropriate institutions at various levels;
- Use targeted direct interventions and capacity building workshops;
- Engage in reforms that will secure land and forest tenure rights of indigenous and local communities;
- Support the involvement of vulnerable groups in the ongoing reforms;
- Initiate an analysis process of the vulnerability of vulnerable groups to climate change, which will enable the support of targeted actions for them;
- Develop and implement pilot activities to the benefit of vulnerable communities and to valorize the lessons learned in the framework of the national strategy;
- Multiply pilots / tests projects on vulnerable groups in all the ecological zones of Cameroon;
- Conduct a study on resource dependence in all pilot projects;
- Promote income generating activities which contribute to the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems.
- Fund adaptation activities to climate change based on agro-ecological zones;
- Valorize the indigenous know how that is favorable to the sustainable use of natural resources.



Definition of the description of the decision making concept : the case of the national platform on REDD and Climate Change in Cameroon

It can be noted that the creation of the national platform on REDD and Climate Change (NPFREDD and CC) in Cameroon resulted specifically through advocacy in the taking into consideration of the needs of women and IPs in the R-PP. We can name :

- The recognition of the vulnerability of women and IPs to climate change;
- The recognition of important rights of women and IPs;
- The institutionalization of women's representation and IPs in the management organs of REDD;
- Their capacity building and allocated funding for their participation in this process.

Without trying to quantify the advocacy carried out by the NPFREDD and CC, we can say they have had an impact.

3.3. Develop pilot projects to ensure fair and transparent benefits sharing

This is about establishing appropriate mechanisms for forest governance to improve the management of forest resources and increase incomes of the poor. To do this, there is a need to :

- Extend the studies on the mechanisms of benefit sharing to several sites;
- Accompany the process of setting up a mechanism to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits from REDD+;
- Engage the private sector to work with government programs through a favorable legislative framework;
- Develop and implement pilot activities for vulnerable communities then ensure the valorization of lessons learned in the context of the national strategy;
- Multiply pilot / test projects on vulnerable groups and in all ecological zones of Cameroon;
- Carry out a study on resource dependence in all pilot projects.

3.4. Améliorer les principes de l'Approche Pro-Poor (PPA)

The purpose of the project was to integrate the 07 principles of the ProPoor approach in the national REDD+ strategy in Cameroon. Their experimentation during this first phase of the project helped to come out with some weaknesses and shortcomings in relation to the Cameroonian context. Thus, in the opinion of REDD actors some improvements are needed to be made in the Cameroon process so as to make them more favorable to the poor.

Table 1 : Proposed improvement of the principles of the Pro-Poor Approach

Principes PPA	Propositions d'amélioration
1. Ensure that vulnerable groups are informed, consulted and participatory in decision-making at all levels and phases of the REDD+ process, in an enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure the institutional strengthening, technical and financial support of vulnerable groups, ▶ Inform and educate at local level ▶ Develop "affirmative " approaches to ensure the VGs access to decision-making
2. Guarantee rights and access to information about processes and outcomes of REDD+ including the positive and negative impacts on the environment and livelihoods of communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop and implement an appropriate communication plan ▶ Support communication at local level ▶ Carry out baseline studies on communication needs and on accessible communication channels to different local actors ▶ Develop appropriate tools and communication channels
3. Clarify and secure the rights of vulnerable groups on resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Extend activities to all agro-ecological zones of Cameroon; ▶ Support communication and sensitization activities ▶ Carry out studies on communities dependence on forest resources in the country ▶ Continue with advocacy ▶ Support the VG's participation in the political reform process
4. Ensure equitable and transparent benefits sharing and responsibilities vertically and horizontally, with specific attention to vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carry out an extensive study on benefit sharing in resource management and use the results for national strategy ▶ Organise exchange visits between communities ▶ Capitalize on experiences of other countries
5. Built on the understanding of the nature and scope of forest dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carry out studies in all the sites and build on it to identify the indicator of communities dependency on forest resources ▶ Carry out a study on the local population's vulnerability on climate change

Four key steps of advocacy to include the rights of vulnerable groups in the political process of sustainable management of natural resources

1. Do a reference situation of the process to highlight the gaps in the level of consideration of the rights and interests of vulnerable groups in the process;
2. Work with organized and influential stakeholder groups to strengthen their capacity in advocacy and promote their ownership of the stakes and challenges of the process;
3. Accompany these groups in the production and dissemination of policy briefs and position papers at the level of decision makers, strategic meetings, politicians and key media;
4. Accompany these influential groups in monitoring the effective consideration of their concerns in the political process.



Principes PPA	Propositions d'amélioration
6. Enhance resilience of vulnerable livelihoods through conserving and restoring natural ecosystem functions including biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support the pilot projects using sustainable management strategies such as agro-forestry, and agro-ecology ▶ Promote income generating activities that contribute to conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems ▶ Support pilot activities on climate adaptation in various agro-ecological zones
7. Recognize and integrate customary practices and values in the design and implementation of REDD+ activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carry out baselines studies to better understand the influence of customary practices and values in the REDD process and capitalize on the REDD process in Cameroon ▶ Follow the outcome of this study to engage an information and sensitization process of traditional rulers

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

One of the strengths of the Pro Poor REDD project has been its ability to adapt to the national context. This enabled it to meet urgent needs regarding the process at very critical moments. The spectacular evolution of the REDD+ process in Cameroon is an illustration of this strategy. Considering that the project was worked out to make the REDD+ process favorable to the poor and vulnerable groups, it is important then to improve on some actions. Thus, in the second phase of the project, there will be a need to :

- Have a poverty mapping in the pilot areas. The tool box poverty - Forests (Tool Kit) has been used only in two communities;
- Extend the application of this tool to many communities and sites;
- Draw lessons learned and consider its systematization in the poverty mapping process;
- Support MINEPDED in the process of developing a benefits sharing mechanism for REDD+;
- Continue the production and dissemination process of knowledge to support the development of the national REDD+ strategy;
- Support the structuring of civil society organizations on the REDD+ process;
- Ensure a better targeting of specific actions in favor of the most affected categories of actors.

More so, Cameroon is engaged in many reforms (forestry law, the framework law on environment, land tenure reforms, etc...). These are opportunities to influence a certain number of provisions in the REDD+ perspective in line with taking into consideration of the rights of vulnerable populations.



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