



A Brief insight of the “pro-poor” approach for the implementation of REDD+ in Cameroon

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Policy Brief

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Definition of REDD+

Initiated by the international community, “the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests (REDD)” is based on the principle that countries wishing to reduce emissions from deforestation and able to do so should be compensated financially for their actions in this direction. The principle of REDD is thus to provide financial compensation for the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation of tropical forests. The concept was expanded with the “+” in REDD + which involves aspects of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks of forest¹.

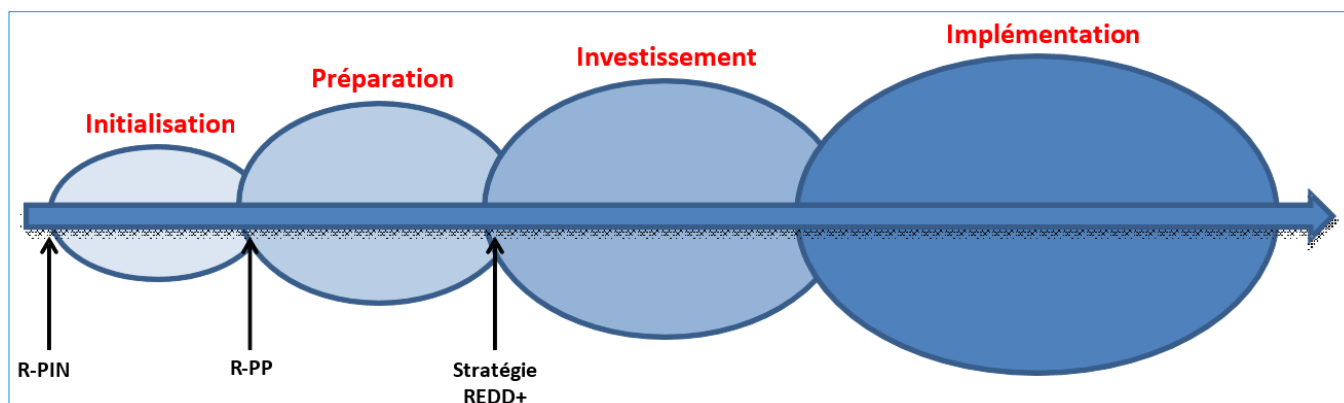
Current Status of REDD + in Cameroon

Though engaged in the REDD + policy Cameroon has not yet completed its preparatory phase. It was just in February 2013 that she obtained an approval from the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility for her R-PP (Readiness Preparation Proposal).

The R-PP is a preparatory document for the design of a national strategy to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. It presents an overview of the forest, the drivers of deforestation and provides elements for the definition of a national REDD strategy. It presents an estimate of the emission rate of CO₂ in the country and proposes a national reference scenario, the methodology MRV (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification) for the monitoring and evaluation of emissions over time and the need for capacity building.

The preparation proposal determines whether the country meets the basic necessary conditions for the sustainable management of forest resources, such as good forest governance, law enforcement and the impact of tenure system on land reallocations. It shows whether the country has put in place mechanisms to address real causes of deforestation, if the conditions for a better implementation of policies to reduce the causes of deforestation and forest degradation are met. It analyzes the risks and opportunities of REDD, notably taking into consideration the interests of forest communities, indigenous peoples and ensuring equitable benefits sharing from REDD.

Cameroon should now develop its national REDD + strategy as specified in the R-PP



The different stages of REDD + and the status of the process in Cameroon²

An Overview of REDD + projects in Cameroon

Projects and REDD + initiatives are currently underway in Cameroon at both local and regional levels. “At least 31, these projects and initiatives help to directly valorize the reduction of emissions and / or absorption of carbon, reductions which will be taken into consideration in the future national carbon accounting. They will have to enrich national reflections on the elaboration of the national REDD + strategy (on issues related to equitable revenue sharing, REDD+ governance, etc.)”³.

1 Karpe P, Randrianarison M, Guignier A, Bigombe P, Akwahneba G, Boutinot L, 2012. REDD+ and the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples in Cameroon: Analysis of the definition of “social and environmental standards. Conference on “Beyond carbon: ensuring justice and equity in REDD+ across levels of governance”, 23-24 March 2012, St. Anne’s College, Oxford, UK.

2 Idem

3 Idem

List of REDD + projects currently underway in Cameroon

Project	Project proponent	Scope of activities	Applicable standards of implementing institutions
"REDD pilot project" (GAF-AG and German Cooperation)	GAF AG, COMIFAC, GTZ, FAN Bolivia, ESA, Joanneum Research	<i>Started in 2007, ended in 2010</i> Developed a methodology for forest monitoring through satellite imaging for the whole country, complemented by measures on the ground in one place, to establish baseline projections of carbon emissions caused by deforestation.	Unknown
Mt Cameroon National Park REDD+ project	WWF and the German Cooperation who are already managing the park	<i>Study in 2009, expected start in late 2010</i> On behalf of KfW, CFA Envest conducted an evaluation for a REDD+ project in the Mt Cameroon National Park in 2009	WWF Statement of Principle on Indigenous People
REDD+ pilot project in Takamanda National Park	WCS in close collaboration with MINEP and MINFOF and likely with the involvement of the German Cooperation	The projects are targeting the parks as well as the surrounding "supporting" areas. The park will become the "core zone". The aim is to sell the carbon on the market.	WCS is a member of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR)
REDD+ pilot project in Mbam and Djerem National Parks		Local communities are expected to benefit from "cash payments" or other "transfers".	
"CBSP Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Ngoyla Mintom Forest"	World Bank in collaboration with MINEP and MINFOF	"To establish a core Protected Area within the Ngoyla- Mintom forest , through an approach based on land use planning and, fostering public-private partnerships"	GEF: Public Participation Policy (2006); Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2005) The GEF does not have binding standards in its Operational Programs (though plans are underway in 2010/11 to develop safeguard policies)
REDD+ in Ngoyla Mintom (WWF)	WWF	Preparation of a REDD project (funding secured), but no documents are available	WWF Statement of Principle on Indigenous People
REDD project in TRIDOM Cameroon	UNDP, GEF, WWF	WWF and World bank REDD projects in Ngoyla Mintom and mentions "innovative financing mechanisms". Landscape zoning for "biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use" A variety of land uses, including logging, protected area and several mines cf. map in main document.	GEF: Public Participation Policy (2006); Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2005) The GEF does not have binding standards in its Operational Programs (though plans are underway in 2010/11 to develop safeguard policies).
REDD+ project in Sangha Tri-national (TNS) Landscape	COMIFAC, WWF (au Cameroun et la RCA), KfW, AFD, USAID, CBFF, EU, WCS (au Congo) , IUCN, MINFOF	<i>Planning stage</i> TNS landscape was established in 2000. The parks of Congo, Cameroon and CAR were established respectively in 1990, 1993 and 2001	WWF Statement of Principle on Indigenous People IUCN various resolutions and recommendations adopted at the World Parks Congress 2003 and the World Conservation Congresses 2004 and 2008
"REDD+ project for the support zones of Korup National Park"	KfW and WWF are involved in the management of the park	<i>Planning stage</i>	Unknown
Community Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the Congo Basin	BR&D, Plan Vivo, RFUK RFUK et CED	<i>Started in 2010, ongoing</i> Forest protection. A PES but not a REDD project	DFID: Directive of the 2006 International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Bill, 7. 2. c. Realising human rights for poor people (2000)

The fundamental need for a "pro-poor" approach

Like other policies such as FLEGT (or Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Exchange) promoted by the European Union, it is increasingly admitted that the consideration of the needs and rights of rural populations concerned by REDD + is an essential condition for its own success, and not just a moral or material obligation to these populations. Despite some difficulties, a "pro-poor" approach to REDD + is thus gradually emerging.

This approach “is built on the idea that the implementation of REDD+ should not create additional burdens for local communities and the rural poor. A pro-poor approach instead aims at bolstering livelihoods, protect people’s rights and ensure that the ecological and social functions of forests are strengthened. Meaningful participation of actors at the grassroots can ensure that their interests are taken into consideration. Indigenous Peoples and local forest communities have a right to be informed and consulted. Their participation in decision-making processes can build the ownership needed for the implementation of REDD+. Strategies that make use of traditional knowledge systems and customary forest management practices can help create more effective REDD+ interventions because they build on the intricate interrelationships between forests and forest-reliant communities”⁴.

Concrete conditions for the implementation of the “pro-poor” approach to REDD +

The “pro-poor” approach to REDD + is based on several fundamental principles, among which is the prior, free and informed consent of the rural population, their right to equitable benefit sharing and the securing of their rights to land. It is henceforth right to set the conditions for their full and effective implementation. This leads to relevant, appropriate and coherent answers to many questions; for example, with regard to the consent of the indigenous peoples, when consulted, who or which institution gives its consent on behalf of the community? Should the collective consent of indigenous peoples be regarded as more important than the ownership right of non-indigenous living in the same territory? How can this type of difference be resolved? (Karpe, 2013). In Cameroon, lessons can be derived for this purpose from the provisions of the new forestry law (Law No. 94-01 of 20 January 1994 laying down Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries policies) and of their implementation, as well as the “pro-poor” REDD + Project carried out by IUCN in the Tri-national pilot areas of the Sangha (TNS) and Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkébé (TRIDOM).

Brief presentation of the study framework

The new forestry law

The rights of rural populations have been strengthened in the new forestry law resulting from the 94-01 law of 20 January 1994 on Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries. A key innovation is the ability henceforth recognized to people to own community forests. These are forests “of the non-permanent forest domain (DFNP, agro-forestry domain) subjected to a management agreement between a village community and the administration in charge of forests. These managed forests which must not exceed 5,000 ha - are owned by the community concerned with the help or technical assistance of the forestry administration. In addition, the law provides that forest products of any kind resulting from the exploitation of community forests belong fully to the communities concerned (Article 37-3) and that a free and contracted technical assistance by the forestry administration to the communities is foreseen (art37-1). Through a management agreement, the state transfers the management of the forest to communities but not the land”⁵.

To facilitate the implementation of community forests, a manual of procedures on award and standards for community forest management was published in 2008 by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF). It was revised in 2009. Improvements have been made to the status of forests to the benefit of rural people, especially the integration of a preliminary phase for information and sensitization, a shortening period in the treatment of files and the institution of the provisional management agreement to enable communities to exploit the forest and support the development of simple management plan by themselves. This agreement “is an intermediary device and an alternative to communities to start activities in their forests before the signing of the final management agreement marking the end of the transfer process. It has a two-year, non-renewable duration. During the two years, these communities can start the commercial exploitation of their forests and derive substantial income enabling them to finance the development of simple management plans. Such income could also incur expenses related to the allocation of community forests and their proper management”⁶.

Revenues generated from the exploitation of community forests belong entirely to the communities to contribute to their socio-economic development.” They are managed by community councils in accordance with the requirements of the simple management plans. 10% of revenue generated is to be allocated for the functioning of the legal entity and the remaining 90% for the implementation of projects previewed in the Simple Management Plan (SMP)”⁷.

The Rural Populations of the TNS and TRIDOM Pilot Areas

The “pro-poor” REDD + project carried out over a period of four years (2009-2012) by IUCN was intended to define, to give details and strengthen the conditions for a viable, effective and useful “pro-poor” REDD + approach. For these reasons, pilot sites were selected. In Cameroon, the sites were TNS and TRIDOM. On these sites, we had to study and experiment rules and institutions particularly regarding “the participatory assessment of the causes of deforestation and degradation; the strengthening of the participation of vulnerable groups in the defining of REDD+ activities; participatory processes for the definition and clarification of property boundaries, discussions about carbon rights; analyses of the impacts that REDD+ can have on the livelihoods of forest communities and the defining and monitoring of

4 IUCN, 2011. Understanding forest dependency for REDD+: Adapting the Forest-Poverty Toolkits to new purposes. Briefing paper, IUCN Forest Conservation Programme. p. 2.

5 Ngoufo, Roger, Nhouhou Njoumemei et Marc Parren (2012). État des lieux de la situation économique, écologique et sociale actuelle de l’espace Camerounais du TRIDOM. Tropenbos International – Programme du bassin du Congo, Wageningen, Pays-Bas. p. 84.

6 Kouna Eloundou C.G., 2012. Décentralisation forestière et gouvernance locale des forêts au Cameroun. Le cas des forêts communales et communautaires dans la région de l’Est. Thèse. Université du Maine, Le Mans. Géographie. p. 149.

7 Idem. p. 173.

social baselines as indicators of the impact of REDD+ in forest communities. [...]. While the work is still in progress, the pro-poor strategy is proposed to include :

- Forest governance and REDD+: Synergies
- Multi-stakeholder processes: Broad participation
- Trees and carbon: Rights and tenure
- Deforestation and forest degradation: Drivers
- Participatory processes for defining REDD+ priority areas and REDD+ activities
- National framework for the preparation of REDD+: Nested approach.
- Dependence of people's livelihoods on forest in rural areas: Impacts on livelihoods
- Transparent and equitable distribution: Systems for Benefit Sharing
- Social and environmental impacts: Safeguards"⁸.

Lessons

All the conditions for the implementation of the "pro-poor" REDD+ approach are neither yet fully known nor detailed. However, it is henceforth being recognized that no REDD + policy can succeed socially without taking into consideration the rights of vulnerable groups, especially rural women and indigenous peoples. Concerning the participation of rural populations in the REDD + project it is also admitted that :

- Fundamentally, the reality and the value of the participation of rural people in the establishment and implementation of REDD + can only be judged over time. It is indeed a long, progressive, costly and difficult process, involving profound changes in these populations (and other stakeholders)
- Conditioning the quality of benefits from the REDD + policy to rural populations, their participation in its formulation and implementation can only be efficient and effective if it is adapted to their real lives and especially their work schedule,
- influencing the scope and content of decisions, the choice of people or institutions contributing to the decision-making process must be autonomous and be based specifically on rules and social, political or cultural institutions specific to the concerned rural populations,
- Finally, for fear of being weakened, the expected participation at the local level must be repeated in the same terms at all subsequent levels of decision-making.

The persistence of a certain fragility

The REDD + policy project cannot succeed in Cameroon (and in all the countries concerned) without the adjunction of a "pro-poor" approach. The required conditions for its achievement are gradually being identified and clarified. Criteria and indicators for its success are equally being defined. Despite all, its concretization still depends enormously on the provision of appropriate and substantial financial resources. This constitutes today in this issue, a real constrain and a strong threat.



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