Experiences and Lessons Learned on REDD+ Social and Governance Safeguards in Cameroon

Kalame Fobissie

Cameroon 2014

Acronyms

AFF	Annual Forest Fees
AFHAN	Association de Femmes et Hommes ami(es) de Nkolenyeng
ASBAK	Association des Baka de Lomié
CAFT	Coopérative Agroforestiere de la Trinational
CAR	Central Africa Republic
CBFF	Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF)
CED	Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération International en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement
CODEVI	Comité de Développement Villageois
COMIFAC	Commission des Fôrets d'Afrique Centrale
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EESS	Evaluation Environnementale et Sociale Stratégique
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IRAD	Institute of Agricultural Reserahc for Deevelopment
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCBB	Observatoire de Culture Baka et Bantu
ONACC	National Observatory on Climate Change
ONFI	Office National des Forêts International
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
MINADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINAS	Ministry of Social Affairs
MINEE	Ministry of Water and Energy
MINEPDED	Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development
MINEPAT	Minister of Economy, Land Planning and Land Use
MINEPIA	Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Livestock Industries
MINFI	Ministry of Finance
MINFOF	Ministry of Forests and Wildlfie
MINRESI	Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification System
PES	Payments for Environmental Services
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation including sustainable forestry, forest conservation and enhancement of carbon sink
R-PP	REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment-SESA
UK	United Kingdom
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Acknowledgement
This study was made possible by the GEF-World Bank-funded COMIFAC Congo Basin Regional REDD+ Capacity Building Project. I would like to thank all of the WWF and CED staff that supported the preparation and field trips of this study. Specifically, many thanks to Marc Languy, Louis Defo, Moustapha Njayou, Ernest Ndjomo Zongo, Samuel Nguiffo, Moise Kono Bidzou and Freddy Mbianda. Additionally I would like to thank the staff of ONFI (Cameroon) especially Pascal Cuny, Guy Marcel Fianla, Bertin Tchikangwa and Felix, who provided administrative, logistic and technical supports. The time and significant contributions of local resources persons and members from Lelène, Zoulabot, d'Etékessang, Messok-Messok, Nkolenyeng and Nomedjoh Community REDD+/PES projects are very much appreciated. This study would not have been possible without their contributions.

Table of Contents

Summary and Key Points

REDD+ safeguards intend to promote practices and approaches that can help to ensure that REDD+ activities provide multiple benefits while doing no harm to local people or the environment. The goal of this report is therefore to highlight key lessons and recommendations on past and current practices relevant for promoting and achieving REDD+ social and governance safeguards in the REDD+ process of Cameroon. The report draws on existing literature, local expert interviews and two ongoing REDD+ projects in Cameroon to inform REDD+ process and project proponents on what works and what doesn't. During field visits in July 2014, group discussions were held with local communities in four WWF Ngoyla Mintom project sites: Lelène, Zoulabot 1, d'Etékessang, and Messok-Messok, and two CED payments for environmental services (PES) project sites: Nkolenyeng and Nomedjoh in the Southern and Easter Regions of Cameroon. In the context of Cameroon discussions about REDD+ social and governance safeguards often focus on land tenure, consultation (FPIC) and participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), distribution of benefits, and institutional and governance issues. In this report, these focal areas are examined and the key findings and recommendations from the field are highlighted.

(i) Consultation (FPIC) and Participation of Local Communities

- **It is not possible to get a definite yes or full consent of an entire community**. Proponents can get the consent of communities either in stages as the project progresses or through a majority of the community members. Some members don't just want the project while others want.
- **Trusted local NGOs can act as knowledge brokers.** There is a lot of misinformation and false expectations of REDD+ in many communities. Community-based organizations that are trusted by local communities and understands REDD+ issues stand a better chance to help communities to understand the implications, complexity, opportunities, challenges and trade-offs of REDD+.
- **Field presence of project staff can build trust and boost local participation**. REDD+ is a relatively new idea for many communities. A permanent physical presence of project proponents and regular sensitization is important in trust-building between communities and proponents and the eventual involvement of many skeptical or ignorant community members.
- **Women should be encouraged to get involved and take up leading roles.** Men often positon themselves to participate in training opportunities especially those that are conducted in faraway places with possibilities of free transportation, meals, hotels and pocket money. Project activities should therefore encourage gender balance and representation at all levels.
- **Encouraging full community participation may undermine project performance**. REDD+ payments are based on performance so the notion of full community participation could involve unwilling community members who will eventually reduce project effectiveness and outcome.

(ii) Community Land Tenure

- **Overlapping customary and statutory rights over REDD+ sites.** The ownership of community REDD+ sites were transferred from the state to the communities. The same lands are however being contested by some families under customary rules - leading to conflicting claims.
- **Existing community land tenure may accommodate REDD+.** Even though there are some incompatibility between individual and collective land rights, most of the community members still feel that the land tenure situation can accommodate REDD+ in the sense that the government officially recognizes the communities as the "owners" of the community forests.

- **Land use planning supports the setting of REDD+ baselines**. Land use planning and zoning helps communities to map, classify and implement different activities under different land use categories. REDD+ payments are done based on activities under these categories.
- **Land use plans should integrate current and future forest needs of communities**. Some individual community members engage in activities that create leakages and they find it difficult to respect the land use plans created by projects. Integrating community basic forest needs and reserving ample space for future community activities is essential to avoid leakage.
- **Community REDD+ is seen an alternative land use practices to logging.** Logging and the associated benefits have fallen short of meeting the expectations of many community forestry programs. Communities and community forestry are now willing to implement community REDD+ as an alternative land use practice.

(iii) Institutions and Governance

- **Community REDD+ should build on or work with existing local institutions.** Local or customary governance structure on natural resources, community development and conflict resolution exists in many communities. It will be beneficial in many cases for REDD+ projects to work in one way or the other with these structures.
- **Community social cohesion is strengthened through increasing interactions**. Communities are obliged to hold meetings regularly, work in groups and regard issues of common interest in the REDD+ project. As a consequence, the Baka indigenous people are increasingly willing to work and cooperate with the Bantu communities to realize the goals of the REDD+ project.
- **Effective REDD+ needs strong institutional support and capacity**. Many communities lack the required institutional and technical capacities for implementing REDD+. Long term capacity building program therefore need to be an integral part of REDD+ projects.
- **Understanding and respecting roles and responsibilities is crucial for performance**. Community members who do not have a good understanding of the project idea, vision and expectations hardly meet up to their commitments and turn to block project implementation. A thorough and targeted sensitization before and during project implementation may help.

(iv) Benefits and Distribution of Benefits

- **Benefit-sharing could easily result in conflicts**. The distribution of benefits at the community level include: (i) performance-based cash payments to project members; (ii) community development projects and (iii) culturally-based benefits tailored to special needs. Poor management of funds and lack of accountability could easily lead to conflicts.
- **Payments for performance should consider both carbon and non-carbon outcomes**. For many communities, REDD+ is not just carbon, so REDD+ performance should cover in many cases biodiversity conservation, livelihood activities, adaptation etc. All these should be captured during measurement of performance, payments and benefit sharing.
- **Recognizing and rewarding individual performance**. Many hard working individuals would feel cheated by working harder and earning the same as some lazy group members. Individuals within groups should therefore be encouraged to work and realize individual tasks rather than insisting only on community and group performance.
- **Seeing is believing: Proponents should start with community development projects**. Immediate short term community benefits are crucial in keeping the momentum for the long term goals. REDD+ project proponents should anticipate the financing of some priority and urgent community development projects in the beginning of the REDD+ project.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Safeguards are intended to maximize and enhance multiple benefits and minimize the risks of REDD+ activities, thereby supporting their acceptability, credibility and long-term success (Savaresi 2013). Global and national policies to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation including sustainable forest management, forest conservation and reforestation and afforestation (REDD+) could bring significant multiple benefits for people and the environment. Forest ecosystems for example play a role in stabilizing global climate by keeping an estimated 2,400 Gt carbon stocks. They contain 75% of terrestrial biodiversity (UNCBD and GIZ 2011). Over 1.6 billion people depend on forest products for their livelihoods and more than 2,000 groups of indigenous peoples live in forest ecosystems, which satisfy their basic needs, such as food, energy and health. The coming of REDD+ has the potential to enhance existing benefits and further provide employment opportunities for local communities. Increased resilience of society to climate and other stressors, improved local livelihoods and governance are also expected to be additional non-carbon benefits of REDD+. Maintaining forest ecosystems intact through REDD+ and their associated benefits are therefore essential for human well-being.

Concerns have been raised, however, that REDD+ could have negative impacts, such as unfavorable land tenure and restricting access to forest products used by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) for their livelihoods, increased centralization of forest management, inequitable sharing of benefits from REDD+ activities, the lack of real participation and lack of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) as well as forestry practices that harm biodiversity (Fobissie et al. 2012). These concerns about the impacts of REDD+ led to the establishment of REDD+ "safeguards" within UNFCCC decisions in Cancun (See Annex 1 for details). The decision among others calls for the promotion and support for the respect of the knowledge and rights of IPLCs as well as "the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders. At the level of a REDD+ country like Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (RoC) and Central African Republic (CAR), safeguards could be put in place by various actors involved in financing, designing and implementing REDD+ activities and projects including government agencies, World Bank, UN-REDD, the private sector, civil society organizations and many international and local NGOs

Given the arguments and merits for addressing social and governance safeguards in support of a successful pro-poor REDD+ implementation in the Congo Basin, this paper draws lessons from different experiences of forest and REDD+ in Cameroon in order to inform REDD+ policy-making by addressing two questions: What do we know from existing literature on forest social and governance issues in Cameroon? And what is currently happening on the ground on REDD+ social and governance issues linked to benefit sharing, participation and consultation, rights to resources etc.

1.2.Objectives

The general goal of this paper is to capture key lessons and recommendations on social and governance safeguards practices relevant for promoting national REDD+ process and projects in Cameroon. The specific objectives of the paper are to: (i) Review and highlight some of the

documented relevant past and more recent practices on REDD+ social and governance safeguards; and (ii) Examine existing REDD+ projects on the ground and synthesize key lessons and recommendations on social and governance safeguards.

2. Methodology

Data collection for this report focused the following topics:

- ✓ Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)
- ✓ Local participation in project implementation and management
- ✓ Benefit sharing amongst project beneficiaries and stakeholders
- ✓ Land tenure and land use planning
- ✓ Institutional arrangements and models
- ✓ Respect of roles and responsibilities and agreements between parties

Data for the paper was collected from a range of actors and stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the target projects as well as social and governance aspects of REDD+ in general. They include but are not limited to CED, WWF, civil society organizations, local NGOs especially at the projects field sites and experts from international organizations. Three main sources of information were used to produce this report: literature review, field visits and expert interviews and opinion.

Literature review: Key documents related to the project were analyzed to understand the different aspects under investigation. Some of the documents were WWF and CED PES project reports, project briefs, documents and power point presentations in various conferences and meetings. Scientific publications based on field experiences were also reviewed. Additional relevant documents where further analyzed to beef up the report.

Field visits: A team of four experts composed of Kalame Fobissie, Moustapha Njayou, ONFI driver and a local facilitator conducted the field work. Local communities in four WWF (Lelène, Zoulabot, d'Etékessang, and Messok-Messok) and two CED (Nkolenyeng and Nomedjoh) PES project sites where consulted for their views (Figure 1). In each of the six villages, group discussions were held with the communities as well as individual interviews with selected key resources persons. Two of the six communities were Bakas while four were mainly Bantus. Participants in the group discussions were men, women, elders and youths. Discussion with communities helped the researchers to collect original data and make predictions based on stakeholders' participatory discussions.

Expert opinion: This was done through formally scheduled interviews as well as informal discussions during field meeting meetings in the six sites. The interviews focused mainly on local experts who have worked with the communities and WWF-CED PES projects in one way or the other. The interviews in the project field sites were conducted in the form of face-to-face with individuals as well as in small groups.

Figure 1. Meetings with local communities

3. What do we know from existing literature?

3.1. FPIC and Participation in REDD+

Long before the coming of REDD+ in Cameroon, the need for the integration of local consultation and participation in natural resource management and environmental conservation decision making and implementation dates back to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (UNCED 1992). Two years after the convention, the Cameroon 1994 Forestry Law immediately introduced participatory forest management with the key objective to devolve powers to local communities, improve forest management practices and institute local ownership and rights over community forests. In the same line, Cameroon 1996 Framework Law on Environmental Management and the Cameroon VPA FLEGT negation process between 2007 and 2009 stressed local participation and consensus seeking (GoC 2013). Some scholars argue that promoting local community participation is critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of these laws and initiatives (Chhatre and Agrawal 2009).

Box 1. A summary of Cameroon's FPIC guidelines (Source: MINEPDED 2014)

Cameroon's national FPIC document provides practical guidelines on how to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of IPLCs during the development and implementation of REDD+ processes and initiatives in Cameroon. Ten guiding steps to undertake FPIC under the REDD+ process of Cameroon include:

- ✓ Establishment of a technical team for FPIC implementation
- ✓ Analysis of the physical, socio-economic and legal context
- ✓ Development of an information and communication strategy
- ✓ Taking appointments
- ✓ Information and sensitization meetings
- ✓ Negotiating with stakeholders
- ✓ Formalizing agreements between parties
- ✓ Developing a roadmap
- ✓ Monitoring
- ✓ Verification and evaluation

In addition, four principles with clear criteria, indicators and specific guidance for obtaining the different components of FPIC are outlined:
Principle 1: Absence of force, pressure, unwanted obligation, manipulation and intimidation
Principle 2: Provision of information regarding REDD+ activities sufficiently in advance
Principle 3: Disclosure of the full information about the REDD+ activity
Principle 4: Community agreement or approval of proposed REDD+ activity.

With the coming of REDD+, consultation and participation of all key stakeholders remained a key aspect in the development and implementation of national REDD+ strategies. According to Cameroon's REDD+ readiness preparation proposal (R-PP) document (GoC 2013), the government aims at implementing an inclusive bottom-up participatory process that ensures the participation of all stakeholders in the elaboration of Cameroon's national REDD+ strategy. To make the participatory process happen, the development of a consultation and participation plan is envisaged. The different steps of the plan include: the identification of stakeholders within the categories of Government and state agencies, IPLCs, civil society, traditional chieftainships, private sector, elected representatives and decentralized authorities; the development of tools and materials for the preparation and implementation of a communication plan; and the consultation of all categories of stakeholders with special focus on the implementation of FPIC in the context of IPLCs. As a first practical step to implement the consultation and participation plan, the government in collaboration with WWF, CED, GIZ and 40 other institutions including indigenous peoples (Baka, Bakola, Mbororo, Bendzang and Bagyeli) and local communities have elaborated and validated a national operational guidelines for obtaining FPIC of local communities during the development of REDD+ projects (MINEPDED 2014). Box 1 presents a summary of Cameroon's FPIC guidelines.

Moving forward with FPIC and participation in the REDD+ process of Cameroon will entail the capitalization of past and existing experiences in forest and natural resource management initiatives. Many scholars have pessimistic findings on past experiences on the effective and inclusive consultation and participation of local communities in REDD+, PES, forest and natural

resource management in Cameroon (for example Logo 1994, Karsentry 2007, Oyono 2005, Cerutti et al. 2010) . There is generally a low level of gender consideration, women's and indigenous peoples' participation in climate change and REDD+ policy forums and processes as well as in decentralized forest management in Cameroon (Bandiaky and Tiani 2010, Brown 2011, Freudenthal et al. 2011). Some of the hurdles to effective public participation process in REDD+ and forest management are linked to inequitable distribution of forest revenues, inadequate education and awareness, lack of competent administrative personnel, insufficient infrastructural resources, insufficient time and financial resources (Dkamela et al. 2011, Fobissie et al. 2012, Alemagi et al. 2013). In a case study of REDD+ projects in Nkolenyeng and Nomedjoh in Southern Cameroon Awono et al. (2014) noticed that about 50% of the local community interviewees were neither involved in project design nor in giving their consent for REDD+ project implementation in their community. Instead, they were invited to attend meetings where they were informed about the project and asked to discuss project implementation aspects. Even when local communities are consulted and involved like in the delimitation and classification process of the Dimako Council Forest of Cameroon, their views and needs are not often integrated in the process (Assembe-Mvondo and Oyono 2004).

To promote and achieve effective participation of key stakeholders in the REDD+ process of Cameroon, the civil society organizations proposed a number of recommendations to the government and REDD+ proponents (Fobissie et al. 2012). They include: (i) Promoting transparency and the establishment of clear procedures to address issues related to the legitimacy and quality of the representation with particular focus on women. A precipitated process does not always favor a broader consultation of IPLCs and the civil society; (ii) Increasing the quotas of IPLC and civil society in multi-sectorial decision making such as in the national REDD+ steering committee; (iii) Developing alternative and effective mechanisms to promote the participation of the least empowered and marginalized persons in the implementation of community projects that are currently dominated by local elites; (iv) Revision of current legislations to involve civil society, communities and women in the process of monitoring and evaluation of social and environmental management plans; and (v) the establishment of a participatory mechanism and consultation strategy that is culturally appropriate, builds capacity of less empowered and marginalized persons and systematically builds a database for information sharing that runs from local to national with sufficient, consistent, and well managed resources.

3.2. Land Tenure and REDD+

Clear and secured land tenure is crucial for the success of REDD+ implementation. In Cameroon, land tenure is characterized by different challenges. First, there is a dual legal system of land management in Cameroon: customary system and modern system and they co-exist side by side (Teyssier 2003). In general and on paper, all lands in Cameroon without a registered land title are treated as state land under the modern system. This means that community landholdings under the customary system, where IPLC have clear rights over forestlands, are also treated as state-owned land. In practice, customary systems and practices remain the dominant tenure type, especially in rural areas Tonye et al. (1993). Second, at the different ministerial levels, there is lack of coordination between different land use strategies and policies. Insufficient inter-

ministerial communication and coordination, and the absence of a land use plan have led to the award of overlapping mining, logging, agriculture permits on the same forest area. Schwartz et al., (2012) noted that about 28 mining and oil permits have been awarded inside 12 protected areas over the last seven years.

Third, to make it worse, the land that most of the poorest and least empowered local communities depend on for their livelihood are facing according to GoC (2013), monopoly by the elites, are increasingly being purchased by the most influential family members, and attempts to register the lands are becoming slower, more complex, and costly for poor local communities. It is therefore important to clarify the legal foundation of the rights of local forest dependent communities to forestlands as per Cameron law. Larson et al. (2013) also pointed out additional challenges at the REDD+ project level in Cameroon to include: no guarantee of carbon rights on customary land, Bantu traditional claims and incursions into Baka areas, border conflicts between local communities and government-managed national parks, and land conflicts between indigenous and migrant populations.

Given these inadequacies, the government of Cameroon is increasing recognizing customary land rights and management (Sunderlin et al. 2008). The 2001 order 0518/MINE F/CAB specifies additional community rights to acquire community forests and demonstrates Cameroon government's commitment to community forest program. To further recognize customary land rights and improve tenure security for IPLCs in the implement REDD+, the government of Cameroon need to consider practical proposals from diverse stakeholders. To achieve successful land reforms in Cameroon, Traditional Rulers Association (CED 2013) made some suggestions for consideration by the government: (i) Locate the village at the appropriate national administrative organizational level; (ii) Recognize the right of a village to ownership of land where it has settled; (iii) Recognition of customary law in the management of rural lands; (iv) Recognition of proprietary rights based on customary practices; (v) Clearly define the role and responsibility of traditional rulers in the management of lands and other natural resources; and (vi) Recognition of women's right to land ownership.

Based on a national workshop on social safeguards and the rights of indigenous peoples in the REDD+ process of Cameroon, civil society organizations (Fobissie et al. 2012) recommended several points to improve land tenure security of IPLCs in Cameroon: (i) The government should adopt a legal Act which recognizes IP's rights to own their land with a legal title to the land properties; (ii) Zoning plans should be reviewed and should establish a mechanism for sharing of land by the state; (iii) Officials engaged in corrupt practices in the process of allocating land titles and also the violations of the rights of IPLC should be sanctioned and their operations suspended; (iv) Change indigenous peoples (IP) settlements into villages and Chiefdoms and their leaders recognized and respected just like Bantu leaders; (v) Building of capacity of IP to strengthen their ability lead and defend their rights, interest and lifestyle; and (vi) In permanent forest areas and in consultation with IP and women in particular, a co-management agreement should be encouraged between IP and the state.

In a study that reviewed the legal ownership status of national lands in Cameroon Assembe-Mvondo et al. (2014) proposed two hypotheses to be considered for the current land-tenure reform process and REDD+. The first is Article 17 of Decree No. 76–166 of 27 April 1976 to

establish the Terms and Conditions of Management of National Lands. This article provides safeguards to enable IPLCs to have access to incomes and revenues from land concessions, and eventually REDD+ revenues. And the second is for Cameroon's land tenure reforms to build on the joint requirements of COMIFAC guidelines on the recognition of customary approaches of ownership of forest resources, the need for REDD+ implementation and the concerns about the increase overlapping land-use permits and competition.

3.3. REDD+ Institutions and Governance

The institutional management structure of the REDD+ process in Cameroon consists of the National REDD+ Steering Committee and the REDD+ Technical Secretariat (Figure 2) (GoC 2013). The Cameroon readiness preparation proposal (GoC 2013) states that the 21-member Steering Committee is a multi-sectorial decision-making body at the national level made up of different Ministries including the MINEPDED, MINFOF, MINEPAT, MINADER, MINFI, MINEPIA, MINEE, MINRESI and MINAS, Civil Society (through the Civil Society REDD and Climate Change Platform), the Indigenous Peoples, the Private Sector and Elected Representatives. This committee is responsible for crafting and proposing REDD+ policy and strategy; reviewing strategies for implementing the REDD+ mechanism; developing REDD+ project selection criteria for validation; evaluating REDD+ projects before approval by the minister of Environment (MINEPDED); promoting REDD+ activities; approving the work plan of the Technical Secretariat.

The Technical Secretariat on the other hand is the operational body of REDD+ in Cameroon. It coordinates and handles the implementation of activities of the REDD+ process at the national, regional and departmental levels. The Secretariat also works closely with the MINFOF-led FLEGT initiative to promote good forest governance as well as ONACC (National Observatory on Climate change), who will contribute in the construction of REDD+ strategy especially in carbon monitoring related activities.

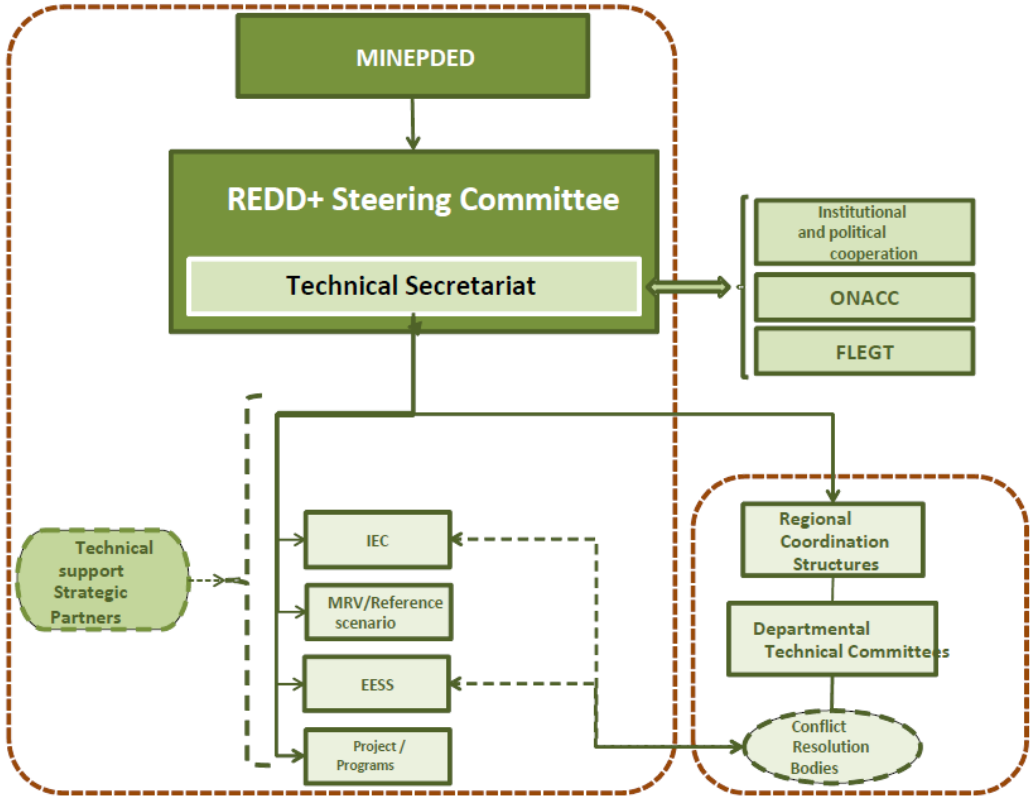


Figure 2. Organizational chart of Cameroon REDD+ process (source: GoC 2013)

In the Congo Basin, Somorin et al. (2012) analyze how different agents hold frames on climate change adaptation and mitigation policies. The study interviewed 103 different actors from government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and private sector in Cameroon, CAR and DRC. The study found that governments are in support of a separate mitigation and adaption policies, the private sector favors mitigation policy only while an integrated policy approach to both adaptation and mitigation was supported by inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental and research organizations. The mitigation agenda especially REDD+ was stronger than adaptation due to the interests of the government and other actors in finances, power and control, knowledge, influence and justice. Another reason for separating adaptation and mitigation is explained by implementation success, effectiveness and scale of operation. The study also found that the predominant political system of administration and the historical trend of fragmenting sectors, policies and program in the Congo Basin countries was critical in to current and future institutional response to climate change. At the time of this research, Cameroon for example had 32 government ministries and over 60 ministers and deputies of only about five ministries are currently known to be in the frontline on forest and climate change. The study argued that it will be difficult for Cameroon and other Congo Basin countries to escape this traditional system of fragmented policies and sectors.

In the early days of REDD+ in 2008, Brown et al. (2011) carried out a study to investigate institutional perceptions of opportunities and challenges of REDD+ in the Congo Basin. The study interviewed personnel from different governmental and non-governmental institutions

from Cameroon, DRC, and CAR. In Cameroon, the study noted that the institutional representatives for the most part were aware of REDD+, but the issue of climate change was not immediately associated only with REDD+. The prominence of REDD+ in climate change discussions appeared to increase following increased discussions especially by the climate focal point at the international level. The forestry companies were however not particularly knowledgeable about REDD+. The civil society organizations saw REDD+ as a catalyst for resolving issues of forest access and tenure while some saw REDD+ as free money for the government with little accountability. Key challenges were attributed to the lack of capacity and knowledge on REDD+ mechanism and its implications for decision making at the national and international levels.

Similarly, Somorin et al. (2013) carried out a study on the challenges of designing a governance structure for a REDD+ in Cameroon. The study highlighted a number of implementation challenges that range from the coordinating dynamics of the MINEPDED–MINFOF relationship to defining the roles of other actors, particularly civil society and the private sector; from the process of designing institutional rules and guidelines for tenure, rights and safeguards to building on the experiences of existing governance tools for REDD+ effectiveness; and from addressing the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation to delivering the co-benefits of poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and economic development.

The Cameroon R-PP (GoC 2013) identifies agricultural expansion, illegal timber exploitation, fuel wood collection, and industrial logging as main causes of deforestation. In order to protect its forests from these eminent threats and promote good forest governance, Cameroon considers FLEGT to constitute one of the bases of forest governance on which REDD+ will rely.
In a comparative study on of the interactions between FLEGT Voluntarily Partnership Agreement (VPA) and REDD+ regimes, Tegegne et al. (2014) argued that the implementation of the VPA is expected to result in positive behavioral change among forest actors that will in turn have positive impacts on REDD+. The study also showed that the REDD+ process of Cameroon is building on FLEGT VPA as a policy model. The study noted that multi-stakeholder consultation process of the VPA has served as a model for the design of a similar strategy for REDD+; the design and elements of SESA under REDD+ strategy will be based on relevant elements under VPA; and that information sharing experience of VPA process could inform the design of a communication strategy for REDD+.

3.4. Benefit Sharing in Cameroon

At the moment no specific nationally adopted REDD+ benefit sharing scheme exist in Cameroon. Awono et al. (2014) noted that local communities in Nomedjoh, Nkolenyeng, Bova, Bomboko, Muelli, Likombe and Mapanja generally perceived benefits of REDD+ through increase in local incomes, adequate compensation for lost forest income successful protection of forest areas and reduce threats from climate change. However, no consensuses exist in any of these communities in terms of a unanimous choice of benefit sharing formula. Some community members prefer household benefit sharing approach rather than community approach which involves community development projects. In Nkolenyeng, about 80% of the households interviewed approved of the village development plan and the forest conservation initiative in

return for payment. In Nomedjoh on the other hand, community members rejected benefit sharing arrangements because the project proposed building houses for leaders whose authority is contested. Moreover it is hard to prove that the project would benefit everyone. This general impression is rooted in the action of some external elites who are reportedly attempting to convince villagers to start timber extraction without respecting the conservation plan.

A study on the assessment of the potential benefits of REDD+ in the Akak community forest by Essomba et al. (2013) noted that key benefits were rather linked to the protection of Ntem's watershed through agroforestry interventions, biodiversity conservation and socio-economic benefits especially alternative economic activities such as beekeeping, ecotourism, and fish farming.

Chia et al. (2013) examined 14 research papers published up to 2011 on benefit sharing in forests management regimes in Cameroon and assessed their compatibility with REDD+ exigencies. They found out that about 86% of all the studies focused on equity in benefit sharing and there were huge failures in terms of sharing benefits between the state, regional, local governments and communities (vertical) and between communities, within communities and/or between households in a community (horizontal).

Cerutti et al. (2010) analyzed logging concessions and the redistributing forest-related monetary benefits to local governments and they found that there is limited investment in public infrastructures such as health, education, and road construction; limited transparency of the distribution process of the area fee paid by logging companies; and Mayors are often used as political scapegoats and blamed for mismanagement, lack of accountability and continuous rural poverty. Oyono et al. (2005) note that the imbalances identified in access to forest resource and forest financial benefits in Cameroon are embedded in policies, laws, regulations and orders enacted by the state since the colonial period. The study recommended that forest royalties should be directly and fairly given to local communities themselves. Moreover, efforts are needed in the design of transparent and participatory mechanisms aiming at (i) putting an end to impunity surrounding the 'forestry channel' that goes through a very long chain from ministries to local communities, passing through logging companies, communes, sous-prefets and village management committees; (ii) enacting laws and regulations based on the obligation of downward accountability at all the levels of the 'forestry channel'; and (iii) promoting and enhancing good decision management. In another study at the local level on the use and misuse of benefits from forest income in Cameroon, Lescuyer et al. (2008) found that a significant part of annual forest fees (AFF) does not reach communities. Out of nine villages surveyed, three were unable to justify the complete use of their AFF and three add additional incomes to realize community development projects. The study recommended the need to build and strengthen the capacities of communities in order to guarantee community development.

Based on a national workshop on social safeguards and the rights of indigenous peoples in the REDD+ process of Cameroon, civil society organizations (Fobissie et al. 2012) recommended several points for the government, project proponents and local communities to improve benefit sharing related issues in REDD+ projects: (i) A proportion of the benefits should be reserved for IPLCs including gender considerations while another proportion should be used to manage and improve implementation of project activities; (ii) Adoption of a business model that seeks to

improve project management, strengthens local capacities, and focuses on both wood and non-wood products; (iii) Collective development projects should take into account some individual interests such as medication for the elderly; (iv) With the generally low deforestation rate of the Congo Basin forest of Cameroon, payments should take into account not only forest carbon but also the wide range of non-carbon benefits; (v) The harmonization of legal and regulatory frameworks for different logging, conservation, mining, agricultural and other natural resource concessions with a view to compensate and contribute to the development of communities adjacent to these concessions; and (vi) While direct individual cash distribution is very appealing for many community members, community development projects such as pipe born water, schools, community halls etc. that benefit the entire community has so far been the most successful benefit approach with the least potentials for conflicts within communities.

From a legal institutional perspective, a study by Assembe-Mvondo et al. (2013) on the assessment of and lessons on the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of benefit-sharing schemes under large-scale agriculture in Cameroon concluded with recommendation for improving REDD+ benefit distribution mechanism in Cameroon. They include: (i) A systematic inventory of the area of land in the national domain that has already been occupied and the one granted or leased under contracts; (ii) Payments of land rents by all operators in the national domain as prescribed by national regulations; (iii) Setting of minimum and maximum prices of the value of a hectare of land; (iv) Complete regulatory provisions and statutory instrument to fix prices and terms of institutional redistribution and avoiding bureaucratic channels that can induce transaction costs; (v) Launch competitive bid solicitations for the exploitation of land in the national domain that is open to potential investors; and (vi) Publication all information relating to the occupation or use of land in the national domain. From a socio-economic perspective, Karsenty et al. (2014) argue that benefit sharing "is a traditional social issue when an economic activity involves several partners, not primarily a legal one – even though the law can provide for mandatory distribution".

Past experiences show that a REDD+ benefit sharing mechanism or program in Cameroon will likely have at the national level a quota approach to benefit sharing and a very context specific approach at the local community level (Fobissie et al. 2014). In a comparative study on REDD+ policy approaches in Cameroon and DRC, Fobissie et al. (2014) suggested three types of key actors or institutions in the sharing of REDD+ benefits and will likely include the local communities, the private sector and the government who are all involved in large scale REDD+ implementation. After receiving their share at the macro scale as a community and based on their performances, the study argue that the real tension and challenge related to REDD+ benefit sharing may likely emanate from the local or micro scale plagued by elite influence and capture, inequitable benefit sharing as previously documented by other authors (Chia et al. 2013) and dominated in many cases by customary rules. At the end, two main approaches are emerging: community benefit and individual benefits.

4. What is currently happening on the ground?

Different REDD+ projects aiming at performance-based payments exist in Cameroon. Most of these projects are at the very beginning and hence can provide very little or no useful real-life experience on the implantation of REDD+ social and governance safeguards. For this reason, this paper focuses on two of the most advanced community REDD+ and forest carbon projects in Cameroon. These projects use the Plan Vivo methodology, are implemented by CED and WWF, and are advanced in the context of Cameroon.

4.1. Payments for Environmental Services (PES) Project

The project "Community Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Project in the Congo Basin (Community PES project)" was initiated in 2009 and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF). The project is being implemented in Nkolenyeng (Figure 3) and Nomedjoh (Figure 4) and coordinated by the Center for Environment and Development. At the initial stage, Bioclimate and the Rain Forest Foundation-UK helped in managing the project, while the Institute of Agricultural Reserahc for Deevelopment (IRAD) and the Centre de Coopération International en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement CIRAD provided extension services and support to farmers. The general goal of the Community PES Project is to assist communities in the project sites to protect forest resources by finding ways to integrate payments for ecosystem services (PES) and community forest management. The primary goal of the project is to maintain and enhance existing forest cover and carbon stocks in each community and using the finance generated from the sale of carbon credits to improve livelihoods in each community (CED 2012).

According to CED (2012), the Community PES Project is being implemented in two Community Forests; the Nkolenyeng Community Forest and Nomedjoh Community Forest. The project intervention follows the Plan Vivo System and Standard. The methods for quantifying carbon stocks and carbon benefits and generating Plan Vivo Certificates were developed using a Plan Vivo Avoiding Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ADD) technical specification. Project activities carried out include: forest protection, sustainable forest use and management, sustainable agriculture and agroforestry, and sustainable and viable non-timber forest products (NTFPs) enterprises. This project has a crediting period of ten years, divided into two 5-year phases. For the first phase, the project is estimated to generate: 59,504 tCO2e of carbon benefits for Nkolenyeng Community Forest and 24,908 tCO2e for Nomedjoh Community Forest. In the second phase, the carbon benefits are estimated to be: 19,822 tCO2e for Nkolenyeng Community Forest and 194,438 tCO2e for Nomedjoh Community Forest. After each successful annual monitoring period, certificates are issued and payments made to local communities. So far, funding has been secured for the first phase (2011 to 2015).

Figure 3. Location of Nkolenyeng community forest (1,042 ha) (Source: CED 2012)

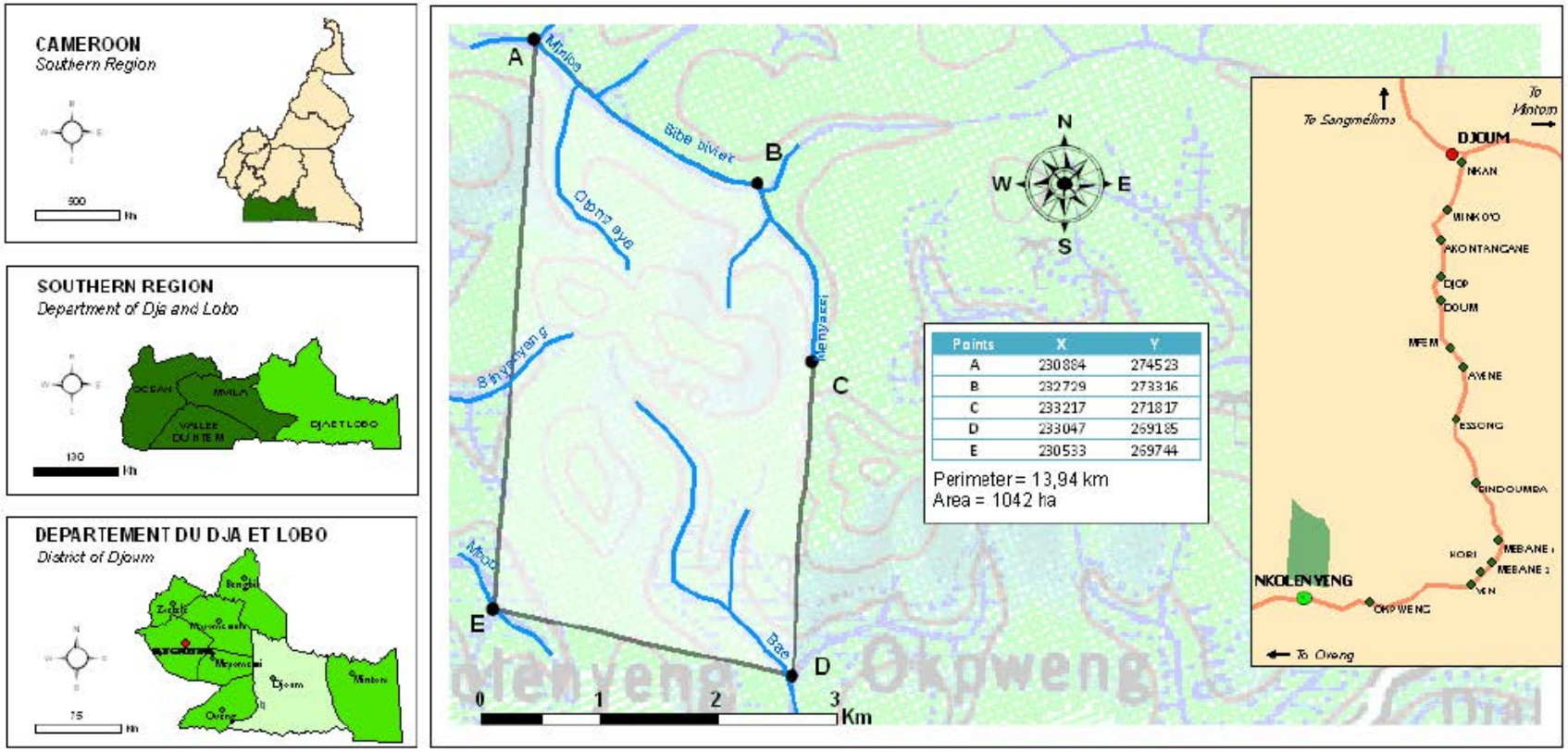
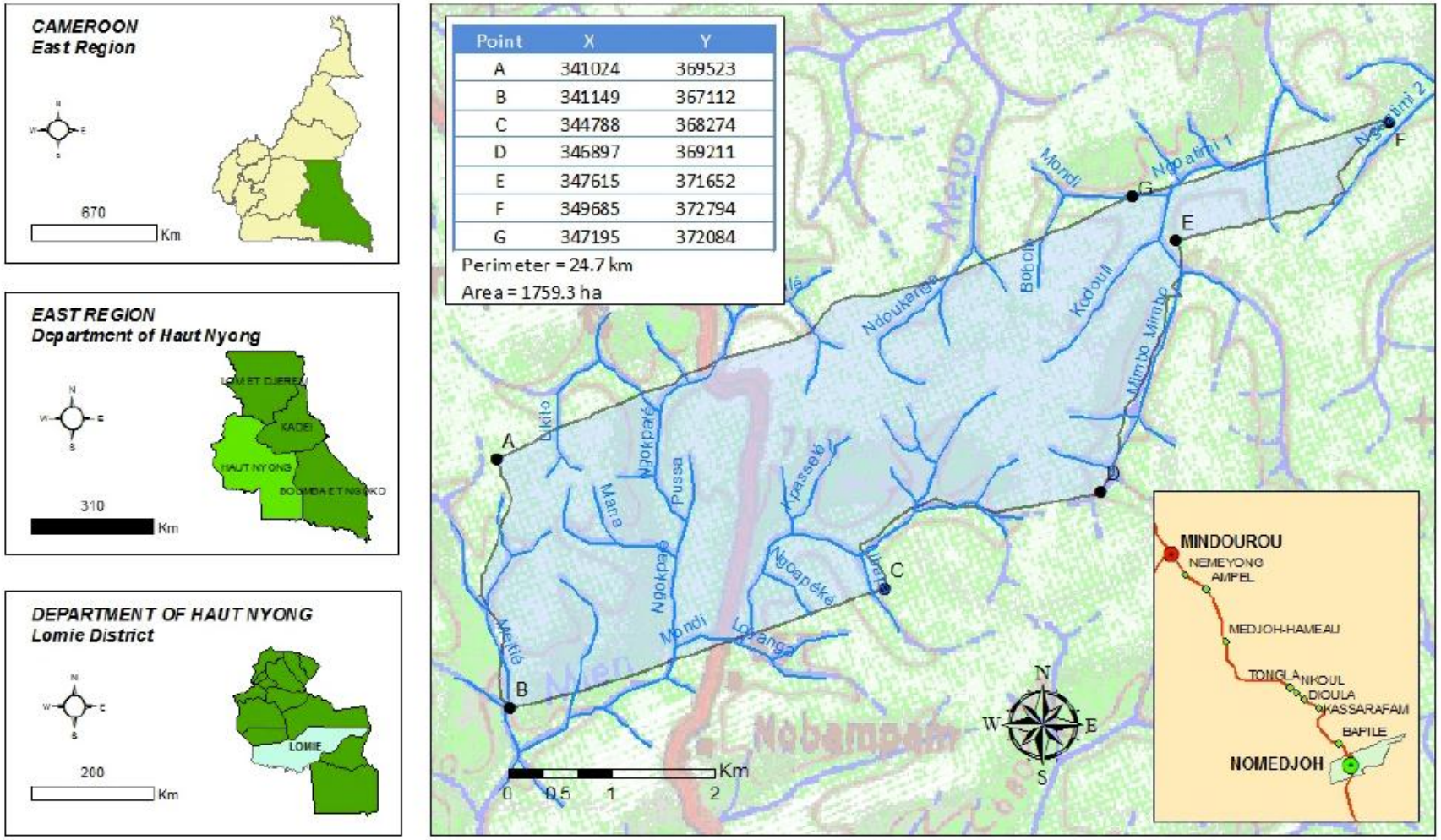


Figure 4. Location of Nomedjoh community forest (1,730 ha) (Source: CED 2012)



4.2. Ngoyla-Mintom REDD+ Project

The project“Reducing deforestation and forest degradation in Ngoyla-Mintom forest block through the implementation of sustainable integrated management in the Tri-National landscape Dja - Odzala - Minkebe (Ngoyla Mintom REDD+)” is implemented by WWF Cameroon. It is a European Union funded four year project that started in Avril 2011 and will end in March 2016. The main areas of work focus on achieving multiple social and environmental benefits as well as the transformation of the forestry sector by putting in place a land allocation plan and an integrative, participative and sustainable management plan which assures the equitable sharing of benefits in favor of IPLCs.

The project intends to support pilot Community REDD+ initiatives that link sustainable forest management to a payment mechanism for ecosystem services (Neale and Riddell 2012). Specific objectives of the community REDD+ initiatives are to conserve and increase carbon stocks and biodiversity in Ngoyla Mintom landscape (Figure 5), increase local governance and livelihoods, put in place effective monitoring systems, and use field experiences to inform national REDD+ Policy process. Based on a social and environmental evaluation (see Table 1) of community forest in the project site, four communities were selected: Messok-Messok, Lelen, Zoulabot 1, and Etekessang. Key activities in these four communities include sustainable agriculture through agroforestry and agricultural intensification; conservation of forest cover; promotion of natural regeneration; and income generating activities linked to beekeeping, aquaculture, keeping of livestock and collection of non-timber forest products (WWF 2013).

Feasibility studies conducted by Bioclimate, WWF and local NGOs (CAFT and OCBB) noted that key issues to developing PES in the Ngoyla Mintom landscape was the possibility of PES finance creating local conflict, intensification of existing social relations or creating inequalities in the communities in question, establishment of equitable benefit sharing arrangements, and improvement in local governance (Neale and Riddell 2012). So far, the four communities have mapped their forest resources through community land use planning (see Annex 3, Figure 6). A first letter of intention has been signed between the communities and the proponent – which represents the consent of the communities for implementing the project.

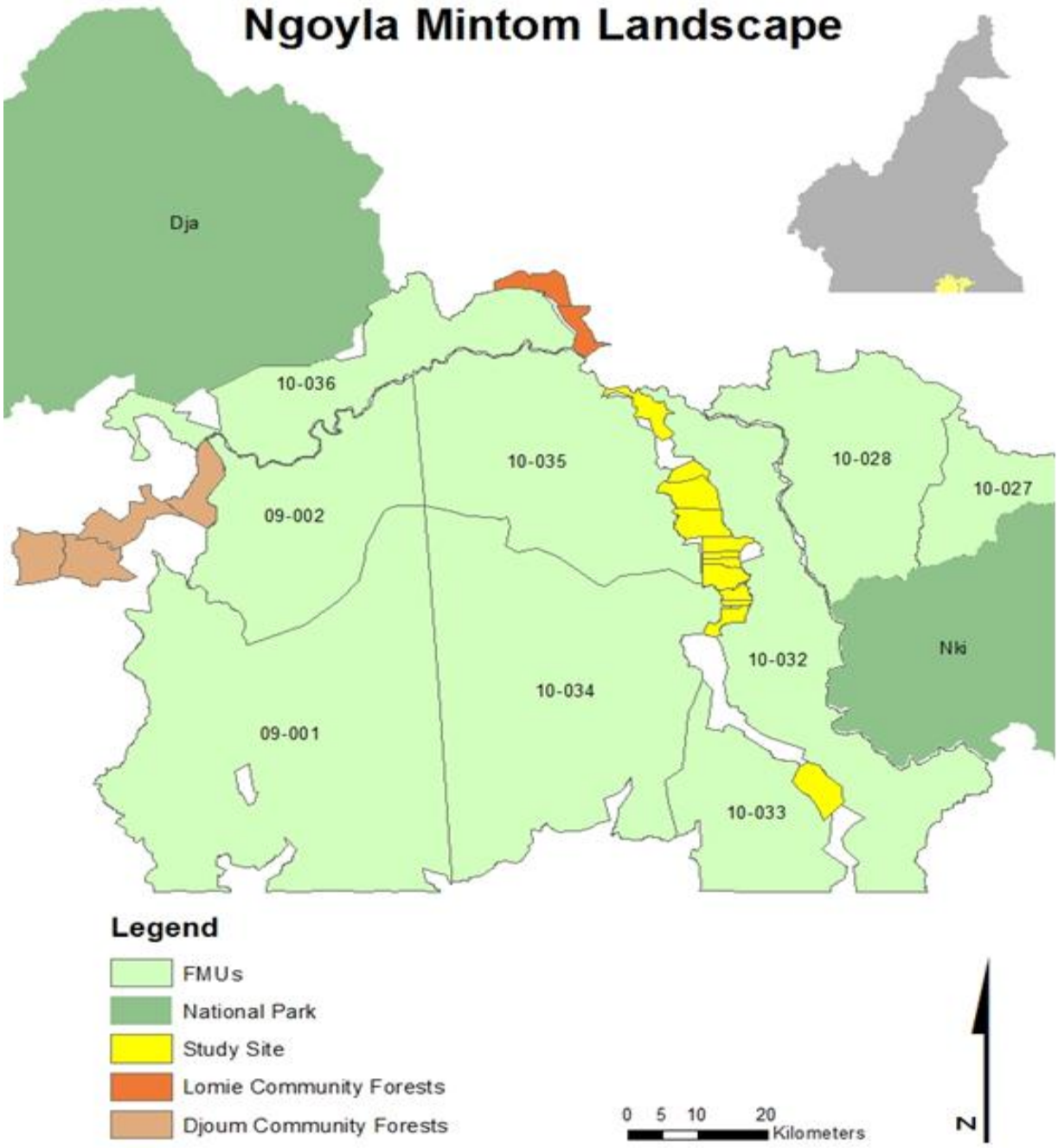


Figure 5: Location of the Ngoyla Mintom Landscape including the project sites in yellow. (Source: WWF 2013).

Table 1. Social and environmental assessment of Community Forests (Source: Neale and Riddell 2012)

Village	**DOUMZOCK**	**LAMSON**	**M. MESSOK**	**LELENE**	**NGOYLA**	**ZOULABOT**	**ETEKESS.**	**NKONDONG I**	**MENKOUOM**
Community Forest	**CODOUM**	**COVILAM**	**CODEM**	**CODEL**	**CODENVI**	**COBABA**	**CODEVIE**	**COVINKO I**	**COBAM**
Security of tenurial instruments	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Community identification with, and commitment to, forest	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Community Leadership	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Extent of forest degradation and deforestation in the community forest	➡	➡	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Examples of past projects	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Group initiative	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	➡	↓
Social inclusiveness and participation in decision-making	➡	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	➡	↑
Financial management and administration experience	➡	➡	↑	➡	↑	➡	➡	↓	↓
Experience with local timber extraction companies	↓	↓	↓	↓	➡	↓	↓	↓	↓
Availability of land for PES activities	↓	↓	➡	➡	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

5. Key lessons and recommendations from the field

5.1. FPIC and Local Participation

It is not possible to get a definite yes or full consent of an entire community. A majority (at least 70%) of community members in all the 6 project sites gave their consent while a smaller percentage were not at all convinced by the goal and associated community benefits of REDD+ projects. REDD+ as noted by one community member "is not the only land use activity. Some of us are interested in the logging of our community forest". Two common ways of getting consent of IPLCs that were visited was either through a progressive more inclusive step by step consent as the project progresses - from a community perspective or a consent given by a cross section of the elders and community members of which the project proponent has to continue to sensitize the other community members who are still in doubt of the potential benefits of the REDD+ project. In Lelen for example, the local population gave their consent by signing the first letter of intention after sensitization meetings. The sensitization meeting helped the community to understand the issues and it motivated them to engage in the process. A majority of the population was interested in the project. The second letter of intention has experience some delay due to the slow paste of activities and expected benefits.

Local NGOs and sensitization on FPIC process. Communities in Zoulabot I and Ndimako indicated that ASBAK - a local indigenous people NGO, was involved in the FPIC process in their village and helped them to better understand the objectives of the project and their rights and expected obligations and benefits. The FPIC process conducted by ASBAK encouraged the local communities to send their first letter of intention to the project proponent to mark their acceptation of the project. However, many communities also indicated that the intention letters does not in practical terms mean that all the community members have agreed to the project idea in their communities. So a continuous sensitization and involvement of communities to get the consent of more than 90% of the community members may take from two to five years in the 6 communities. The sensitization should include all community members about the risks and opportunities and individual roles and benefit not just for the elders, rich and powerful but also for women, the poorest, youths and marginalized groups. In reality, the cost of the expected long sensitization process may be far beyond the allocated project budget. REDD+ project should therefore identify this needs and integrate them early enough in the conception phase of projects.

Field presence of REDD+ project staff and trust building. Permanent physical presence of project proponent and regular sensitization activities is important in trust-building between communities and project proponents. It could play a positive role in getting increasing community consent and acceptability of the project. It also provides opportunities for follow up and more targeted guidance over time. The trust building could also lead to the initial FPIC activities such as participatory identification and mapping of community resources as well as training on use of Global Positioning System (GPS), management, agriculture etc. As a result, REDD+ projects could easily gain the favor and consent of communities.

REDD+ and PES are new ideas for many communities. There is a lot of misinformation and a need to provide more correct and realistic information about REDD+ and PES. As REDD+ proponents visited some of the communities for introduction and explanation of their mission,

suspicion grew as some villagers thought carbon was a precious liquid or substance that the REDD+ project proponents were smuggling out of the community forest with the complicity of some community members. There are cases where community members refused to participate in the FPIC process mainly due to misinformation about climate change and REDD+, ignorance of their potential roles and benefits from REDD+ and general negligence of new ideas and initiatives around them as well as their personal will not to participate at all since participation is in many cases voluntary and not obligatory for all community members. Misinformation could render the FPIC participatory process difficult and cause many community members to stay away from the FPIC process making it difficult to get the consent of many community members. In some communities, doubts and suspicion persisted owing to failure of wood exploitation and commercialization and rumors that the community forest was in the process of being sold. And to make things more difficult to get an inclusive consent, the participation of youths and other marginalized community members remain discouraging in some communities with a potentially catastrophic consequence in the long term implementation of REDD+ project in most of these communities were life expectancy is probably lower than Cameroon's national average.

Increasing participation of women. In 2 out of 6 communities visited, men seem to be very selfish and would not allow a woman to participate in training opportunities especially those that are conducted in faraway places with possibilities of free transportation, meals, hotels and per diems. The trend is however promising in 4 out of the 6 communities visited and the participation of women was fairly balanced. In some cases in the 4 communities, women are in control and are involved in managing community actions in the REDD+ project activities which range from agriculture, conflict resolution, monitoring to benefit sharing.

The risk of full community participation. The notion of full community participation could reduce the effectiveness of the management of the project. While some community members are very willing to participate and implement the project, others with often very limited interest are merely dragged into the project and they constitute part of the problem to manage and implement REDD+ / PES projects. Instead of fostering full and effective participation, an option for consideration is to rather promote voluntary involvement and participation in project activities. In this way, the projects can really on those who really want to be part of the project.

5.2. Land Tenure

Customary rights and collective management for REDD+. Community forests are being superimposed on customary property rights that may lead to tenure ambiguity and contestations between statutory and customary views on tenure rights (Awono et al. 2014). Based on customary rules, many families in Nkolenyeng are contesting and claiming their family land right over collective rights imposed by community forests and now REDD+.

Land tenure situation and community REDD+. Even though there are some incompatibility between customary rights and collective management for REDD+, most of the community members still feel that the land tenure situation can accommodate REDD+ in the sense that the government officially recognizes the communities as the "owners" of the community forests. Other nearby lands are however still officially belonging to the government and communities

have no say on these nearby lands. Land use planning in this case is expected to be strictly done by the communities and within community forest lands.

Land use planning and REDD+ implementation. Community land use planning and zoning helps many communities to map their own resources and classify them into different land use categories. Common categories include primary, secondary and degraded forest areas. The primary forest area is reserved for conservation and is often the most intact forest areas which in many cases contain the highest concentration of forest carbon stocks coupled with the presence of important big mammals such as elephants and gorillas. It was common for communities in most of the six field sites to have classified their degraded y forests into areas for cultivation of crops such as cocoyams, cassava and plantains and for cocoa agroforestry farming.

Changing community perception and actions on land use planning. In the beginning of REDD+ projects, land use planning and zoning is commonly perceived by community members to have little impact on the space for their farming activities. This perception often presents no risks in terms of agricultural productivity and food security of the communities. In effect, as time passed and project activities are rolled out for about two to three years, communities may start to expand their farming activities. Communities may also turn to see the land use planning, zoning and classification of forest areas under the project as a limiting factor for agricultural expansion and a potential future threat to their dependence on forest resources and general way of life. Some community members may become uneasy to farm on defined space and thus caused leakages in the project as they would engage in felling trees in areas reserved for conservation. This is due to the fact that most of the community members are used to using their lands freely, so it proved difficult for them to stay on the same farming space within their forest landscape. Some community members may even feel that their rights are curtailed and their farming activities limited. While agricultural intensification could be proposed as an alternative practice within limited farming space, its adoption by community members and effectiveness remain questionable in community managed forest landscapes full of abundant natural resources for community consumption. In this regards, land use planning could prevent leakages by reserving ample space for projected future activities by the communities.

PES and REDD+ are alternative land use practices to community logging. The history of forest and other natural resources utilization, management and benefits has a key role in influencing current and future community land use practices. In Nkolenyeng community for example, the idea of PES came at a time when wood exploitation in the community forest had failed and left many community members very bitter, frustrated and helpless. The poor experience of exploitation left villagers divided with suspicions of one another as they failed to get the money they had expected from logging activities. “Exploitation of our community forest for logging did not benefit most people and so many were disillusioned, they said”. “Not everyone was involved in exploitation and so some people felt excluded. Moreover, exploitation entails a lot of physical and paper work and only those involved in the exploitation benefitted (Resource person from Nkolenyeng)”. More recently in Nomedjoh, the Baka community decided to go for commercial logging activities and they learned a bitter lesson similar to the case of Nkolenyeng. It was even more difficult for the villager, dominated by illiterates, to follow the paper works which at the end made it impossible for them to reap any benefit from logging activities. They have learned their lessons and are now more than ready to embrace REDD+ or

PES as an alternative land use practice to preserving and at the same time benefit from their forests.

5.3. REDD+ Institutions and Local Governance

Functioning of existing and new institutions: In many communities, it would be common to find at least two different institutions that operate in parallel with different mandates as well as some common functions. Before the coming of PES or REDD+ projects, communities already have local institutions such as the Community Forest Bureau or the Council of the Wise made mostly of elders and community leaders. On top of these existing local institutions, most REDD or PES projects create a project management committee that works strictly for the project. Community members in Nkolenyeng disclosed that decisions regarding their project are taken in a general assembly of AFHAN who manages the project at the local level and ensures that things are properly done. Apart from the community project committee (AFHAN), the Council of the Wise helps to ensure a smooth functioning of project by handling issues relating to conflict prevention, management and resolution. While the project committees are within the mandate of the project, the Council of the Wise are more permanent and handles other issues beyond REDD+ or PES projects. Similarly, there are two institutional organs for the management of the project activities in Lelen: the Community Forest Bureau and the project management committee. The former is in charge of forest related conflict prevention and resolution amongst the population while the latter is in charge of direct project management issues at the community level. In Etekessan, there are also two bureaus: one is CODEVI Village Development committee and the other is the Community forest committee in charge of all forest conservation issues.

Strengthening community cohesion. Communities REDD+ or PES projects have catalyzed community members to be united around a common cause for the development of the community. According to one elder in Lelen community, “before the coming of REDD+, the community had a tradition of working individually but now the solidarity and unity has increased and people are now working together and exchanging ideas”. Communities are now obliged to hold meetings regularly, work in groups and regard issues of common interest beyond REDD+ and PES. As consequence, the Baka indigenous people and the Bantu communities in Dimako and Lelen are now closely working together on many common issues.

Capacity building and institutional performance. Bringing about lasting change in impoverished rural community settings is always a long-term process that needs the right institutional support and capacity. Institutional capacity strengthening program needs to be developed and implemented not only at the beginning of REDD+/PES projects but also during the implementation of the project over a considerable number of years. Community members need more training on management and other subjects related to the effective execution of REDD+ and PES projects (Bioclimate 2014).

Understanding roles and responsibilities. A very good understanding of the project idea, vision and expectations by the communities is fundamentally linked to their involvement, and the respect of their roles, commitments and responsibilities. Communities’ may say yes when they mean “no” or may not be fully ready for a particular task or responsibility. To ensure maximum respect of roles and responsibilities by community members, one local resource person in

Nkolenyeng suggested that "REDD+ and PES projects should look for people who are willing to be part of the project, are capable, available, self-aware of the task ahead and above all are up-to-the tasks they are required to perform". Otherwise, community members who cannot meet up to their commitments and responsibilities may block and frustrate project implementation. And the frustration is likely to increase when project proponents fail to continue follow-up, sensitization, capacity building and trainings to meet some of the existing and emerging challenges. REDD+ or PES project proponents therefore need to put aside sufficient financial and human resources to continuously help communities meet their tasks otherwise their performances may be very bad – which would also mean very poor community payments and benefits that may lead to the overall failure of the project goals.

5.4. Benefits and Distribution of Benefits

Community benefit-sharing formula and challenges. The quota of community benefits in REDD+ projects would likely not be the key issue of concern. It may be pretty straight forward and clearly indicated in the project document and will be based on community performance. We must also recognize that in many cases of REDD+ or PES projects, communities may not be the only actors - we have the project proponents (or REDD+ investor) and/or government ministries especially when the project covers government owned lands. Whatever be the nature of the project and actors involved, benefit sharing at the community level would generally happen in three ways: (i) through performance-based cash payments targeting households and individuals who have accomplished specific tasks; (ii) Community development projects targeting the entire community members and (iii) and culturally-based benefits tailored to the special needs of community leaders, elders or handicaps with special needs. The real challenge would be for communities to manage their funds and the conflicts associated with benefit sharing process in an effective, just and transparent manner. This is because payments and benefit sharing could easily become problematic when community management committees and group leaders are not able to properly handle project funds. It may in such situations be common to have cases where some community members are either unable to account for money used or unwilling to refund money received.

Payments for performance should consider both carbon and non-carbon outcomes. For many communities, REDD+ is not just carbon, so community REDD+ performance should not be limited to carbon measurement and verification. REDD+ performance should cover in many cases biodiversity conservation, diverse livelihood activities, reduction of vulnerability and adaptation and local governance issues. All these should be captured during measurement of performance, payments and benefit sharing.

Recognizing and rewarding individual performance. Working in groups should only play a coordination role for a better project implementation and not group payments with equal amounts among group members with different levels of performance or results. Many hard working individuals would feel cheated by working harder and earning the same as some lazy group members. Individuals within groups should therefore be encouraged to work and realize individual tasks rather than insisting on community and group work. In this circumstance, the motivation of individuals is higher and their success would likely encourage others to increase their efforts to do better.

REDD+ projects should start with community development projects. Immediate short term community benefits are crucial in keeping the momentum for the long term goals. REDD+ and PES projects should anticipate the financing of some priority urgent community development projects. We cannot talk about community benefits in two, five or ten years when communities don't have clean drinking water, school buildings for their children or when people are sick and there is no community health center or doctor. Moreover, most of the elders will not leave to see the next five or ten years. In the Zoulabot I community for example, the members stressed that the benefit sharing mechanism must allocate sufficient or substantial funds for them to immediately construct classrooms before the school year begins. For other communities like in Nkolenyeng, "seeing-is-believing". Community development projects such as the electrification of Nkolenyeng was a very useful move that motivated many community members to get involve in REDD+ / PES project. Such projects must however be strictly tailored to the priority needs of the communities and design in a way that takes into account cultural and community-led long term management issues.

6. Concluding Remarks

Cameroon REDD+ process, strategy, programs and projects can benefit from past and existing experiences to effectively address social and governance safeguards. The general findings in this paper show that experiences on forestry and REDD+ social and governance safeguards in Cameroon are not positive. Many issues of limited participation and consultation, land tenure insecurity, equitable sharing of benefits, effective institutions and good governance remain to be sufficiently addressed both at the local and national levels. Even with all these shortcomings, the two case study projects by WWF and CED provide opportunities for continued learning – given that REDD+ process is still evolving and its implementation is at the very early stage.

A successful implementation of REDD+ social and governance safeguards will not come easily and moving forward will entail the involvement of multiple stakeholders to play or lead various roles at different appropriate levels. At the national level, the government agency in charge of REDD+ should use the generated lessons to inform the development of national REDD+ strategy, policy and enabling REDD+ environment in Cameroon. REDD+ project proponents and investors should play their part by working closely with national REDD+ secretariat and local communities to ensure maximum compliance of social and governance standards of REDD+ activities. At the local level, the capacities of communities should be strengthened by proponents and the government including adequate sensitization on the challenges and opportunities of REDD+. Moreover, community members should respect their roles and responsibilities and payments should be based on their performances. Civil society organizations that in many cases are very pro-community could play the role of an independent and just watchdog to ensure that the implementation of social and governance safeguards and any emerging agreement between proponents and communities are well respected by both parties.

References

Alemagi, D., Hajjar, R., Tchoundjeu, Z. and Kozak, R. A. 2013. Cameroon's environmental impact assessment decree and public participation in concession-based forestry: An exploratory assessment of eight forest-dependent communities. Journal of Sustainable Development, 6(10):8–24.

Assembe-Mvondo, S and Oyono, P.R. 2004. An assessment of social mngotiation as a tool of local management: A case study of the Dimako Council Forest, Cameroon. Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research 19(4):78-84.

Assembe-Mvondo, S., Brockhaus, M. and Lescuyer. G. 2013. Assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of benefit sharing schemes under large- scale agriculture: Lessons from land fees in Cameroon. European Journal of Development Research. doi:10.1057/ejdr.2013.27

Assembe-Mvondo, S., Colfer, C.J.P., Brockhaus, M. and Tsanga, R. 2014. Review of the legal ownership status of national lands in Cameroon: A more nuanced view. Development Studies Research Journal 1(1):148-160.

Awono, A., Somorin, O.A., Eba'a Atyi, R. and Levang, P. 2014. Tenure and participation in local REDD+ projects: insights from southern Cameroon. Environmental Science and Policy 35:76–86.

Bandiaky, S. and Tiani, A.M. 2010. Gender representation and participation in decentralized forest management: Case studies from Cameroon and Senegal. Governing Africa's Forests in a Globalized World. L.A. German, A. Karsenty and A.M. Tiani. London, Earthscan: 144–159.

Neale, E. and Riddell, M. 2012. Ngoyla Mintom Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Project Scoping study report, Bioclimate Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.

Bioclimate 2014. Community Payments for Ecosystem Services in Cameroon Lessons and opportunities for REDD+. Bioclimate Policy Brief 1. Bioclimate, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK http://www.brdt.org/images/pdf/bioclimate/policy_briefs/Community_PES_Policy_Brief_1.pdf

Brown, H.C.P. 2011. Gender, climate change and REDD+ in the Congo Basin forests of Central Africa. International Forestry Review 13(2):163–176.

Brown, H.C.P., Smit, B., Somorin, O.A., Sonwa, D. and Nkem, J.N. 2011. Institutional perceptions of opportunities and challenges of REDD+ in Congo Basin. Journal of Environment and Development 20(4):381–404.

CED 2012. Community PES Community Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the Congo Basin: Plan Vivo Project Design Document (PDD). Yaoundé Cameroon,

CED 2013. A Proposal by traditional rulers on land tenure reforms in the rural areas of Cameroon. Yaoundé, Cameroon: CED.

Cerutti, P. O., Lescuyer, G., Assembe Mvondo, S., and Tacconi, L. 2010. The challenges of redistributing forest-related monetary benefits to local governments: a decade of logging area fees in Cameroon. International Forestry Review 12:130-138.

Chhatre, A. and Agrawal, A. 2009. Trade-offs and synergies between carbon storage and livelihood benefits from forest commons. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science PNAS 106(42):17667–17670.

Chia, E.L., Tiani, A.M. and Sonwa, D. 2013. The state of research on effectiveness and equity (2Es) in forests management regimes in Cameroon and its relevance for REDD+. Environment and Natural Resources Research 3(4):92-105.

Dkamela, G.P. 2011. The context of REDD+ in Cameroon: drivers, actors and institutions. Occasional Paper 57. CIFOR, Bogor.

Essomba, E., Amougou, J.A. and Mbianda, F. 2013. Assessing Cameroon REDD+ potentials through a participative method: Case study of Akak community forest. International Journal of Geoinformatics 9(1):19-29.

Fobissie, B.K. Essomba, E.P. Sonne, N. Ndobe, S.N. and Retana, V. 2012. Social Safeguards and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the REDD+ Process in Cameroon: Lessons from experiences in Natural Resources Management; WWF and Centre for Environment and Development: Yaoundé, Cameroon, 2012.

Fobissie, K. Alemagi. D. and Minang, P. 2014. REDD+ Policy Approaches in the Congo Basin: A Comparative Analysis of Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Forests 5: 2400-2424

Freudenthal, E., Nnah, S. and Kenrick, J. 2011. REDD and Rights in Cameroon: A Review of the Treatment of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Policies and Projects; Rights, Forests and Climate Briefing Series Forest Peoples Program: Moreton-in-Marsh, UK.

Government of Cameroon (GoC). Cameroon Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP); Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF): Washington, DC, USA, 2013.

Karsenty, A. 2007. Overview of industrial forest concessions and concession-based industry in Central and West Africa and considerations of alternatives. Washington DC: Rights and Resources Initiative Group.

Karsentya, A., Vogel, A., Castell, F. 2014. Carbon rights, REDD+ and payments for environmental services. Environmental Science and Policy 35:20–29.

Larson, A.M., Brockhaus, M., Sunderlin, W.D., Duchelle, A., Babon, A., Dokken, T., … Huynh, T.-B. 2013. Land tenure and REDD+: The good, the bad and the ugly. Global Environmental Change 23:678-689.

Lescuyer, G., Mbarga, H.N., and Logo, P.B. 2008. Use and misuse of forest income by rural communities in Cameroon. Forests, Trees and Livelihoods 18:291-304.

Logo, B. 1994. A qui profite l'exploitation forestière à l'Est-Cameroun? LaVoix du Paysan 33: 9-10.

MINEPDED 2014. Operational guidelines for obtaining free, prior and informed consent: Including principles, criteria and indicators. MINEPDED, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Oyono, P. R., Kouna, C. and Mala, W. 2005. Benefits of forests in Cameroon. Global structure, issues involving access and decision-making hiccoughs. Forest Policy and Economics 7:357-368.

Savaresi, A. 2012. REDD+ and Human Rights: Addressing Synergies between International Regimes. Ecology and Society 18(3):5.

Schwartz, B., Hoyle, D. and Nguiffo, S. 2012. Emerging trends in land use conflicts in Cameroon: Overlapping natural resource permits threaten protected areas and foreign direct investments. Yaoundé, Cameroon: WWF.

Somorin, O.A., Visseren-Hamakers, I.J., Arts, B., Sonwa, D., Tiani, A.M. 2014. REDD+ policy strategy in Cameroon: actors, institutions and governance. Environmental Science and Policy 3:87-97.

Somorin, O.A., Brown, H.C.P., Visseren-Hamakers, I.J., Sonwa, D., Arts, B. and Nkem, J.N., 2012. The Congo Basin forest in a changing climate: policy discourses on adaptation and mitigation (REDD+). Global Environmental Change 22:288–298.

Sunderlin, W., Hatcher, J., and Liddle, M., 2008. From Exclusion to Ownership? hallenges and Opportunities in Advancing Forest Tenure Reform. Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC, USA.

Tegegne, T., Ochieng, Y., Visseren-Hamakers, R.M., Lindner, I.J., Kalame, F.B. and Kanninen, M. 2014 Linking FLEGT and REDD+ to improve forest governance. Wageningen: Tropenbos International, 55, p. 18-24 7 p.

Teyssier, A. 2003. "La Régulation Foncière au Cameroun, Entre Régimes Communautaires et Aspirations Citoyennes." In Organisation Spatiale et Gestion des Ressources et des Territoires Ruraux, edited by P. Duguée et Ph. Jouve, Actes du colloque international, 25–27 février 2003. Montpellier, France: CIRAD/CNEARC, 1–10 p.

Tonye, J., Meke-Me-Ze, C. and Titi-Nwel, P. 1993. Implications of national lands legislation and customary land and tree tenure on the adoption of alley farming. Agroforestry Systems 22(2):153–160.

UNCBD and GIZ 2011. Biodiversity and Livelihoods: REDD-Plus benefits. Montreal, Canada.

UNCED (1992). Report of the United Nations conference on environment and development: Earth Summit Agenda 21. 300 p. United Nations, New York.

WWF 2013. Payment for Ecosystem services in the Ngoyla-Mintom forest block for rural communities. Plan Vivo project idea note. WWF, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

WWF 2014. Addressing safeguards in REDD+: The need for further UNFCCC guidance. WWF submission to UNFCCC SBSTA 41.

Annex 1. Cancun Safeguards and key issues

Decisions 1/CP.16 (Cancun, 2010) set seven safeguards to be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD+ activities (see Table 2). REDD+ countries like Cameroon are expected to develop Safeguard Information System (SIS) for providing information on "how the safeguards are being addressed and respected", in a manner that ensures "transparency, consistency, effectiveness and comprehensiveness". Decision 12/CP.17 (Durban, 2011) states that an SIS should provide information on how all Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected. Such information is to be periodically updated and shared through countries' national communications, and voluntarily on the UNFCCC web-based information hub. In order to receive results-based payments, decisions 9/CP.13 and 12/CP.13 (Warsaw, 2013) state that REDD+ implementing countries are to share their latest "summary of information". However, there is no specification of what type of information the summaries should contain and there is no guidance on how to actually meet the SIS requirements of transparency, consistency, effectiveness and comprehensiveness (WWF 2014).

Table 2. Cancun safeguards

Cancun safeguards	Key areas of interest for social and governance issues in Cameroon
(a) Consistency with objectives of national forest programs and relevant international convention and agreements	REDD+ institutions and governance
(b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures	REDD+ institutions and governance
(c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities	Land tenure, and benefit sharing
(d) Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders	FPIC consultation and participation
(e) Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity and enhancement of other social and environmental benefits	
(f) Actions to address the risks of reversals	
(g) Actions to reduce the displacement of emissions	

In addition to the UNFCC Cancun safeguards standards, the "Common Approach (CA)"- which provides the World Bank and other multiple Delivery Partners (DP) a common platform for risk

management and quality assurance in the REDD+ Readiness Preparation process is also used. Under the World Bank's environmental and social safeguard policies and procedures applicable to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Fund are respected by REDD+ countries especially in the Congo Basin including Cameroon. Four sets of guidelines are at the core of the Common Approach and include:

(i) FCPF Guidelines and generic Terms of Reference for Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and the associated Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

(ii) FCPF/UN-REDD Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness. Greater emphasis is put on active participation of IPLC.

(iii) FCPF Guidelines on the Disclosure of Information; expected to be disclosed 45 days prior to the signature of the relevant contract.

(iv) FCPF Guidelines for Establishing Grievance and Redress Mechanisms at the Country Level.

Annex 2. PES in Cameroon: Lessons and recommendation for REDD+ (Sources: Bioclimate 2014)

Key lessons

1. **Potential social and environmental benefits of REDD+.** If community forestry is put at the centre of the REDD+ strategy in Cameroon, it could be a way of improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Otherwise, REDD+ could be counter-productive for communities and a lost opportunity for social development.
2. **Community forestry legislation gaps and REDD+.** Important legislative gaps need to be addressed in Cameroon, including uncertainty about community ownership of forest carbon and communities' rights to benefit from voluntary markets for carbon and ecosystem services.
3. **Implementation of REDD+ at a local scale.** REDD+ actions ultimately have to happen at a local level, and community REDD+ can reinforce the social and environmental goals of decentralised resource management.
4. **Institutional development and capacity building.** Bringing about lasting change in impoverished rural community settings is always a long-term process. Community REDD+ projects and initiatives need to recognise this. Institutional capacity strengthening needs to happen at both community and local government levels.
5. **Merits of PES approaches to community REDD+.** PES can provide an alternative to logging for local communities. It can also act as a catalyst for greater community control over forest resources and improved local institutions and livelihood opportunities.
6. **PES incentives and participation.** Conventional economic opportunity cost analysis may not be useful for gauging community interest in participating in PES projects and may overstate the importance of monetary incentives. The overall package of livelihood and capacity benefits may be as important as the outright financial incentives.
7. **Carbon as a metric for community REDD+ performance.** Carbon is expensive to measure repeatedly and doing so can divert attention and resources away from activities that directly support community livelihoods. Nor does its use as an ecosystem metric lead to better monitoring and outcomes – hence it may not be the most appropriate metric for community REDD+ performance.
8. **Scaling up community REDD+.** Community REDD+ projects can be scaled up by applying a successful basic project model and making adjustments for the context in which it is to be applied.
9. **Supporting community action on REDD+.** It would be beneficial to establish a platform to support community REDD+ actions in Cameroon. This could be a forum for promoting legal reform and environmental and social safeguards, and for sharing project experiences, methods, technical tools and data.
10. **Relationship between REDD+ policy and practice.** The lack of a fully developed REDD+ policy is not a reason to pull back from experimentation, especially in the area of community REDD+. On the contrary, pilot projects are vital for seeing what works and what fails and will provide insights and innovations that can inform REDD+ policy.

Annex 3: Land uses of the WWF and CED Community REDD+ project sites

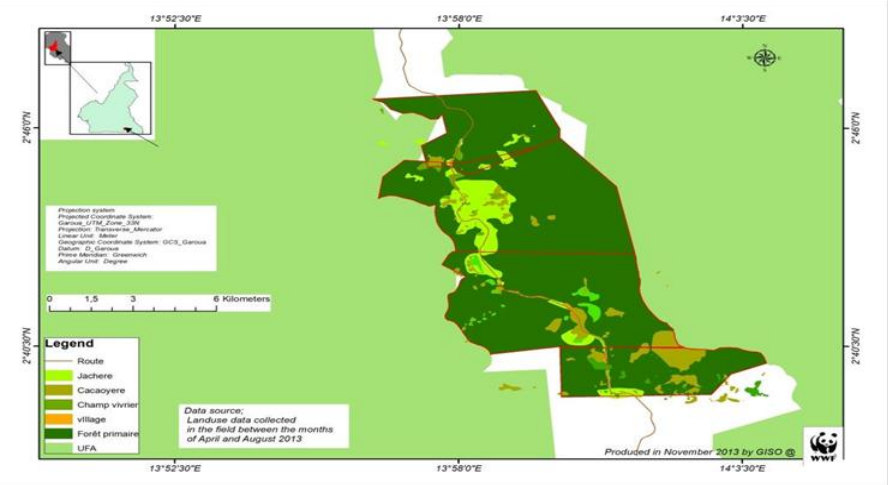


Figure 2 : Plan de situation des quatre FC du projet PES

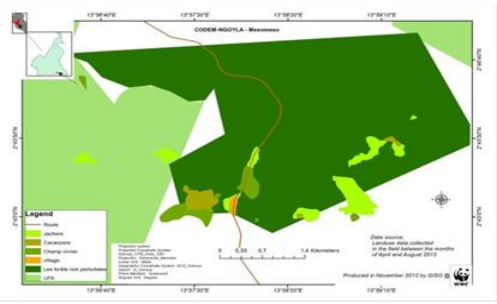


Figure 3 : Carte d'utilisation de terre de la FC de Messok-messok

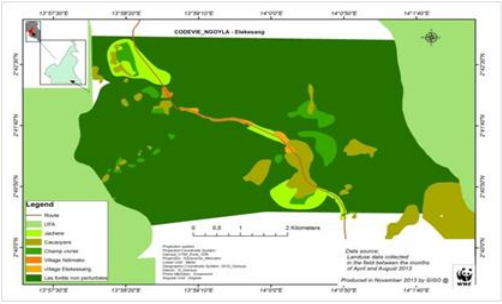


Figure 4 : Carte d'utilisation de terre de la FC d'Etékessang

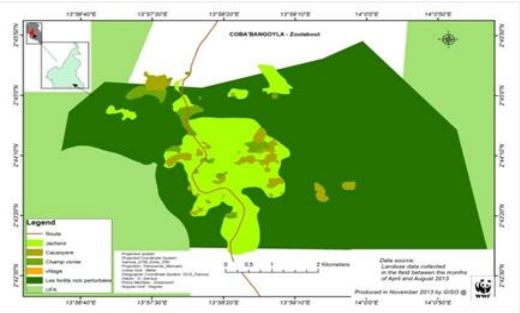


Figure 5 : Carte d'utilisation de terre de De la FC de Zoulabot I

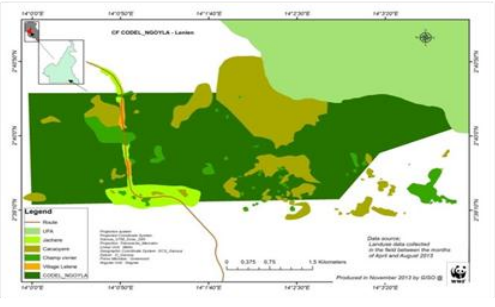


Figure 6 : Carte d'utilisation de terre de la FC de Lelene

Figure 6. Forest cover and land use types in WWF project sites (Source: WWF 2013)

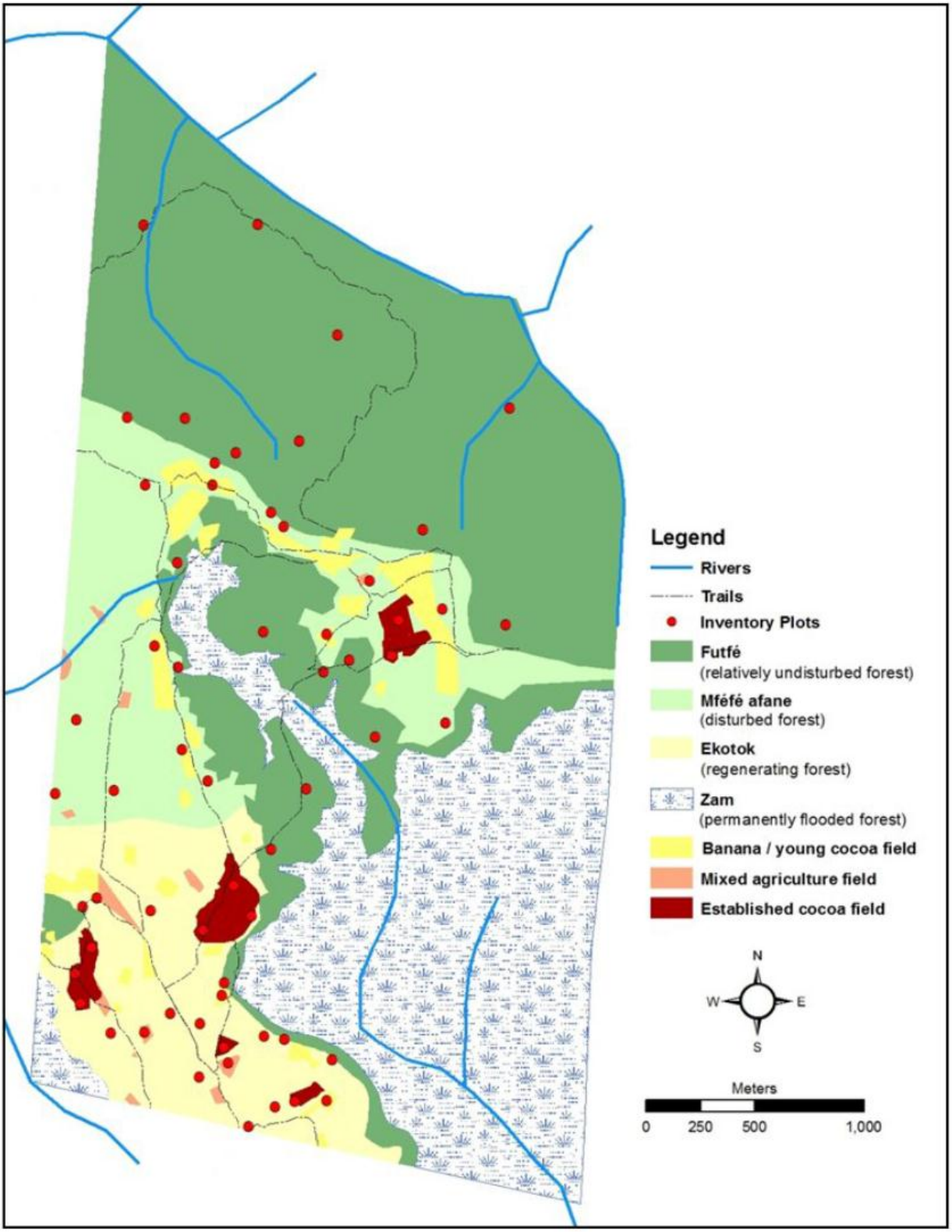


Figure 7. Nkolenyeng community forest cover and land use (Source: CED 2012)

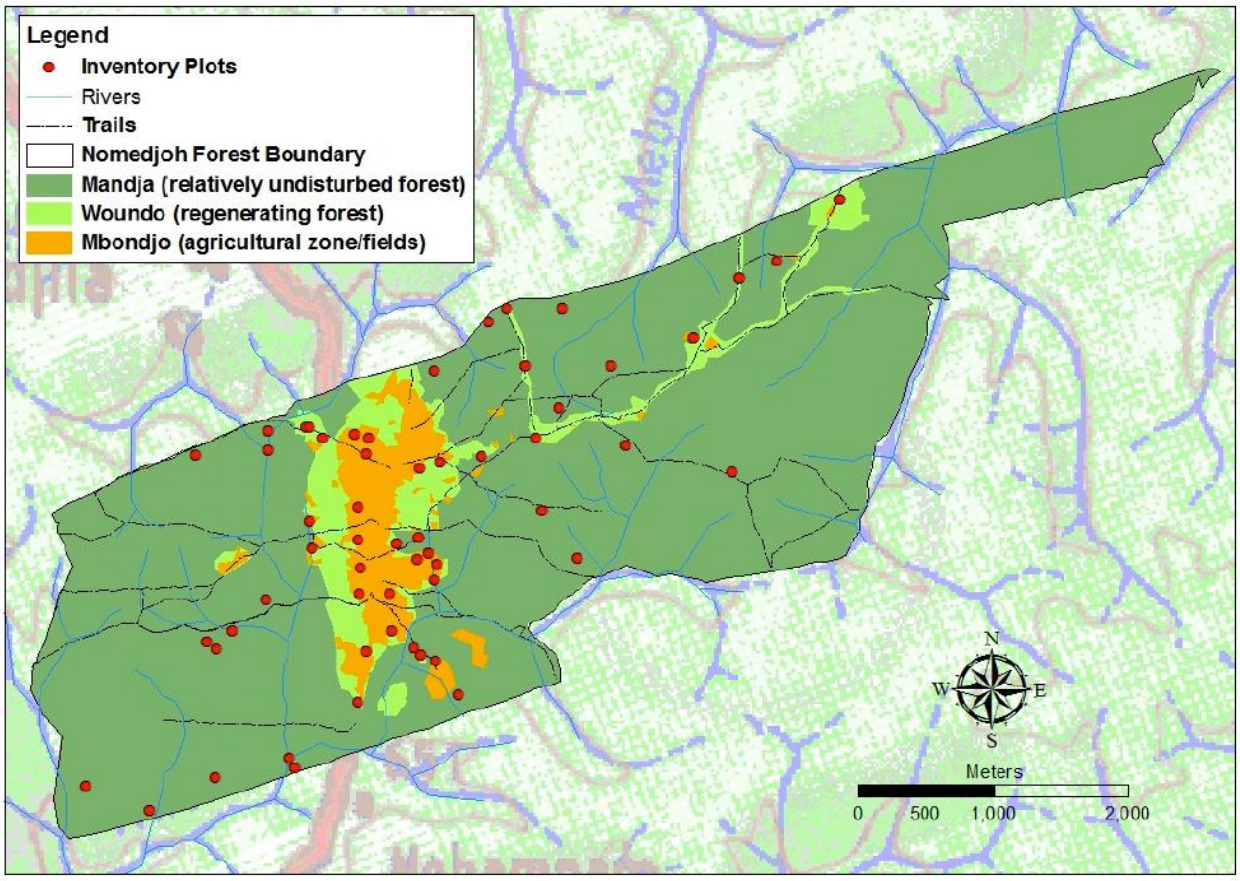


Figure 8. Nomedjoh community forest cover and land uses (Source: CED 2012)