



August 2006

Forest Governance Learning Group – Cameroon (GREG-Forêts)

WORK PLAN

1. Background on the Forest Governance Learning Group

The Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG) is an alliance of independent agencies that aims to exchange learning and develop ideas on forest governance and to help them work. Several internationally active agencies and a range of connected sub-groups in western and southern Africa, and Asia constitute the FGLG. The FGLG is coordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and, in the period February 2005 to January 2009, is financially supported by the European Union and The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹

During the inception phase of the FGLG initiative from 2003 to 2005, IIED and its partners identified the relevance and interest of Cameroon for inclusion within the FGLG initiative. Following discussions which began in 2005, and an inception report dated January 2006, the convening meeting of FGLG-Cameroon (from here on called GREG-Forêts or Groupe de Réflexion et d'Etude sur la Gouvernance des Forêts) was held on May 29, 2006. The group is comprised of government and non-government forest practitioners that focus on reflection, thinking, exchanging lessons and developing ideas for improving forest governance in the country². This document is an indicative work plan for GREG-Forêts up to the end of 2008. It covers activities in detail only to March 2007. It is likely to be revised in early 2007 with further detail on activities between March 2007 and the end of 2008.

2. Problem statement

Despite significant progress, the prospects for sustainable forest management in Cameroon remain bleak until major governance challenges are overcome. Institutional problems, for example, are apparent at many levels: weak capacity to realize the

¹ For more information about the FGLG initiative see: www.iied.org/NR/forestry/projects/forest.html

² Contact the convenor of GREG-Forêts, Chimère Diaw, at: c.diaw@cgiar.org

potential of a decentralized fiscal system; weak information flow among stakeholders; poor accountability and equity in the management of annual forest royalties (AFR); the absence of communal and local development plans for management of AFR; and the insufficient local returns from timber and non-timber forest by-products, thus not realizing their potential to alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods (See Table 1).

Table 1. Achievements and limitations of major institutional innovations in the forest sector in Cameroon

<i>Institutional Reforms</i>	
Achievements	Limitations
<i>Forest management</i>	
<p>Transparency in the allocation of forest concessions and their alternatives is henceforth guaranteed by an independent commission</p> <p>Increase of the percentage of classified forest management units (FMUs)</p> <p>Increase of the percentage of FMUs that have management plans</p>	<p>Discrepancy between the existence of funds for forest development and the implementation of forest development activities</p> <p>Implementation of the forest management plans remains weak</p> <p>Limited involvement of the private sector in the implementation of better forest management practices</p> <p>Forest regeneration is limited to some forest plantations created by the State</p> <p>Effective creation of private and community forest plantations has not begun though it was provided for by the 1994 reform</p> <p>Almost total failure of plantations in the wet and moist zones of Cameroon.</p>
<i>Community Forests (CF)</i>	
<p>The exploitation of CF is effective in many areas in Cameroon</p> <p>Increase in the percentage of CFs allocated, with about 127 CF under an approved simple management plan, 100 under an approved management convention (June 2006)</p>	<p>Lack of realism in the plans for these types of forest and a tendency to over-exploit prior to allocation to communities</p> <p>Procedures for the allocation are a challenge to communities,</p> <p>Funding for the processes of acquisition is limited</p> <p>Distribution of income continues to pose intra-community problems due to the absence of accountability mechanisms</p> <p>Exploitation of management options are still limited to timber</p> <p>Lack of ownership of local population</p> <p>Vested interests of elites</p> <p>Limited bargaining power of communities with logging companies has prevented communities from getting full benefits when outsourcing forest operations</p>
<i>Council Forests (CLF)</i>	
<p>5 CLF created by classification by the Prime Minister; two in operation.</p> <p>The existence of these council forests consolidated the role of municipalities in the forest sector</p> <p>CLF led to the diversification and increase of municipal incomes</p>	<p>Number of FCL created (~1/3) remains below initial plans;</p> <p>There is still no tested model for the exploitation of CLF. They face difficulties of implementation due to inadequate funding and external support and the absence of technical expertise.</p> <p>Model for governance and management benefits of CLF is not impressive</p>
<i>Protected Areas (PA)</i>	
<p>Increasing percentage of classified PAs, and growing network of PAs in Cameroon</p> <p>There is remarkable progress in transborder management of resources through inter-State parks</p>	<p>There are many conflicts around protected areas, in particular with bordering communities</p> <p>Economic benefit of protected areas are too small or non-existent to communities</p> <p>Poaching and bush meat issues</p> <p>Weak involvement of local population in decision making processes</p> <p>Overoptimistic expectations from alternative livelihoods strategies such as ecotourism which have proved to be insufficient to discourage local communities from illegal activities</p>
<i>Community hunting areas (CHA)</i>	
<p>Presently, there are 9 committees (COVAREF) that manage about fifteen CHA.</p> <p>The experiences from CHA acquired in certain areas in Cameroon</p>	<p>Process of the creation of CHA went too quickly, in particular in the East; capacity building in management structures has been weak, and there has been misuse of incomes and conflicts in certain cases;</p> <p>Certain committees have not yet succeeded to attract Guides for community hunting in order to develop their CHA. They exist on paper but they are not financial viable</p>
<i>Certification Verification/Legality of timber</i>	
<p>The promulgation of National PC&I by the Ministry of forests (Dec. 2004) defined an official</p>	<p>Model for verification/legality of timber is still experimental</p> <p>Process of certification is slow and contested by some stakeholders.</p>

<p>national framework; The presence of an independent observers in the sector reinforced the processes of the traceability of timber There are many private initiatives on forest certification and a logging concession (the first) was certified by FSC in 2005</p>	<p>Ownership of processes of certification and verification by the State and the civil society, and by certain private operators remains limited and prone to controversies Many concession holders continue to have little interest in certification and verification except at a superficial level</p>
Decentralized taxation	
<p>Annual forest royalties (AFR) allows a distribution of a quota to bordering communities and municipalities Bordering communities get part of their quota (10%) through the financing of certain community infrastructures</p>	<p>Accountability mechanisms are not functional in the council houses (<i>Mairies</i>) and in the AFR management committees Strategic vision of the use of AFR for long-term financing of development of municipalities and communities is extremely limited There is a risk of a recentralization of the management of AFR through equalization fund managed by FEICOM</p>

Many of the above institutional limitations are exacerbated by the lack of concerted effort to address governance problems in the forest sector: (i) Diverging initiatives in the forest sector with often ill-conceived approaches to development and poverty alleviation; (ii) Limited contributions of forest management units, community forestry and forest conservation projects to socio-economic development and poverty reduction in neighbouring or involved communities; (iii) Increasing problems in the collection, management and distribution of AFR and forest incomes in general; (iv) Increasing conflicts over forest access and benefit sharing amongst forest actors, and an upsurge of intra-community conflict; (v) Dwindling capacity and financial resources within the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MinFoF); and (vi) Inadequate levels of training/awareness of field staff regarding governance issues.

In 2004, the Government of Cameroon adopted the Forest and Environment Sectoral Programme (FESP), which aims to rise to the challenge of providing a comprehensive response to the sector’s problems. Donor support for the FESP is via a basket fund called the Forest Sector Governance Support Programme. There is widespread recognition that, for the Government’s FESP to work, joint action with a wide range of non-state actors will be needed from local to national levels. With this in mind SNV – the Netherlands Development Organisation – and the UK Department for International Development initiated the Forest Governance Facility in 2006. This Facility is designed to support civil society organizations, elected groups, the private sector, the media and research organizations in their efforts to contribute to FESP.

A key test for FESP and other programmes which aim to tackle Cameroon’s forest governance problems is whether they can come up with practical and tactical ways forward based on local realities rather than some idealised norm of how things should be. This is where GREG-Forêts aims to contribute – identifying experience that demonstrates practical tactics for improving governance in action, and spreading such learning.

3. Aim and target groups of GREG-Forêts

The aim of GREG-Forêts is to contribute reflection and new thinking on the practicalities of governance, to promote learning about practical forms of governance to the context of forest management in Cameroon and to improve governance by influencing decision-making processes.

The main target groups for the outputs of GREG-Forêts work in Cameroon will include:

- ❑ Key forest policy and decision makers from national to local levels within MINFOF and other Ministries and Departments involved in the governance of forests
- ❑ Forest logging companies and forest industry associations
- ❑ Community based natural resource management practitioners and champions of local community rights
- ❑ Civil society organizations involved in forest and environment sectors.

4. Outputs and summary of activities

To achieve its aim, GREG-Forêts will pursue activities until the end of 2008, each of which will be designed to contribute to one of the four main outputs of the overarching Forest Governance Learning Group project coordinated at the international level by IIED:

- ❑ Output 1: Poverty reduction strategy, national forest programme and decentralisation programme enable improved forest governance
- ❑ Output 2: Illegal and corrupt forestry practices that degrade livelihoods are reduced through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance
- ❑ Output 3: Forest enterprise initiatives and private sector associations comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance
- ❑ Output 4: Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks are improved to support local control and benefit sharing.

GREG-Forêts activities will involve: participatory evidence gathering; network building; dialogue with parliamentarians and other key stakeholder groups as yet poorly engaged with on forest governance; taking opportunities to engage directly with governance reforms such as through the circle of partners of MINFOF; training and capacity building initiatives; and monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in the sector. The main emphasis in these activities will be on identifying, testing and installing practical approaches and tactics. In other words, the focus is not on generating new lists of recommendations – but on learning how to implement them and on spreading this learning. The following sub-sections describe general activities under the outputs they contribute to. A calendar of more specific activities for the period to March 2007 is given as Appendix 1.

Output 1: Poverty reduction strategies, national forest programmes, decentralisation programmes and related processes enable improved forest governance

1.1 Identify the key entry points for improving forest governance in FESP, the PRSP, the national governance programme (NGP) and the decentralisation programme within a short report.

1.2 Consolidate GREG-Forêts participation through the hiring of a GREG-Forêts coordinator and the convening of regular meetings - connecting high-level governance

actors (policy) with each other and with on-the-ground practice (management).

1.3 Adapt and update the GREG-Forêts work plan when new opportunities for making governance improvements arise in: tackling illegal and corrupt forestry, forest enterprise and their associations, and tenure and access for local communities.

1.4 Support the spread of knowledge and thinking to key actors and stakeholders in Cameroon and in Central Africa (COMIFAC) through participation in key fora.

Output 2: Illegal and corrupt forestry that degrades livelihoods is reduced through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance

2.1 Publish and spread findings from policy studies as well as the state of art on practical approaches to address various scales and impacts of forestry illegality

2.2 Collaborate with entities such as the control unit in MinFoF), the independent observer, and CSOs that have undertaken investigations to synthesise information on the impact of illegality on local livelihoods. Contribute to the preparation, publication and delivery of guidance based on this synthesis to improve the implementation of the FESP, the PRSP, and decentralised forest programmes

2.3 Contribute and provide options to key actors to test and implement at least one new practical approach to combat illegality in association with the FLEG and FSC processes

2.4 Develop/contribute and undertake at least two training events on ‘tactics that work for law enforcement’ for identified stakeholder groups, to try and strengthen forestry in wider frameworks, notably FESP.

2.5 Evaluate progress through a participatory monitoring evaluation framework and share findings on approaches that are proving successful

Output 3: Forestry logging companies and private sector associations comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance

3.1 Conduct a survey to update the information on the existing capacities and difficulties facing forest enterprise, with a particular focus on small and medium forest enterprise, and their associations – building on the work of the WWF Project on Forest and Trade, and CIFOR sub-programme on Forest Finance and Trade, Law Enforcement and Corporate Accountability. Assess public policy and technical support mechanisms, finance, associations and information flows, capacity and labour issues relevant to legal compliance

3.2 Contribute to the preparation and publication of guidance on practical approaches to improve the functioning of small and medium forest enterprises and their associations (including incentive based and voluntary compliance mechanisms such as certification) in association with: WWF and other agencies; AFLEG, FLEGT, FSC and other key processes; and other members developing the national criteria for certification

3.3 Engage with key actors in enterprise initiatives and associations and help to establish best bet options for corporate social responsibility and sustainability-conscious market access

3.4 Participate in attempts to test out best bet options with corporate and small-medium enterprise leaders so as to drive progress through competition and contribute to the EC Action Plan for FLEGT.

3.5 Work to install ideas for corporate responsibility within the forest sector and reporting protocols for new forest associations – potentially in association with independent observer.

Output 4: Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks are improved to support local control and benefit from forestry

- 4.1 Support the spread of information on community based management through participation in the forum on forest governance to be organized in collaboration with the MinFoF HIPC Community Forest Project (RIGC), the Forest Governance Facility (FGF) and other ongoing initiatives sharing the same goals.
- 4.2 Engage with key decision makers in land and resource access law and identify and promote actions that strengthen the interest of local communities in the practical development and use of law and regulation in forestry
- 4.3 Contribute, in collaboration with the FGF and RIGC, to strengthening capacities through training of key intermediary groups in community organization models and the ownership and management of community forestry.
- 4.4 Contribute to the finalization of guidance materials and tools such as the manual of procedures for community forestry and for communities, their supporters and other local-level actors on how to improve tenure, forest resource access and policy frameworks governing local control and benefit from forestry

5. Implementation arrangements

Cameroon already has various active fora and working groups in the forest sector. GREG-Forêts is a learning group and process that draws on but does not duplicate or replace these existing fora. The GREG-Forêts convenor, Dr Diaw Mariteuw Chimère, will catalyse and convene a core group and a wider group of interested stakeholders and actors. The core group will aim to meet quarterly, whilst interaction will be maintained between meetings through smaller face-to-face exchanges, email and phone. The group is likely to evolve over time with some participants contributing only for a short time while others join the Group later on. The core GREG-Forêts group currently comprises 17 professionals in the forest sector, including government and non-government forest practitioners (Table 2). Activities will be conducted by group members, support staff and contracted parties. Lessons and recommendations drawn from experience and research work will be disseminated as widely as possible, and all main reports will be available on the FGLG website.

Table 2. GREG-Forêts members

1. Serge Menang Evouna	Spécialiste Forêts et Environnement, World Bank – Cameroon Email: emenangevouna@worldbank.org or menangevouna@yahoo.fr
2. Carole Megevand	Spécialiste Forestier, World Bank – Cameroon Email: cmegevand@worldbank.org

3. Samuel Nguiffo	Secrétaire Général - Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement Email: snguiffo@cedcameroun.org or snguiffo@yahoo.fr
4. Clauss Falkenber	Conseiller technique, COMIFAC
5. Paolo Cerutti	JPO, Forest and Governance Programme, CIFOR Central Africa Email: p.cerutti@cgiar.org
6. Dr. Chimère Diaw	GREG-Forêts convenor. Senior-Scientist, Coordinateur of Forest and Governance Programme CIFOR Central Africa, Email: c.diaw@cgiar.org
7. Dr. Tim Fomete	Consultant, Rainbow Consult, Yaoundé, Cameroon Email: timfomete@yahoo.fr
8. Pascal Cuny	Conseiller en Gestion des Ressources Naturelles – Equipe Centre-Sud Littoral SNV-Cameroon, Email: pcuny@snavcm.org
9. Denis Kolangna	Directeur, Division des Projets et Coordination, Ministère des Forêts et Faune
10. Patrice Bigombe	Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour le Développement Durable en Afrique Centrale (CERAD), Email: ftpp.cameroun@camnet.cm
11. Parfait Mimbini	Ex-Member of Parliament and Executive Director of FSC-Cameroon Email: akung34@yahoo.fr
12. Benoît Mertens	Coordinator [Cameroon & Gabon] Global Forest Watch Email: benoit.mertens@iucn.org
13. Cleto Ndkumagenga	IUCN – Central Africa Regional Office Email: cleto.ndkumagenga@iucn.org
14. Hon. Madame Ndo, Angéline	Member of Parliament
15. Hon. Joseph Roland Matta	Member of Parliament
16. Vincent Pelé	Chargé des programmes d'aménagement - PALLISCO
17. Mala Armand William	Chercheur, Programme forêts et gouvernance, CIFOR, Central Africa Office

6. Monitoring and evaluation

GREG-Forêts will produce short quarterly reports describing key moments, dynamics and “behind the scenes moves” in forest governance in Cameroon, and describing progress with the work plan. These reports will be discussed with IIED and form the basis for adaptation of the work plan. Evaluation will be carried out by GREG-Forêts in collaboration with IIED.

7. Sustainability

The sustainability of GREG-Forêts will depend on its continued relevance and interest to the group members and others stakeholders as a learning process about how to improve forest governance. GREG-Forêts will have limited funds of its own. GREG-Forêts may develop proposals with partners to source funding for further activities and longer-term viability of the group. Sustainability will be built through partnership with existing activities such as the FGF, AFLEG process and others initiatives.

Appendix 1. GREG-Forêts calendar of activities, July 2006-March 2007

Results and Activities	Key persons involved	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Result 1. FGLG-Cameroon convened and activities planned (contributes to work plan activity 1.2)										
Activity 1.1. Potential members contacted and FGLG convened	Convenor Support staff									
Activity 1.2. Development of work plan to end 2008	Convenor/ GREG members Support staff									
Activity 1.3 Update of the list of <i>GREG-Forêts</i> members and creation of a mailing - list	Administrative/ Support staff									
Result 2. Institutional map of Forest Governance programmes and projects in Cameroon available (contributes to work plan activity 1.1)										
Activity 2.1. Development of the ToR, methods and team for the study, in collaboration with Forest Governance Facility	Convenor/ GREG members Support staff									
Activity 2.2. Desk study, field survey (Yaoundé, Southern Cameroon), and institutional mapping ; Reporting	Study task leader Convenor/ GREG Support staff									
Result 3. Gap analysis of Forest Governance in Cameroon available (contributes to work plan activity 1.1)										
Activity 3.1 Development of the ToR and methods for the <i>Gap - analysis</i> of forest governance initiatives in Cameroon, in collaboration with Forest Governance Facility	Convenor/ GREG members Support staff									
Activity 3.2 <i>Gaps - analysis</i> of forest governance initiatives and reporting	Study task leader/ Convenor /GREG-									

