



Forest Governance Learning Group – Cameroon¹ (GREG-Forêts)

2008 WORK PLAN (Draft: March 2008)

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 teams in west-Central 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 Affairs²

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 in May 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 country. This document sets up the work plan for GREG-Forêts up to the end of 2008. It follows up on, and strengthens the effort started in 2006-2007 to clarify the governance landscape in Cameroon and to more rigorously link this scientific work to the important governance processes now unfolding on the ground.

2. Problem statement

There have been significant governance initiatives in Cameroon in recent years, yet major challenges remain. At a time when influential external groups are increasingly questioning the viability of the industrial concession model for addressing sustainable development and poverty issues in the forest sector, logging concessions are making deliberate and visible efforts to align with certification criteria, including those related to

¹ Contact the convenor of GREG-Forêts, Chimère Diaw, at: mc4chim@hotmail.com, c.diaw@africanmodelforests.org

² For more information about FGLG see: www.iied.org/NR/forestry/projects/forest.html and contact james.mayers@iied.org

biodiversity conservation, rights of local people and indigenous communities, and timber legality. Several companies have embarked on a long term FSC certification process, many of them through the Central Africa Forest and Trade Network (CAFTN) promoted by WWF. At least three have either obtained an FSC certificate or are close to obtaining one, despite significant controversies with environmental NGOs. There is much left to do but progress is visible. The work of NGOs on these and other issues is also much better defined and influential, and contributes to the movement toward better governance and accountability in the sector.

Next to the much-discussed Cameroon community forest model, a number of innovations in community-based natural resource management are emerging and consolidating at the grassroots. This includes Monitoring Committees and Peasants-Forest Committees, set up with support from the industry, local management committees (COVAREF) organized with WWF/GTZ support in Community Hunting Areas (CHAs), and various Common Interest Groups (GIC) generating local benefits from sawmill waste, ecotourism, and other opportunities. Many of these innovations are linked to protected area programs and to the certification drive.

At the supra-local level, the pilot Model Forest sites of Campo-Ma'an and Dja & Mpomo, which regroup all stakeholders in a voluntary partnership covering all land use values and interests in large working-scale landscapes, constitute a major governance initiative; it is supported by the government and is the prelude to a model forest learning network that will be established both nationally and in the larger Congo Basin. Local NGOs, organized into broad NGO networks, are increasingly effective in supporting these developments.

The question of Annual Forest Royalties (AFR) remains contentious; the capacity to realize the potential of a decentralized fiscal system is still weak and suffers from the absence of communal and local development plans as well as poor information flow, accountability and equity in the management of the AFR. Despite some improvements; local returns from timber and non-timber forest products is vastly insufficient and fails to significantly 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>	
Transparency in the allocation of forest concessions and their alternatives is henceforth guaranteed by an independent commission Increase of the percentage of classified forest management units (FMUs) Increase of the percentage of FMUs that have management plans	Discrepancy between the existence of funds for forest development and the implementation of forest development activities Implementation of the forest management plans remains weak Limited involvement of the private sector in the implementation of better forest management practices Forest regeneration is limited to some forest plantations created by the State Effective creation of private and community forest plantations has not begun though it was provided for by the 1994 reform Almost total failure of plantations in the wet and moist zones of Cameroon.
<i>Community Forests (CF)</i>	
The exploitation of CF is effective in many areas in Cameroon Increase in the percentage of CFs allocated, with about 127 CF under an	Lack of realism in the plans for these types of forest and a tendency to over-exploit prior to allocation to communities Procedures for the allocation are a challenge to communities, Funding for the processes of acquisition is limited

	approved simple management plan, 100 under an approved management convention (June 2006)	Distribution of income continues to pose intra-community problems due to the absence of accountability mechanisms Exploitation of management options are still limited to timber Lack of ownership of local population; Vested interests of elites Limited bargaining power of communities with logging companies has prevented communities from getting full benefits when outsourcing forest operations
Council Forests (CLF)		
	5 CLF created by classification by the Prime Minister; two in operation. The existence of these council forests consolidated the role of municipalities in the forest sector CLF led to the diversification and increase of municipal incomes	Number of FCL created (~1/3) remains below initial plans; 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. Model for governance and management benefits of CLF is not impressive
Protected Areas (PA)		
	Increasing percentage of classified PAs, and growing network of PAs in Cameroon There is remarkable progress in transborder management of resources through inter-State parks	There are many conflicts around protected areas, in particular with bordering communities Economic benefit of protected areas are too small or non-existent to communities Poaching and bush meat issues Weak involvement of local population in decision making processes Overoptimistic expectations from alternative livelihoods strategies such as ecotourism which have proved to be insufficient to discourage local communities from illegal activities
Community hunting areas (CHA)		
	Presently, there are 9 committees (COVAREF) that manage about fifteen CHA. The experiences from CHA acquired in certain areas in Cameroon	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; 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
Certification Verification/Legality of timber		
	The promulgation of National PC&I by the Ministry of forests (Dec. 2004) defined an official 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	Model for verification/legality of timber is still experimental Process of certification is slow and contested by some stakeholders. 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
Decentralized taxation		
	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	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

Many of the above institutional limitations were exacerbated in the past 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 neighboring 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.

Work to date suggests that, in the light of the above problems and developments, an effective governance gap analysis is needed to focus thinking and action. Some specific work also on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement process between Cameroon and the EC to make Cameroonian timber legal, and on governance issues facing small forest enterprises, also appears very timely in 2008. GREG-Forêts has also identified the importance in 2008 of re-igniting efforts to initiate a national forum on forest governance to air the above work and other initiatives and build momentum amongst stakeholders for more concerted action.

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. Progress to date

A summary of what has been done and achieved to date is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of activities completed and works achievements.

Activities planned	Activities carried out	Achievements	Remarks
GREG- Forêts Network development	Members have been regularly engaged with	A pool of members participate regularly in reflection, thinking and identification of next steps	We have been able to identify our strengths (leadership, knowledge of the sector, institutional linkages) and weaknesses (members are very busy and it can be difficult to deliver on commitments to the group)
Development and sharing of a vision for achieving governance impact	Development of work plan and detailed activities by the team	Forest governance mapping and gap analysis has been identified as the entry point for the team to build its credibility, share knowledge and learning, and to create long term impact	An agreement has been made with the Forest Governance Facility (FGF) to develop this
Partnership development with FGF	An MoU has been discussed and amended with a view to foster a long term relationship ToRs for the mapping and gap analysis have been discussed and amended in conjunction with Forest Governance Facility (FGF) and Center for Environmental Watch (CEW)	The MoU was submitted to FGF in mid 2007 The ToRs, work plan including methodology, and budget were submitted to be funded by FGF in late 2007	The MoU has not yet been signed. This is partly justified by FGF's restructuring process that did not allow it to make any further engagement with partners. The FGF has not yet signed the contract
Catalyze the preparation of a National Forum on Forest Governance	A concept note for the forum including its background, objectives and expected outcomes is in circulation.	Some preliminary contacts have been made with partner organizations such as GTZ, FGF, COMIFAC	Progress was stalled by delays on other group activities – and will be reinvigorated in 2008
Review of the FGF/CEW database	Review of the data base is in progress	The MS Access database has been deconstructed into MS Excel in order to understand the structure of the data including the description of the variables	One key problem with the database is that forest governance issues have not been highlighted in its records and the challenge is to link the group's forest governance mapping with the institutional mapping study already carried out

5. 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.

GREG-Forêt regroups expertise at the cutting edge of governance developments in Cameroon. While pursuing the conceptual and clarification work on the institutional landscape and gap-analysis of governance, which will lead to the National Forum on Governance in Cameroon, GREG-Forêt, will put greater emphasis in 2008 on having impact with a coordinating and learning role that will allow it to fully bring on-board the rich and diverse experience of its membership and optimize its full potential.

The following sub-sections describe activities that will contribute to the above Outputs in 2008. A calendar of these activities over 2008 is given in Appendix 1.

1. Administrative outputs

Consolidating GREG-Forêts participation through effective administration and convening of sharing and learning seminars alongside regular meetings - connecting high-level governance actors (policy) with each other and with on-the-ground practice (management).

1.1 GREG-Forêts Administration

1.1.1 Information sharing and team animation; update team members list

1.1.2 Institutional realignment (CIFOR to NESDA) and finalization of Workplan 2008

1.1.3 Reporting on GREG-Forêts Meetings

1.1.4 Preparation of short, regular “governance gossip” messages and GREG-Forêts quarterly reports

1.1.5 MoUs signed and monitored

1.2 GREG-Forêts' Sharing and Learning thematic seminars

1.2.1 Sharing and Learning seminars

1.2.2 Publications- GREG-Forêts outputs

2. Forest Governance gap analysis

Preparing a solid gap analysis which builds on the database of initiatives and governance institutions that CEW carried out and analyses: the key issues; the knowledge base; and likelihood of action to address each issue, and therefore the gaps and the kind of action needed to fill each.

2.1 Review of methodology and content of the database of initiatives and governance institutions as well as database compatibility with FGF/CEW institutional study;

2.2 Analysis of the key issues, the knowledge base and the likelihood of action to address each issue;

2.3 Desk review, interview and field-work;

2.4 Data analysis/gap-analysis, prioritisation of the gaps and the kind of action to address each issue both as group exercise and detailed work by individuals;

2.5 Thematic syntheses, writing and reporting.

3. Voluntary Partnership Agreement – a process and content contribution.

Offering practical governance experience from GREG-Forests to the process between the Cameroonian government and the EC to develop a VPA on Forest Governance.

3.1 Review and analysis of the process and its social feasibility;

3.2 Organization of thematic seminars on VPA and good forest governance: lessons learnt from practices;

4. Small forest enterprises – initial review of status, associations and key governance challenges.

Reviewing the status of small forest enterprises, building on the work of the WWF Project on Forest and Trade, CIFOR sub-programme on [Forest Finance and Trade, Law Enforcement and Corporate Accountability](#), and other initiatives .

4.1 Develop ToRs for the review based on best practices in other countries (IIED to help advise here);

4.2 Initiate contact with partners, including Model Forests, NESDA CA, CERAD, forest administration, entrepreneurs, municipalities and communities

4.3 Review of: the status of small forest enterprises; the various formal and informal ways in which they cooperate, federate and form groupings; and the key governance, market and institutional issues they face.

4.4 Production of a report

4.5 Use the review to support other initiatives of the GREG-Forêts membership.

5. National forum on forest governance

Stimulating and participating in a national 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

5.1 Review, amendment and adoption of the concept note in term of scope, objectives, expected outputs and ways forward for stakeholders;

5.2 Contacts with partners;

5.3 Setting-up an organizing committee;

5.4 Elaboration of the forest Gov forum programme;

5.5 Distribution of invitations;

5.6 Preparation of participants' material;

5.7 National forum on governance;

5.8 Production of the forum synthesis report;

5.9 Production of the proceedings of national forum on forest governance.

6. Proposal development

Working to secure support for high priority actions by GREG-Forêts beyond 2008.

6.1 Funds mobilising with other ongoing initiatives working to achieve similar results

6.2 Development of long-term funding proposals.

6. 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, until early 2008 of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and now Coordinator of the Africa Model Forests Initiative, convenes both the core team and a wider team of interested stakeholders and actors. The core team meets quarterly, whilst interaction is maintained between meetings through smaller face-to-face exchanges, email and phone.

The group continues to evolve over time with some participants contributing only for a short time while others join the team later on. The core GREG-Forêts team currently comprises 17 professionals in the forest sector, including government and non-government forest practitioners (Table 2). Activities are conducted by team members, support staff and contracted parties. Lessons and recommendations drawn from experience and research work are disseminated as widely as possible, and all main reports are available on the FGLG website. Taking into account recent changes in the affiliation of some of its members, from early 2008 GREG-Forêts administration has moved out of CIFOR to be based at NESDA-CA, an NGO managed by GREG-Forêts member, Mrs. Prudence Galega.

Table 2. GREG-Forêts members

Active Members

1. Serge Menang Evouna	Spécialiste Forêts et Environnement, World Bank – Cameroon
2. Prudence Galega	Magistrate, Coordinator of NESDA– Central Africa
3. Denis Koulagna	Secrétaire Général, Ministère des Forêts et Faune (MINFOF)
4. Samuel Nguiffo	Secrétaire Général - Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement (CED)
5. Paul Anspach	Manager, Forest Governance Facility (FGF)
6. Claus-Micheal Falkenberg	Conseiller technique, GTZ/COMIFAC
7. Paolo Cerutti	JPO, Forest and Governance Programme, CIFOR Central Africa
8. Dr. Chimère Diaw	GREG-Forêts convenor. Senior-Scientist, Coordinator, African Model Forest Initiative (AMFI)
9. Dr. Tim Fomete	Consultant, Rainbow Consult, Yaoundé, Cameroon
10. Pascal Cuny	Conseiller en Gestion des Ressources Naturelles – Equipe Centre-Sud Littoral SNV-Cameroon
11. Patrice Bigombe Logo	Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour le Développement Durable en Afrique Centrale (CERAD)
12. Hon. Ndo, Angéline	Former Member of Parliament
13. Vincent Pelé	Chargé des programmes d'aménagement - PALLISCO
14. Samuel Makon	Conseiller GTZ
15. Vabi, Boboh Michael	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
16. Philippe COUVREUR	Groupement de la Filière Bois du Cameroun (GFBC)
17. Mala Armand William	Chercheur, Programme forêts et gouvernance, CIFOR, Central Africa Office
18. Dr. Anne Marie Tiani	Consultant, CIFOR and AMFI

Former members called to other duties, now available resource persons

19. Benoît Mertens (former member)	Coordinator [Cameroon & Gabon] Global Forest Watch;
20. Parfait Mimbini	Ex-Member of Parliament and Executive Director of FSC-Cameroon
21. Cleto Ndkumagenga	IUCN – Central Africa Regional Office
22. Hon. Joseph Roland Matta	Member of Parliament (now State Secretary, MINFOF); Cabinet Member
23. Hon. Roger Nkodo	Président du Syndicat National des Exploitants Forestiers – Yaoundé

6. Monitoring and evaluation

GREG-Forêts will produce short quarterly reports describing progress with the work plan and shorter more regular “governance gossip” messages within the team and with IIED describing key moments, dynamics and “behind the scenes moves” in forest governance in Cameroon. 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. Calendar of GREG-Forêts Activities January to December 2008

GREG-Forêts Activities January 2008 – December 2008												
	Jan08	Feb08	March08	April08	May08	June08	July08	Aug08	Sept08	Oct08	Nov08	Dec08
1. Administrative inputs												
<i>1.1 GREG-Forêts Administration</i>												
1.1.1 Information sharing and team animation; update team members list												
1.1.2 Institutional realignment (CIFOR to NESDA) and finalization of Workplan 2008												
1.1.3 Reporting on GREG-Forêts Meetings												
1.1.4 Preparation of GREG-Forêts quarterly reports												
1.1.5 MoUs signed and monitored												
<i>1.2 GREG-Forêts' Sharing and Learning thematic seminars</i>												
1.2.1 Sharing & Learning seminars												
1.2.2 Publications-GREG outputs												
2. Studies, scientific inputs and proceedings												
<i>2.1 Study of Forest Governance Gap Analysis in Cameroon</i>												
2.1.1 Review of methodology and content of the database of initiatives and governance institutions as well as database compatibility with FGF/CEW institutional study												
2.1.2 Analysis of the key issues, the knowledge base and the likelihood of action to												

address each issue												
2.1.3 Desk review, interview and field-work												
2.1.4 Data analysis/gap-analysis, prioritisation of the gaps and the kind of action to address each issue both as group exercise and detailed work by individuals												
2.1.5 Thematic syntheses, writing and reporting												
3. Voluntary Partnership Agreement – a process and content contribution.												
3.1 Review and analysis of the process and its social feasibility;												
3.2 Organization of thematic seminars on VPA and good forest governance: lessons learnt from practices;												
4. Small forest enterprises – initial review of status, associations and key governance challenges												
4.1 Develop ToRs for the review based on best practices in other countries (IIED to help advise here);												
4.2 Initiate contact with partners, including Model Forests, NESDA CA, CERAD, forest administration, entrepreneurs, municipalities and communities												
4.3 Review of: the status of small forest enterprises; the various formal and informal												

ways in which they cooperate, federate and form groupings; and the key governance, market and institutional issues they face.													
4.4 Production of a report													
4.5 Use the review to support other initiatives of the GREG-Forêts membership.													
5. Organization of the National Forum on Forest Governance													
5.1 Review amendment and adoption of the concept note													
5.2 Contacts with partners													
5.3 Setting-up an organizing committee													
5.4 Elaboration of the forest Gov forum programme													
5.4 Distribution of invitations													
5.5 Preparation of participants material													
5.6 National forum on governance													
5.7 Production of the forum synthetic report													
5.8 Production of the proceedings of national forum on forest governance													
6. Proposal development													
6.1 Funds mobilising with other ongoing initiatives working to achieve similar results													
6.2 Development of Long-term funding proposals													