

**COLUMBUS UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**Picayune, MS 39466-0879**

**USA**

**THESIS**

**FIELD OF STUDY: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

**SACRED FORESTS AND COMMUNITY FORESTS AT THE CROSSROADS**

**FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

**CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON**

**Master thesis**

**Nicodème TCHAMOU - Student #: 149588-6268**

**Supervision: Diane RUSSELL, PhD - Anthropologist**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: COMMUNITY FORESTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.1. What is a Community forest?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.2. Why was this concept developed?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.3. Unfolding of Community forests</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.4. Impediments to the development of community forests</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1.4.1. Pre-award impediments</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1.4.2. Post-award hurdles</b>	<b>23</b>

<b>1.4.2.1. Internal Factors</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>1.4.2.2. External Factors</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: TRADITIONAL FORM OF FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>SECTION I. THE CASE OF SACRED FORESTS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2.1. Rationale</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2.2. Guiding objectives</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.3. Research methodology</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.4. Definition, creation and typology of the sacred forests</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2.4.1. Definition of Sacred Forests</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2.4.2. Creation of the sacred forest</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2.4.2.1. Sacred forest of the “quartier”</b>	<b>42</b>

2.4.2.2. Sacred Forests of the chieftainships	42
2.4.3. Typology of sacred forests.	43
2.4.3.1. The sacred forests of the “quartier”	44
2.4.3.2. The sacred forests of the chieftainships	44
2.5. Role of Sacred Forest	45
2.5.1. The role of customary court	45
2.5.2. The role of the places of worship	46
2.6. Local techniques and practices for sacred forests conservation	46
2.6.1. Laws and proscriptions	47
2.6.2. Sanctions meted out at offenders	48
2.6.3. Myths and narratives	50

<b>2.6.4. Control system for compliance with proscriptions</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.6.5. Transmission system</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.7. Local management techniques of the sacred forests' resources.</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.7.1 Firewood</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2.7.2. Wood for handicraft</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>2.7.3. Wildlife</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>2.7.4. Medicinal plants</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>2.7.5. Honey</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>2.8. Role and responsibilities of different players in sacred forests</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2.8.1. Roles and responsibilities of players in the sacred forest of quartier (case of Bahouan)</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2.8.1.1. The security guards</b>	<b>55</b>

<b>2.8.1.2. The Village chief</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2.8.1.3. The village notables and the populations</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2.8.1.4. Visitors</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.8.2. Roles and responsibilities of players in the sacred forest of the chieftainship (Case of Bamenyam)</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.8.2.1. “Aides” of the village chief</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.8.2.2. The notables</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.8.2.3. The village chief</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2.8.2.4. The princes and the queens</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2.8.2.5. The priestesses</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2.8.2.6. Traditional healers</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2.8.2.7. The gendarmes or village security guards</b>	<b>57</b>

<b>2.9. Access and control of sacred forests resources</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.9.1. Access to the sacred forest's resources of the "quartier"</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.9.1.1. Firewood</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.9.1.2. Wood for handicraft</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.9.1.3. Medicinal plants</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.9.1.4. Wild animals</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.9.1.5. Fruits</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.9.1.6. Condiments</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.9.1.7. Honey</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.9.1.8. The jujube (<i>Ziziphus sp</i>)</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.9.2. Access to the resources of the sacred forests of the Chieftainship</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>SECTION II: LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF TREES</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE: SEARCHING FOR COMMON GROUND</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3.1. The Friendly Forests</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3.2. Designing the model</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>3.3. Tools required for Success</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3.3.1. Administrative Guide</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3.3.2. Community Simple Management Guide</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.3.3. Consulting Firm or Business Service Support</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
<b>- Letdown of community forest in Cameroon and need for options</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>- Way forwards: Friendly Forests</b>	<b>69</b>



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**71**

**ANNEXES**

**75**

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AFNETA:	Alley Farming Network for Tropical Africa
CBNRM:	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CV:	Curriculum Vitae
DFID:	Department for International Development
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organization
GECEC:	General d'Epargne et de Cr�dit de l'Est Cameroun
GIC:	Common Interest Group
ICRAF:	International Center for Research in Agro-forestry
IITA:	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
ILO:	International Labor Organization
MARP:	Active Method for Participative Research
MINEF:	Ministry Of Environment and Forestry
NGO:	Non Governmental Organization
PM:	Prime Minister
SDDL:	Soutien au D�veloppement Durable de Lomi�
SM:	Sustainable Management
SNV:	Netherlands Development Organization
SODERIM:	Soci�t� de D�veloppement du Riz
UN:	United Nation
WRI/GFW:	World Resources Institute under Global Forest Watch
WWF:	World Wide Fund for Nature

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We are deeply grateful to many people for their support and assistance in developing and completing this project—the list is endless.

We are particularly indebted to Diane RUSSELL. Initially our supervisor at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture; she encouraged and guided us through the entire process of applying for the Msc program, studying, field researching and writing up this dissertation which, she has reviewed three times.

Our sincerest reconnaissance goes to our colleague Jacqueline DOREMUS who helped us search and order all academic books from Amazon website and arrange for the shipment.

Most of all, we would like to thanks all local communities from all seven villages and two cantons in which we carried out our field researches-- whose time, knowledge experience and insights on local and traditional uses of natural resources enabled the completion of our project.

Sincere gratitude to my wife, who got me up almost everyday at 3 o'clock in the morning, to work on this thesis.

Nicodème TCHAMOU

## **ABSTRACT**

Set aside the Amazon Basin, Central Africa contains the largest area of contiguous moist tropical forest in the world; about 240 million hectares. More than 60 million people live in the region and, rely on their rich forests and other biotic resources for their livelihoods and economic development. These forests form the catchments' basin of the Congo River, a watershed of local, regional and global significance. They provide valuable ecological services by controlling and buffering climate at a regional scale and by absorbing and storing excess carbon dioxide released from the burning of fossil fuels, thereby helping to slow the rate of global climate warming. Though the tropical rain forests cover only 7% of the earth's surface, it harbors at least 50% of the world's planet biodiversity. However, despite its critical importance the tropical rain forest is under severe threat from a multiple of forces including logging, mining, slash and burn agriculture, with almost four million hectares destroyed and degraded each year. Conserving this large track of forest is and has always been a challenge. Because of the anthropogenic nature of most of the threats and the international community's and donors' pressure for decentralization and good governance in Africa, attempts to involve local communities in forest resources management resulted in the notion of community forests. Since 1994 many Central African countries have embarked in the review of their forest policy to include provisions for community forests. The process is well-rooted in Cameroon with 116 community forests allocated to date. In the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon, the process is just getting started with the development of a legal

framework. However, in Cameroon, twelve years after the enactment of the 1994 forestry laws that opened the way for community involvement in the management of forests for commercial timber production, community forests are still in daunting stage.

This case study deploys a multidisciplinary approach, with a particular emphasis on fieldwork, involving anthropology, ethnology, botany, sylvi-culture and history. It strives to compare and contrast the management, institutions and meanings of sacred and community forests in order to understand the historical background as well as impediments to effective community forest development and implementation. It also recommends a hybrid model called “Friendly Forests” that reconciles both sacred and community forests for a sustainable management of natural resources in Central Africa.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cameroon covers 475,000 square kilometers and shares borders with Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. The country is a mixture of desert plains in the north, mountains in the central regions and tropical rainforest in the south and east. The amount of forested area is estimated at 225,000 square kilometers, of which 175,000 square kilometers have been identified by the government as production forests. Cameroon was a German colony from 1884 to 1916, and then was administered by France (eastern Cameroon) and Britain (northern and southern Cameroon) until independence in 1960. The United Nations (UN) estimates the population at 17 Million in 2006 in which 50% live in the forest and almost 65% depend on forest resources for their daily survival. The 1994 forestry law, essentially a framework for industrialization, divides the forests into permanent and non-permanent forest areas. The permanent forest domain is formed by state forests and communal forests.

Population pressure and extreme poverty in rural areas coupled with unsustainable agricultural practices account for 90% of deforestation, whereas logging accounts for 60% of forest degradation. Poaching is a serious threat to wildlife, shrinking some species to extinction. In the wake of reforms, policymakers in many countries are seeking to address these problems by involving forest users through participatory

management or co-management approaches or transferring part of the responsibility to communities. Hence, the idea of community forests turned up in Cameroon.

Indigenous communities, however, have managed their forests for hundreds of years with almost no modification of numerous functional attributes of the ecosystem (ecosystem and biodiversity composition, environmental and other services). Sacred forests, though long neglected and sometimes mistreated, were and are good examples of communities managing forest resources for their own improvement and good stewardship. Sacred forests used to be ancestral domains set aside under customary law whereby access to forest and use of resources therein were adjudicated by customary laws and regulations. Sacred forests took different forms depending on culture and ecology; in savannah areas they were refugia for endemic and important species and varieties while in the forest zone they represented spiritually important areas for the community--indeed the very locus where the community was anchored.

The reactivation of the concept of “community forests” begs several questions: why was this new concept of community forest developed in the first place? What are the impediments to its development? Does it take traditional management into account at all? If yes, why? If no, why not? What lessons can be drawn from the traditional forms of forest management such as sacred forests in order to inform the model of community forest as it is now being developed? These lessons can potentially help to reinforce community participation in biodiversity conservation in Central Africa. Alternately, is there anything in this new “modern” paradigm of community forests that could bolster

communities' attempts to preserve their sacred forests? To achieve on the ground actual conservation of biodiversity, we need to seek feasible options, and not rely on idealized academic models.

Integrating past indigenous practices into current social processes such as is now attempted for community forests--whose foundations were laid in different contextual frameworks--remains very topical, all the more so as these attempts have often resulted in well-known anecdotal failures. In fact, this problematic encompasses all development sectors: health, agriculture, and environment sectors, to just name a few, have been marred by ill-conceived attempts at integrating and adapting past paradigms and practices.

Exclusionary models of forest conservation such as forest reserve and parks has proven inefficient and has given rise to reflections on alternatives that would better suit local realities and, above all, result in the actual participation and commitment of the local population. A question of paramount significance for governments and the international community in devising policies for sustainable management of natural resources is "What is the best way to involve local community in the management of natural resources and improve the livelihood of rural dwellers"? Therefore, field researching to compare and contrast the management, institutions and meanings of community forests and sacred forests in order to understand the historical background as well as impediments to effective community forest development and implementation became evident.



Our fieldwork was carried out as follows: We spent one month (July 2006) understanding the traditional values and management of forest resources in general and of trees in particular in four villages in the southern province of Cameroon; three weeks (November 2006) in the western province updating our data from sacred forests in three villages namely Bahouan, Bamenyam and Bati; and one month (mid-February to mid-March 2007) intensively surveying six community forests in the eastern province of Cameroon (in the administrative quarters called “cantons” of Bidjouki and Konambébé).

Several social sciences survey tools were used, a) the Active Method of Participative Research (MARP) that has a competitive advantage to create a climate of trust and friendliness between the populations and the research team. In fact, each sacred forest in the Western Province of Cameroon is a subject to taboo which people often do not like to stretch; b) Venn and flux diagrams to identify resources extraction from the sacred forests, in which form and to analyze resources dynamic within and outside sacred forests; c) pyramid of problems and solutions to master and rank problems occurring in the management of sacred forest and corresponding local solutions; d) participatory mapping that helped locate forested zones and gallery forests areas, agricultural zones, streams and rivers plus most important infrastructures in the villages to understand how sacred forest fit into these various components; e) matrix of score to capture the dynamic of sacred forests areas, wildlife population, wood and timber quality/extraction, gifts, intrusions, penalty , and forfeit performed; e) focus group interview to factor into our research different age groups and gender consideration; f) participatory observations to collect some information from our own observations; g) semi structured interview to

collect supplemental information to contrast with what has been collected using other tools such as matrix of scores; g) botany and ethno-botany sampling techniques for the inventory of plant species, and the understanding of their local uses and management. All these tools enabled us to collect a data set on hurdles in implementing community forests, the function and functionality of sacred forests, the traditional use and management of forest resources with an emphasis on trees. We have also collected information from the existing literature and synthesized it with data from the field.

These undertakings highlighted the growing consensus among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, development agencies and progressive-minded governments that community forests hold the key to the future of the forests. Empirical research into community forests systems has found that secure rights to well-managed forest resources can contribute significantly to rural livelihoods as well as conservation. Small scale technologies such as mobile chainsaws used for small-scale logging in community forests can bring benefits with virtually no significant ecosystem disturbance.

However, community forests now being offered as models to increase local community's participation in forest management, thus asserting that they could leverage poverty at the forest margin, are more of a myth than reality, as they fail to take into account social, cultural and economic realities in rural communities.

Community forest as defined in the decree No 94/436/PM of 23 August 1994 article 3 (11) is flawed and can hardly serve the purpose for which it was intended. It alienates the customary rights of local communities and is bent in favor of a small category of well-

connected elite who are given free rein to acquire more forest land for exploitation and destruction.

To obtain a community forest, the community concerned must have a legal personality in the form of associations, cooperatives, common initiative group and economic interest groups<sup>1</sup>. David Brow *et al.* 2001 (4); argue that nowhere in the Cameroon legislation is there any attempt to define the nature of the “community” into whose hands the management of a “community forest” is to be placed.

On the ground, community forests are perceived by local communities as a smokescreen thrown up by the government and international donors to confuse them. None of the steps required to be granted a community forest is within reach of local communities – Just to form a legal entity required by the law to compete for a community forest is a nightmare as this form of legalized entity is unprecedented in any traditional social arrangements. Consequently, they are forced to collaborate with unscrupulous private sector operators in destroying their own resources for meager returns devised to keep them in the bondage of subsistence economy. It could even be argued that community forests by no means belong to local communities but to the elite or private enterprises that can afford the forbidding costs of pre-award bureaucratic red tape.

Studies of land tenure and customary rights have simply been discarded in the entire process of setting up these community forests. Many community forest lands overlap

---

<sup>1</sup> Manual of the procedures for the attribution, and norms for the management of community forest, April 1998, 12

with forests' logging concessions, private plantations and other community forests (see table 4 in the annex). The notion of community as defined by the procedure manual does not match any traditional social structure. Worse still; even when a community has struggled and acquired a community forest, third parties would move in and log the forest with paltry or no benefits at all for local communities.

However, despite efforts by national government and international organizations in the last decade to achieve a tradeoff between the sustainable management of forest resources and poverty alleviation in rural milieu, threats to biodiversity and ecosystem destruction continue to increase. In Cameroon, one of the most recent attempts at conservation is the development of community forests to ensure environmental stability, boost biodiversity conservation, meet basic needs of people, and protect the customary rights of tribal and other people dwelling in and around forests. Our study shows that community forests hardly achieved any of the above goals; their environmental sustainability is doubtful. The main objective of a community forest is resource extraction and primarily timber. The simple management plan required as a tool to monitor timber extraction in community forests is weak and in most cases not monitored by the appropriate supervisory entity in ensuring that application on the ground is in compliance with environmental sustainability.

Community forests, though small in surface area (less or equal to 5,000 ha), are scattered (see Map 1. in the annex) all over the forested area in the vast swath of southern

Cameroon. Their exploitation/disturbance will fragment the forest and pose serious threat to mega fauna's movements as well as increase the risk of unsustainable hunting.

Twelve years after the enactment of the 1994 forestry laws, community forest is nothing more than an attempt at legally allowing local communities, through a stringent bureaucratic process, to cut down timber trees in a given circumscribed area (generally around five thousand hectares) within their agro-forestry zones, which extend five kilometer wide along roadsides, for their own uses and for a renewable five-year period. It supersedes the former "*permis de coupe*" (or felling authorizations) that were granted to individuals and were restricted to a determined number of trees.

In most of the countries of the world, there are many examples of appropriate traditional forest management, in which environmentally sustainable use is assured while benefiting local communities however the literature on the subject is sparse. In Nepal for instance, existence of traditional forest management systems was hardly reported before about 1975 (Kunstadter, 1978).

The case of "sacred forests" should not be misconstrued as indigenous nature conservation methods, as conservation as such was never traditionally conceptualized as a policy objective by these communities. Sacred forests were instead a set of ancestral domains set aside under customary law whereby access to forest and use of resources therein were adjudicated by customary laws and regulations that yielded unintended conservation benefits and services. Despite the fact that their purpose is not intentionally

conservation, there is merit in taking them into consideration in crafting new conservation models of the likes of community forests.

“Sacred forests,” can thus be reframed and understood as positive “forest lifestyles” in that some human actions in forest areas could bring about positive impacts on nature. This impact has been positive until external factors changed traditional contexts, resulting in the collapse of these very contexts. For instance, in the past forests and forest resources were never considered as marketable commodities.

Indigenous populations have both symbolic and economic relationship with the forest. Their perception of the forest determines the mode of access and the manner in which forest resources are used.

In societies where once kinships and traditional authority were pillars for local governance, “traditional” chieftaincies have nowadays turned into auxiliary branches of central government whose interests are alien to those of their own constituencies. During the colonial period, local chiefs maintained horizontal relation with the central government to help it collect what was called “*Impôt libérateur*” (a form of “liberatory” taxation that left communities free to self-govern locally). In the postcolonial period, with the centralized government control of all resources, traditional societal structures have all but collapsed, including sacred forests. But these sacred forests could still be revived and inspire the development of community forests to suit local conditions and foster conservation efforts.

Forest resources management decisions and actions lacking in social understanding and acceptance are doomed to ultimately fail. Both models—community forests and sacred forests—seem, to date, trapped between two opposing models of sociopolitical conceptions. It should be now evident that new models and approaches that would balance “local need with central government sovereign role are needed to achieve conservation. Ideally, this third model should be hybrid enough to take into consideration the two models of sociopolitical organizations as its sustainability will depend on integrating local judgments, the level of trust of its managers, local experiences, local ideas about what “natural” means, the degree of risk seen in management actions, and strong reliance on local values or experiential knowledge in addition to academic scientific knowledge as well as reassessing the growing need by the central government to exercise unmitigated power over natural resources. This new paradigm should thus be multidimensional to benefit the environment and sustain healthy communities. We call this the “*Friendly Forests*” model.

## **CHAPTER I: COMMUNITY FORESTS**

### **1.1. What is a Community forest?**

According to the manual of the procedures for the attribution, and norms for the management, of community forests from the Ministry of the Environment and Forests in Cameroon (1998. 9), a “community forest is a forest forming part of the non-permanent forest, which is covered by a management agreement between a village community and the forestry administration. Management of such forests is the responsibility of the village community concerned, with the help or technical assistance of the forestry administration<sup>2</sup>” In turn, a community forest management agreement is defined as a contract whereby the forestry administration entrusts parts of the national forest to a community with a view to its management, conservation and use for the benefit of that community. In respect to the Cameroon Forestry decree<sup>3</sup>, the agreement should be accompanied by a simple management plan which sets out the activities to be undertaken

Furthermore, forest products of all kinds resulting from the management of the community forests belong solely to the village communities with the exception of those forbidden by law<sup>4</sup>.

According to the decree No 94/436/PM of 23 August 1994 article 28(3), in order to secure a community forest, the community has to be incorporated as either one of the following incorporated entities<sup>5</sup> with relevant bylaws:

---

<sup>2</sup> Article 3(11) of the 1994 Cameroon forestry decree No 04/436/PM of August 23, 1994, fixing the modalities of application of forests regime.

<sup>3</sup> Article 3(16) of the 1994 Cameroon Forestry decree.

<sup>4</sup> Law No 94/01 of January 1994 on Forests, fauna and fishing regime, article 37 (3).



- Associations
- Cooperatives
- Common Initiative Groups; or
- Economic Interest Groups.

Each incorporated entity can be granted only one community forest; but an individual who holds membership in other entities can carry out activities in more than one community forest.

### **1.2. Why was this concept developed?**

The predatory nature of the state, the centralized structure of forest management and the state's disregard of local populations' rights are the major causes of deforestation and forest degradation. In Cameroon, as in all former French African colonies, the state is the exclusive proprietor of and manager of all the above and below - ground resources, including forests. The state thus accumulates all the wealth and resources of the country, and ignores the basic needs of local communities. Bigombe (1998) argues that local populations have been marginalized in forest management since colonial times. Focus was put more on how to control land with the state dictating everything and monopolizing the flows and networks of the use of resources.

More specifically, local communities have been marginalized in the management of forest revenues though they have always been traditionally stakeholders in forest management. Lip service for communities' political rights to regain this role has been paid by the state for the past twenty years or so, with no palpable results.

---

<sup>5</sup> See definitions in table boxes in the annexes

The community forestry process has not been a natural development; it is a governmental response to external pressure (GECEC Report, 2006). In 1978, the World Bank issued its influential policy paper entitled *Forestry: Sector Policy Paper*, which signaled a major shift in its forestry activities away from industrial forestry towards environmental protection and meeting local needs. This shift was claimed to “to reflect the reality that the major contribution of forestry to development will come (...) from its impact on indigenous people (...) in developing countries” (FAO, 1991).

The government of Cameroon, trapped between a rock and a hard place of macro policies pressure and its desire to retain centralized control over forest resources wealth, has attempted to improve the extent to which the interests of the populations living near the forest are taken into account. In the laws No 81-13 of 21 November 1981 and in subsequent decrees of application No 83-169 of April 1983 these interests of the populations were only provided for in non-classified forests, and within socially based initiatives relating to forest use (use right). Unfortunately, none of these strategies to promote better forest management succeeded in curbing the scale of forest destruction in Cameroon. Instead the country witnessed a ‘disastrous’ management of forest resources: logging companies ‘mining’ the forest, uncontrolled allocation of logging licenses, widespread illegal logging, poaching and extensive slash and burn agriculture practices. The 1994 reform on forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulations, promulgated under law No 94/01 of 20 January 1994 by the President of Cameroon, conducted in a context of restructuring the political environment, and under pressure from calls for democratization, decentralization and devolution in a macroeconomic environment, for

the first time formalized the involvement of local populations with the hope that this will forge management partnerships with local communities for

- Environmental stability;
- Biodiversity conservation;
- Meeting basic needs of people; and
- Protection of the customary rights of tribal and other communities living in and around forests.

However, looking at how the community forests are scattered like islands in a sea (see Map I), the environmental sustainability of the whole undertaking appears at a glance already questionable as logging all of these dotted areas will create large openings into the forests canopy with all the subsequent inadvertent consequences to forest structure and biodiversity.

### **1.3. Unfolding of community forests**

Much water has flowed under the bridge since the community forests concept was first articulated. In fact, the Cameroon law No 94/01 of January 1994 in its title one, article 20 (1, 2 and 3) divided up the national forest territory into two domains: a) permanent forests which are areas definitively affected as forests or and wildlife habitat and b) non-permanent forest which are forest areas that can be affected for other type of uses set aside. In the Chapter Two of the Cameroon law No 94/01 of January 1994, section one and two divides the non permanent forest into communal forests and community forests<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> See table box 1 in the annexes

In April 1998, The Government of Cameroon through its Ministry of Environment and Forest issued the manual of the procedures for the attribution, and norms for the management of community forests that further detailed the administrative procedures and norms relevant to the attribution and management of community forests.

From this point onwards, the race for community forests took off. In 2003, the database at the community forestry unit at the Ministry of Environment and Forest showed that 256 dossiers were filed and were at different levels of processing (see table 2 in the annex).

In 2004, the community forestry department at the Ministry of Forest and Environment in Yaoundé offered the following statistics: a total of 63 community forests were granted (CIII), 56 reserved but not yet granted (CII), and 120 in the process of being reserved (CI). See table 3 in the annex

In 2006, the database at the ministry of Environment compiled by the World Resources Institute (WRI) under Global Forest Watch program (GFW) showed the following statistics: 116 Community forests fully granted out of 256 recorded; with 22 expanding into logging concessions, private plantations, and forest reserves or into community forests. As shown in table 4 in the annex.

However, it is argued that, "Wherever local forest-dependent people's rights are ignored, whenever they are excluded from forest resources and their management or marginalized by external forestry managers or forced to interact 'illegally' with their natural ecosystem,

the results are socially unacceptable, economically inequitable and ecologically devastating." (Campbell & Raharjo, Feb 2000). Furthermore, States should "obtain the consent of tribal and indigenous peoples, as expressed through their own representative institutions, in decisions affecting their future." (ILO Convention 169, Article 6.1a)

Twelve years after the enactment of the 1994 forestry laws, community forests have become small (around five thousand hectares maximum) legalized logging concessions granted to communities through costly administrative processes within a determined area of their agroforestry zones, which are strips extending five kilometers in width along both sides of the road sides over a period of five years renewable. This decree supersedes and abolishes what were once known as "*permis de coupe*" or individual felling authorizations that were issued to individuals and restricted to a limited number of trees. Is a community forest a type of participatory forestry? Djeumo (2001) explains that, in Cameroon, community forests have been seen to be the doorway into a more broadly defined process of participatory forestry. Participatory forestry can include all aspects of tree resource management whether on farm or in the forest and whether with individuals or communities. This clearly calls for the need for a significant investment of time and resources to address the critical issue of how best to establish community forests. Yet, there is also a concern that too narrow a focus will one day lead to a situation in which a large number of community forests are scattered like islands in a sea of unregulated forest resource use. The indications are that, in the longer term, an integrated and participatory landscape approach to planning is essential, with community forests seen as just one integrated piece of a bigger landscape with intra and extra ecological functional links.

#### 1.4. Impediments to the development of community forests

Impediments to the development of community forest can be divided in two categories;

Pre and post-award impediments.

While the literature is very rich in documenting the pre-award impediments, very little is known about post-award development of community forests. That's why our fieldwork research sought to specifically focus on the latter, though we will briefly review the bureaucratic red tape of the pre-award process. Our findings stem from six community forests operational in the eastern province of Cameroon (see table I below).

**Table I: Community Forests Surveyed**

Entity that owns the community forest	Canton	Date granted	Date when exploitation started	Number of years exploited
BIBIMBO	Bimou Bidjouki	2003	2004	3
DJANKORA	Bimou Bidjouki	2006	-	-
ESSAYONS VOIR	Bimou Bidjouki	2006	-	-
MBIELABOT	Konambébé	2001	2002	4
MPEMOG	Bimou Bidjouki	2004	2004	2
MPEWANG	Bimou Bidjouki	2006	2006	Less than a year

##### 1.4.1. Pre-award impediments

Several studies have substantially documented the pre-award hurdles for applying and acquiring a community forest. We have retained six of them to illustrate the costly bureaucratic hurdles local communities face in securing these community forests.

Community forests started with the promulgation of the 1994 Cameroon Forestry law (No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994 on forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulation and its subsequent implementation decree No 94/436/PM of 23 August 1994. But the first edition of the Manual of the procedures for the attribution and norms for the management of community forests was released only in three years later (1998) “Manual of the Procedures for the attribution, and norms for the management, of Community forests – MINEF Cameroon, 1998”. This delay slowed the process and led to discouragement of various actors who were so eager to see this section of the law turned into reality.

High transaction costs and complicated application and management requirements can deter communities from participating in Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), or make it financially unsustainable for them to do so. In Cameroon, the application procedure to gain legal recognition as a community forest is lengthy and centralized. The costs for communities are significant—even more so because management rights are granted for only a ten-year period. To apply for a community forest, full application file must include the following documents (MINEF, 1998):

1. A stamped request laying out the proposed community forest objectives;
2. A 1:200,000 scale map showing the proposed forest;
3. A certified copy of the community’s incorporation document, including a copy of its bylaws;
4. A description of the activities previously carried out in the proposed forest;

5. The curriculum vitae (CV) of the personnel responsible for management; and
6. Minutes of the consultation meeting as stipulated in article 28 (1) of the decree No 94/436/PM of 23 August 1994.

Putting together these six pieces of the puzzle at the village community level is a sheer nightmare. The cost for the complete dossier varies a lot. Martha K *et al* (2001:23). came up with the figure of 1.5 to 2.5 Million cfa (US\$3,000 to \$4,500) upfront investments; Enyegue (1997) quoted by Martha K (2001: 23) estimated the same process at 29 Million cfa (\$ 58,000), of which the staggering sum of 23,5 Million cfa (\$47,000) went to forest inventory alone (2001:23); and in Fomete's estimation quoted by Martha K (2001:23) amounted 14 million cfa (\$28,000) (2001:23). While some international NGOs such as SNV (Netherlands Development Organization) and DFID (Department for International Development) are helping local communities to get organized in applying for community forests, none of these organizations is willing to foot the bill of pre-investment costs. This has a tremendous effect on how community forests are managed once the status has been granted, as described in the section dealing with post-award constraints below.

The operations of the Unit responsible to process community forests application within the ministry of Environment and Forestry (MINEF) have been for a long time reinforced in personnel to speed up their capacity. However, the processing of applications for Community forest permits is too slow. In 2003, 256 applications were filed at different levels but as of 2004, only 63 community forests were granted with proper legal permits. In the meantime, forest areas for which community applications were pending were



already being logged by large-scale operators, dashing any hopes of establishing small-scale operations.

Technically, communities using and managing the forest in a communal way in the form of the incorporation provided by the legislation in force in Cameroon (art. 28 (3) of the Decree No 94/436/PM of 23 August 1994 is unprecedented. Acceptable legal entities in the Cameroon law are: Associations, common initiative groups, and cooperatives or economic interest groups (see table box 2). None of these actually provide an ideal framework for the management of a community forest.

Prior studies of land tenure and customary right have been discarded in the entire process of setting up community forests. Many community forests' land expands or overlaps with agroforestry zones, thus causing the intractable problem of timber extraction from a cocoa plantation, which is the sole property of an individual or a family who need to be compensated for damages. Some community forests expand their rights into forests concessions, private plantations, and other community forests.

The process of acquiring a community forest in the eastern Province of Cameroon is reinforcing the segregation between communities (between Pygmies Baka and Bantu ethnic communities, for example). The international NGO World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) helping the community to organize into a legal entity to apply for community forest has gone far into the process and has two community forests reserved pending simple management plans for approval in the Mambele canton Bangando. Of the two

community forests reserved, one belongs exclusively to the Bantus and the other is for the Baka Pygmies for the simple reason that Pygmies have always been marginalized and considered as separate group of people, although these two entities live together and share the same resources in the same community. Though this segregation help keeps Pygmies identity, it may be source of tensions if one community happens to be richer in natural resources such as high valuable timber species and Non Timber Forest Products.

#### **1.4.2. Post-award hurdles**

Ideally, policy decisions should be made on the ground of empirical biophysical and social science findings, in Cameroon, the new forest policy enactment approach emerged in response to donors compelling for more local community participation in the forestry sector. Now, trying to adjust the donors' requirement with empirical field realities proves almost impossible. In the case of community forests, it is only after the enactment of the law that many organizations including the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) started on the ground research to understand its applicability and its functionality. Abundant literature on community forests in Cameroon dates only 2001 whereas the law was enacted in 1994.

One of the community forests we surveyed, Mbielabot, as shown in the table I, page 15 above, is one of the oldest in Cameroon. It was granted this status in 2001 and has been operational since 2002. Another site called "Mpewang" is one of the youngest 2006 with less than a year in operation. However, problems in exploiting these community forests are similar, regardless of the location, the community concerned, the number of years

they have been operational, and the type of partner providing technical support to the community.

Both internal and external factors shape the implementation of community forests on the ground.

#### **1.4.2.1. Internal Factors**

It is encoded in any local people's mindset in Cameroon that government claims of livelihood improvement should be taken with a grain of salt. One elder in Mboy village in the eastern province of Cameroon confessed that he and his community decided to embark in community forest with the hope that this would help them get out of poverty. However, as time goes by, he and his communities have grown poorer. He wondered whether the government would ever stop cheating people. More over, some names designating community forest are quite illustrative; "Essayons voir" meaning "We'll see." This show the hesitation communities have in embarking in this process.

Gaps in access to information about resource rights can also cause community forestry programs to work against the people they should support. In a blatant manipulation of the system in Cameroon, local elites in one region used community forestry laws to gain management rights over forests in another region, taking advantage of communities that were not yet aware of how to use the forestry law to protect their rights (Smith 2005:14). Two cases are invoked here to illustrate this point. One pastor, elite of the Masea village used the new forestry law, under the provision for community forest to apply and acquire

in 2001, a community forest on behalf of the GIC Mbielabot from the Bomba and Ngoko division, locality where he was posted for ecumenical services. He logs and manages that community forest without any return to the community living in the surroundings.

Another attempt happened in 2002 in Mbol 2 village located at 55 km on the road to Yokadouma-Mpwapack- Lomie with the GIC MIREBE where the deputy mayor of Yokadouma decided to create a community forest in a village he does not belong to. He went so far as reserving the forest but until today he hasn't completed the file to be granted that forest.

#### **1.4.2.2. External Factors:**

Policies are unlikely to be successfully if tackled by generalized solutions or approaches that address only a single element of a system. The anthropogenic study of the relation between the harvest and use of tree products in the community was never done prior to the wake of community forests. This practice is often embedded in complex resource and social systems. In fact, most of the factors that affect our ability to intervene with forestry solutions are often of non-forestry in nature. They are primarily human factors, connected with the ways women and men organize the use of their land and other resources. They therefore require situation-specific approaches.

When community forest was first introduced in Cameroon, there was little discussion on how to define a "community." Nowhere in Cameroon's legislation is there any attempt to define the nature of the "community" into whose hands the management of a

“community forest” is to be placed. Djeumo discusses at length the different types of legal entity that a “community” can choose (association, cooperative, common initiative group, economic interest group) to adopt and, the fact that none of the options available adequately reflects any of the types of community that exist in reality (2001: 7). The heterogeneity of the notion of “community” is highlighted by Ruth Malleon together with the difficulties that this poses for community-based resource management.

Malleon’s area of research is the English-speaking South-Western Province, where high levels of population movements are traditional, with important implications for the definition of social identities. Ruth Malleon concludes that understanding the diversity of community identities is essential if appropriate “community-based” forest management initiatives are to be promoted in such an environment (2001: 11). In-depth anthropological studies of what precisely is a “community” are a prerequisite to any setting up of a community forest.

The literature defines community as a body of people having common rights, privileges, or interests, or living in the same place under the same laws and regulations. Yet, community is a word that encompasses many different types of social groups, organizations, and/or institutions. These may include locations such as villages or groups of villages, community councils, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, community banks, or kinship groups. Local communities can be non-territorial, as the importance of urban-based people in the decision-making of their local community of origin is considerable in Cameroon. For purposes of forest conservation in the Congo Basin, communities must be defined by geographic, spatial, ethnic and economic criteria,

with networks linking community members across landscapes, and even continents, increasingly factored into conservation planning. There is a greater awareness that communities in Cameroon's forest region are generally socially heterogeneous, but there is little understanding on how diverse these communities are and the implications this may have for achieving community-based forest management.

Community forestry is defined as “any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity. It embraces a spectrum of situations ranging from woodlots in areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest products at the household, artisan or small industry level to generate income” (FAO, 1978). None of the six community forests we surveyed matched this FAO definition of community forestry. Instead, one would argue that the community forest in Cameroon is an organized corrupt system to give free rein to timber extraction in so-called agroforestry zone by elites and private investors, thus worsening the impoverishment of already pauperized local communities. The photograph I in the annex features a well built from the meager resources earned from managing a community forest for about two years in “Ndongo” village. Meanwhile housing quality and conditions are still miserable (see in the background of the photograph 1 in the annex).

The notion of “community forest” is suffering from considerable confusion and lack of clarity as to its nature and purpose. In practice, ongoing activities in these community forests are timber extraction and subsistence agriculture, subsistence hunting and

gathering, undermining the primary objective of getting local population involved in sustainable forest management. To some degree, this confusion has been compounded by the concurrent old concept of “social forestry,” a term for which no clear definition exists, and which is used by some interchangeably with community forestry and by others to describe an implicitly narrower spectrum of activities surrounding timber extraction.

The high transaction costs and complicated application and management requirements can deter communities from participating in Community Based Natural Resources Management, or make it financially unsustainable for them to do so. Indeed an amount ranging from \$26,000 to \$48,000 upfront investment is required to process files and acquire a community forests (Martha K 2001:23). Because of this overhead beyond local communities’ capacity, they are forced to enter into contractual arrangements with either elites or privates companies that have the financial resources required to process the files and offset the pre-award hurdles. In doing so, local communities always get duped because they do have neither the knowledge of the law required to write a contract nor the means to sue or make a court case in case of non compliance (see table box 3 in the annex).

The main income-generating activity and the compelling factor to run for community forests is timber exploitation, however, logging in a community forest has to be done according to the law, in small-scale fashion with chainsaw and mobile saw (Lukas mill). Because poor local communities do not have the means or the equipment required to extract timber in the community forest, it can be argued that the idea of community forest

was not meant to help these impoverished communities but elites or private investors that are capable to bring in equipment and means required to log the community forests (see table box 4 in the annex).

Therefore, practically, community forests do not really belong to the communities as they can't benefit from them though they bear the legal property title.

Community forest as defined in the decree would hardly serve the purpose for which it's intended in its current form. It alienates customary rights and favors elites and the private sector to acquire more forest land for exploitation / destruction. In fact, among the six community forests we surveyed, though legally on the agreement the community forests belong to local communities, practically on the ground none belong to local communities per se and the typology in term of who is practically logging and gaining most resources from community forests led to the identification of five different community forests.

#### **- Logging companies' community forests**

Logging companies identifies the area to be billed as community forest, provides all required investment and follows up the file up to the attribution of the title. Once the status of community forest is granted, the company turns around to log the forest.

Djeumo, 2001, 10 argues that; in Yokadouma, in East Cameroon, a community was paid 4 millions cfa (\$ 8,000) by a logging company for the future use of their forests. This is a common practice in most areas whereby the process to acquire community forests is financed by logging companies that will often release considerable sums of money on the



basis of a contract signed with the community, with the intention of proceeding to an immediate and short term felling of the timber in the aforementioned forests. Moreover, how the \$8,000 got distributed among community members concerned was an affliction as traditional chief lifted up their authority to get most of the share.

#### **- Elite community forests**

The elite are people with the wherewithal to follow up the procedures and compile the documents required to file for community forest legal incorporation. In doing so, these elites often present themselves as local community representatives and responsible to negotiate contracts with logging companies for future logging of the community forest; establishing a direct business link with the private sector. When money comes, these elites always cheat local community members through severe embezzlements. This happened in Mbimboué, an allocated forest which was almost completely logged without any real benefits for the village, and where certain members of the boards (élites) were sentenced to jail for embezzlement.

#### **- NGO community forests**

Environmental NGOs, with the aim to improve local livelihood and foster conservation agenda, helps the community to go through the entire process by providing all the technical background work and local communities most of the time through money lenders, provide the funding. Once the status of community forest is granted, logging becomes a serious problem, forcing the community to enter in partnership with a private company that most of the time ends up cheating the community. In Mambélé canton

Bangando – east of Cameroon, WWF is helping two communities to acquire community forests without any provision on how these forests will be logged and how benefit will be shared among community members.

#### **- Donors community forests**

Donors, in advancing their agenda, and to prove to the international audience that the notion of community forest is effective, provide all required wherewithal and technical assistance necessary to acquire the status of community forest. After this status is granted, the community is left alone to find ways of exploiting the community forest resources which in the end turns into a nightmarish experience for local communities. The case of (GIC) Biwegui- Bi – Mboy in charge of the management of Bibimbo community forest which experienced in 2005 a swindle of about \$28,000 by a private company, namely “ONY BROS” is illustrative.

#### **- Government community forests**

The government in response to macro policy pressure (for natural resources decentralization) wants to prove to the international community that something is being done to help reduce poverty at the local community level. However, once the status of community forest is granted, it is then left to the community to find tools to log the community forest. But, due to lack of upfront capital to buy chainsaw and mobile saw necessary for exploiting the community forest, local communities end up not benefiting. The Common Interest Group “Essayons Voir” and association “Njankora” in the East province of Cameroon cannot even find a third party to log their community forest for the

simple reason that it is located in very remote area in the forest with almost no road access. Logging under these circumstances will result in potential high transaction cost with mere or negative economic return. Though from the conservation standpoint this is an excellent outcome, this is not the local communities' main purpose to apply for community forest.

Money causes tensions if rules to properly manage community forests are not determined. *The manual of the procedures for the attribution, and norms for the management of community forests* failed to include how the cost and benefits will be shared within the legal entity managing the community forests whose rules and bylaws no longer stem from customary rights. In spite of the election of an executive board during a general assembly and the description of the tasks of each member in the bylaws of the association as required by the law, we found that all agreements were called into question as soon as real or potential money arrived in the village. Suddenly everyone claimed to have responsibility for, or to be a representative of, the community. At that moment, the customary power structures emerged (based on clans, elites, individualism, and tribalism). Unfortunately, too often, the customary leaders do not make their presence felt during the long periods of community work required to prepare the applications.

Communal money management is not part of the traditional way of life of either the local Bantus or the pygmy peoples in the East province of Cameroon (Martha Klein 2001, 19). Furthermore, the arrival of money makes it glaringly obvious that hardly any community spirit exists. Only family lineages count and even within these there is no guarantee of

concerted and coherent management. The case of the Common Initiative Group “Mpewang” where the collectif of traditional chiefs where the community forest is located required a salary of \$120 per month for each of them, prerequisite for any community forest exploitation is quite enlighten.

Community cohesion is still quite nonexistent and organizational and management ability is still at an embryonic stage. This observation leads to seriously question the validity of contracts of community forests’ exploitation being granted. Again this problem goes back to the lack of a sociologically valid concept of “community.” There may be a group of people who can define the boundaries of a given forest as belonging to them through their ancestors, and there may be another group that bands together to start a small enterprise but these groups are not in any sense “corporate entities” that have experience managing sums of money together. Women tend to manage money in groups together (Njangui) but this is a restricted and small-scale process for savings. Neither customary nor elected officials have learned accountability to a constituency and, governance is still based on patrimonial relations (hierarchy of favors).

Even where communities have received technical guidance and mentoring from international NGOs and development agencies to organize themselves into legal incorporations and to acquire a community forest, logging for commercial purpose has been outrageous. The local power structures have been remolded to fit the law, and not the law to fit the structures. The local system is patriarchal, and clan-based, not village-based. The chief is not necessarily the seat of real authority, for example. Many of the communities while existing on paper; do not exist in reality. This leaves the community

forests with a lack of legitimacy and authority. Policing, managing and harvesting timber can often split a community apart as they attempt to enter the market especially as money comes in. (Ben Olander, 2005).

The formulation of Cameroon's 1994 Forestry Law was influenced by the World Bank, the Government of Cameroon and French politicians, as well as by logging companies and individual Cameroonian politicians. Their actions were motivated by development objectives, direct material interests and political concerns (Ekoko, 2000. 24). This clearly shows that communities were not consulted. Consequently, the concept of community forest heralded as one innovation of the Cameroon's 1994 Forestry Law carried from its inception elements of failure.

In sum, the concept of community forest though well thought as a means to comply with international communities and donors pressuring for more involvement of local communities in Natural Resources Management is, suffering in its application from several hurdles; cultural, political, technical and economical that puts the entire model below redemption and requires a drastic change in the paradigm.

## **CHAPTER II: TRADITIONAL FORM OF FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT.**

### **SECTION I. THE CASE OF SACRED FORESTS**

#### **2.1. Rationale**

Local communities are desperately in need of new technologies and methods that can sustainably alleviate poverty in rural areas. However, understanding their spatial and temporal arrangement, social structure, customary rights, and the anthropogenic relation they have with the surrounding resources is vital. Several attempts to introduce new technologies and fashions of forest resources management into local communities “know-how” and practices have failed. Most of them vanishing shortly after their conceivers are gone. For many years (1991 to 1998), IITA and ICRAF in their endeavor to cope with decreasing soil fertility, invasive weeds such as *chromolaena odorata* due to the forest devastating slash and burn agriculture, have introduced several technologies in several villages (Awae, Nkolfoulou, Nkometou, Mvoutesi, Mengomo, Mekomeyos) in the southern humid forest zone of Cameroon that failed to take root. Several reasons accounted to this failure; almost all being social and cultural than scientific.

- Trees used by ICRAF in alley farming to improve soil fertility are generally non indigenous species therefore create an unwillingness climate among farmers who then view the trees as “ICRAF tress” rather than their own.

- Alley farming systems using soil fertility tree species such as *Leuceana sp*, *Flamengia macrophylla*, *Gliricidia sepium*, *calliandra calothyrsus*, failed to be adopted. The technology required high labor cost to maintain alley farm plots, putting more burden on woman who are generally responsible for the food crop field where the soil fertility issues is being trying to be addressed; farmers claimed that species like *calliandra calothyrsus* were drying the soil and driving bees in the field rendering the field impracticable when the sun arose as they were getting bitten by the bees. More over, alley farming usually does not contribute to replenishing phosphorous and potassium, which are often limiting factors in African soil (AFNETA, 1998)
- Weeds control planting cover plant species like *Mucuna pruriens var utilis* in the fallow also failed to be adopted for the simple reason that farmers in the humid forest zones of Cameroon harvest crops in the fields sequentially starting with groundnuts and vegetables (oignons, folons etc...) following by the cassava that is harvested throughout the year, other crop like bananas are harvested later. This progressive way of harvesting crop from the same field does not give a clear cut idea between the harvesting period and the time the field is turned into fallow rendering the time to plan cover crop difficult to capture. Moreover, even when a food crop fields seem to be abandoned into thick bush of *chromolaena odorata*, farmers still come back and harvest some left over cassava and bananas; this period is called “Mbindi”. By the time the food crop field is progressively turned into fallow, the land is covered with two to three meter high *chromolaena O.* bush

plus some pioneer tree and shrub species like *trema orientalis* and *triumfetta cordifolia*). At this stage, having to plant cover crop like *mucuna pruriens var utilis* would require additional labor to slash the bush, turning this technology into failure.

- Introduction by SODERIM in the 1980s of new crop variety like lowland rice for off seasons food supply in the “Mbo” Plain of Cameroun failed because of labor intensity and rice has never been a staple food in that part of Cameroon.

Local community managing forest resources and forest ecosystems goes back centuries. There is an abundant literature documenting this century-old practice (Pampa, Mukherjee, 2003 and Guha, Ramchandra, 1989). Several questions are to be asked about ways communities managed their resources. Why are the same communities that developed forms of forest management today reluctant to adopt and/or are opposed to new approaches such as community forests that are meant in essence to generate sustainable livelihoods and to devolve more power to impoverished local communities? Are there lessons to be drawn from traditional uses and belief systems able to motivate local communities in participating into these new approaches? To answer these questions led us to undertake an in-depth study of three “Sacred Forests” in the western province of Cameroon where traditional kingdoms and kinships are still very strong and where belief systems are guiding principles to natural resources’ use and management (Villages Bahouan, Bamenyan, bati in the West province of Cameroon). The photograph 1 in annex figures a sacred forest in Bahouan village.



"Traditional" refers to customary beliefs and practices that the local people construe to have inherited from age-old practices of their communities. These beliefs and practices are thus held as local and indigenous, and not stemming from outside beliefs and practices.

## **2.2. Guiding objectives**

Guiding objectives of the study are to typologically describe and scrutinize how these Sacred Forests were created. These included understanding the management techniques and monitoring systems in place that sustained up to this today the survival of sacred forests, draw parallels between sacred forests and community forests in terms of procedure to secure them, as well as the rules and regulations that govern the management of these forests and finally to capitalize on lessons learned from this study to revert back into the development of community forests initiatives.

## **2.3. Research methodology**

We conducted pre-investigations using open discussions with the supreme chief of Bafoussam village. Discussions from which the supreme chief, based on his historical knowledge of sacred forests and the behavior of local communities surrounding them in the west province of Cameroon, recommended the selection of three sacred forest sites in three different villages (Bahouan, Bamenyam and Bati) for in-depth research (see map 2 in the annex)

To conduct this in-depth research, we used a combination of several social science methods and tools together with; the Active Participatory Research Method (MARP) technique used to interview both the village community and local administrative authorities. The advantage of MARP is its strength to build the trust and friendliness with participants. Trust and friendliness are keys in sacred forest research as the management of these forests is based on taboos and myths that local communities are often reluctant to share.

In each of these three villages, 60 people were surveyed (30 men and 30 women) sampled using age classes (more than 80 years old, between 40 to 80 years and less than 40 years) and different social categories that existed in the village (religious, administrative authorities, traders...) which the interviews took into considerations. In this way, participants comprised the old and the young from different social classes.

To ease data collection, several tools were used:

- Historical markers: This allowed the identification of big historical events (the pre and post colonization eras, the introduction of Christianity and, schools) to understand the evolutionary dynamic of sacred forests in the village.
- Large-scale participative maps performed during the study helped to map out important ecological zones including forested areas, gallery forests, agricultural lands (cropped or in fallow), various hydrosystems (streams and rivers) and most

important infrastructures in each of the three villages. (see photograph 2 and 3 in the annex)

- The matrix of scores: This allowed time series evolutionary study of the three sacred forests. Three periods were targeted; years 1930, 1960 and 2006. To capture information for year 1930, three focus-group meetings were held with elders, 80 years old or more; one in each of the three communities (see photograph 5 in the annex).

The following variables and indicators were used to study the evolution of each of the sacred forest; a) the area of the sacred forests; b) the animal population; c) vegetation type with emphasis on tree densities; d) the number of gifts to the sacred forests; e) the intensity of human intrusions into the sacred forests; f) the frequency of sacrifices performed in the sacred forests

- The Venn diagram helped to a) identify different stakeholders in the sacred forests; b) identify the nature of interventions in sacred forests and; c) identify the nature of interaction among stakeholders.
- The flux diagram was essential to document natural resources extraction in sacred forests, what is extracted and in which form and; to correlate the intra –extra interaction between sacred forest and its surroundings.

The access and control over sacred forests resources chart enabled the study of gender balance access right to sacred forest resources, and to document who control and who own the resources

- Pyramids of problems/solutions to identify, document and prioritize problems in sacred forests management and its potential realistic solutions

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather additional information to supplement those gathered using various social sciences tools listed above in bullets.

## **2.4. Definition, creation and typology of the sacred forests**

### **2.4.1. Definition of Sacred Forests**

According to Cameroonian law No 94/01 of January 20, 1994 article 2; forests are fields that include plants in which are predominately found trees, bushes and other sensitive kinds of products other than agrarian. These forests, be they natural or planted, play a role on protection, production, recreation and tourism. Added to these universally acknowledged functions, the forests in the Western province of Cameroon have other essential roles which find their foundation in cultural considerations and in beliefs in mythical and religious dimensions. Sacred forests are thus islets of natural forests kept for centuries by local populations. They are venerated and reserved for the cultural expressions of a community. Access and management are governed by traditional powers.

## **2.4.2. Creation of the sacred forest**

### **2.4.2.1. Sacred forest of the “quartier”**

In each village, the setting of these forests went side by side with the colonization of the space by the populations. The choice of the site was carried out by a marabout priest. In general, it is a portion of the natural forest that was carved out as a place of worship.

Most of the time, the choice of the site was determined either by a natural phenomenon or by a big event that took place at the site. Among these are waterfalls (case of the sacred forest of "Vava" in Bahouan), a water source (case of the sacred forest of Kossap in Bamenyam) and the burial place of a leader or forefather of the village (sacred forest "Fotoh" of Bamenyam.)

In the event of an absence in the district of a natural forest, a natural phenomenon or a big event that could determine the choice of the site, the community's shaman would be in charge of determining a place where a particular plant (*Ficus sp*) will be grown to indicate the place for worship. This space would then be fenced off and over the years it would be taken over by pioneer species to become a natural forest.

### **2.4.2.2. Sacred Forests of the chieftainships**

During the historical period of population, each group of individuals that settled at a location had to set up a traditional institution called “chieftainship.”. A leader or head (village chief) was then appointed to this institution. Most of the time, the head was the

individual to set up the institution. Three main criteria were considered to determine the site of the sacred forest of the chieftainship:

- The area had to be on the hillside and the main entrance oriented towards the hilltop so that it was accessed by descending the slope;
- Downstream from the slope, a section of the river bank of the stream contiguous to forest area had to act as border between the chieftainship and the neighboring plantations
- The hill slope had to be a natural forest in which had to be built downward, the huts of the leader and of his spouses as well as a hall for secret society meetings, while the remaining forest was then set up as a sacred forest.

As in the case of the sacred forest of the quartier, a space was then delimited and fenced off around the chieftainship for a forest and trees planted and grown in the event there was no natural forest on the hill slope.

These three criteria, when met, ensured the security of the village chief while at the same time reinforcing his power vis-à-vis his subjects. The main function of the sacred forest of the chieftainship was the venue for secret societies meetings made of notables, who were also the advisers of the village chief.

### **2.4.3. Typology of sacred forests.**

In the Western province of Cameroon, there are two different major types of sacred forests: The sacred forests of the “quartier” or places reserved for adorations, and the sacred forests of the “chieftainship.”

#### **2.4.3.1. The sacred forests of the “quartier”**

The sacred forests of the “quartier” are streams surrounded by natural forests found in virtually all “quartiers” of every village. They are shelters of the gods that are believed to protect or help local communities in the event of difficulties. In general, a shrine is constructed in each of these forests as a place of animistic worship. Sacrifices are regularly made to the gods either on individual or collective basis, according to the nature or the rationale of the sacrifices.

In all three villages surveyed (Bahouan, Bamenyam and Bati), a further differentiation was made between very powerful sacred forests and relatively less powerful sacred forests. The relative potency of a sacred forest of the “quartier” is linked to tribal use and religious formalities it plays in the rural community.

#### **2.4.3.2. The sacred forests of the chieftainships**

These are islets of natural forests found around the chieftainship of each village. They are places for ritual initiations of the various clans that make up the village. They are shelters where the big dignitaries and notables of the village organized in secret societies hold their weekly meetings, places where young leaders are initiated and can obtain the mystical powers required to fulfill their function in the community. They also are places where these dignitaries are buried when they die. The sacred forests of the chieftainship are micro-zoned into intervention zones called “quartiers,” six different in total.

- The quartier of the secrete societies
- The quartier of the princes

- The quartier of the queens
- The quartier of the tribal court
- The quartier of the prison
- The quartier place for the gods' worship

## **2.5. Role of Sacred Forest**

For centuries, local communities have developed numerous social and cultural values around the sacred forests in the western province of Cameroon which sustained the protection of these forests.

### **2.5.1. The role of customary court**

The sacred forests of the quartier as well as the sacred forests of the chieftainships played the role of social justice. In the sacred forest of Djeugo Bahouan, it is reported that when an accused person does not want to plead guilty to his offense, s/he is taken to inside the sacred forest where s/he must drink the "cadis" while claiming his/her innocence and suggesting to the gods of the forest the sanctions which could be inflicted to him/her in case s/he is judged guilty. Though there is no scientific basis for these practices, many people in the village claimed that they have witnessed situation where the gods from the sacred forests inflicted the sanctions upon the guilty people who would have suggested them.



### **2.5.2. The role of the places of worship**

For several centuries, mystical and religious beliefs contributed greatly to the protection of the sacred forests. These forests are believed to be sheltering the gods and the spirits of the founders and forefathers of the village. These gods are also believed to be protecting the village against its enemies and various natural calamities. Worship is regularly addressed to the gods during periods of crisis. This was the case when the people of Bahouan were confronted with the onslaught of crickets, diseases and tribal conflicts.

Worship of the gods of the forests can take place at any time at the request of any village dweller. This happens in general when the villager's son or daughter suffers from barrenness, serious illnesses, and ill fate or inadvertently violates a proscription of the sacred forest.

A holy place is constructed in every sacred forest in which religious rituals are held. These rituals consist of mainly in offerings or sacrifices to the gods. These sacrifices often accompanied with words of conjuration. Offertories vary according to the nature of assistance asked to the gods; offerings could be in the forms of a goat, oil, salt or a chicken. The jujube fruit (*Ziziphus* sp) is included in each offering regardless of the nature of the offering.

### **2.6. Local techniques and practices for sacred forests conservation**

Given the socio-cultural importance of the sacred forests, communities have sustained these local habitats through traditional laws and regulations, proscriptions, sanctions,

myths and narratives, as well as through an intricate system of control of compliance with proscriptions and a “system of information” for transferring knowledge to subsequent generations.

### **2.6.1. Laws and proscriptions**

Laws and proscriptions were set up to regulate access into the sacred forests, People willing to access sacred forests had to fulfill a certain number of conditions. In the case of the sacred forests of the quartier, only the security guards designated by the local chief and his families had access to them. Whereas in the case of the sacred forests of the chieftainship, only the royal family, the attendants of the leader and the members of the different clans of the sacred societies had access to them. Whatever the type of sacred forests, access was denied to anyone looking for firewood, entering them for cutting down standing trees, cropping, hunting; access to these forests were also denied to anyone who had been charged with perjury at the customary court, or anyone deemed to be a sorcerer.

In the Bahouan, Bamenyam and Bati villages, two days of the week are dedicated to the gods of the sacred forests. During those two days, it is forbidden to carry out a certain number of activities such as burials, various demonstrations and home activities including cleaning of the compound and collecting firewood.

### **2.6.2. Sanctions meted out at offenders**

Sanctions incurred by those who violate the laws and proscriptions regulating the protection of the sacred forests vary, and they vary according to the nature and seriousness of the fault committed and whether it was witnessed or not.

In most cases however, violations are not witnessed henceforth, no established structure is responsible for judging the offenders contrary to the modern system where a jurisdiction is set up by the state and regulated by forestry law. In the case of the sacred forests, the enforcement of laws and proscriptions are believed to be in the hands of the gods. The following corporeal punishments are believed to be inflicted by the gods for breaking the proscriptions of the sacred forests: amputation of a member resulting from a severe infection of scabies, any number of curable and incurable diseases, and ultimately the death of the offender. In some cases, the offender can be healed through offerings to the gods. The table below gives some faults and corresponding sanctions.

**TABLE 5: Offences and corresponding sanctions**

Offense	Alleged Punishment
Hunting or felling trees of the sacred forest	Paralysis of a member or an incurable illness that can kill the offender
Gathering and use of firewood from the sacred forest	The children of the offenders are burned if firewood taken from the sacred forest is burned
Slash and burn around the sacred forest for agriculture	The family is subjected to ill fate in which certain family members can be burned by fire
Perjury	Amputation of a member of the offender or abortion in the case of a pregnant woman
Violation of sacred days as defined by the tradition	Poor crop yield
Sacrilege in the sacred forest (getting in with unclean mind such as sorcerer practices)	The offender gets lost in the sacred forest and can't spend several days in the forest without finding his way back home until he confesses.
Attribution of a name other than that of "Feuki" or "Djuiki" to a child born on the sacred day	The child will be unhealthy and punished for the rest of his/her life

### **2.6.3. Myths and narratives**

Myths and narratives are fundamental elements of the system developed by communities to guarantee the protection of the sacred forests. These myths and narratives have through generations instilled fear of the sacred forest by ricochet negative reinforcement of the laws and proscriptions that regulate sacred forests. Secrets transmitted from generation to generation highlight village victories due to sacred forests during tribal wars or the misfortunes that had befallen the violators of the laws and proscriptions of the sacred forests. Several stories collected substantiate this function of myths and narratives: A) in Bahouan village, during tribal wars, people took refuge in the sacred forest of Djeugo where the gods of the village and the spirits of the forefathers caused either fire or whirlwind around the sacred forest to protect them against their enemies. In the event that the enemies succeeded in entering the forest the gods of the forest directed them into dangerous places where interlaced creepers took them hostage and could then capture them without too much trouble. B) A newly-converted Christian catechist entered the sacred forest of Djeugo without permission; with the intent of undermining what he deemed to be the trumped-up sacred character of the forest. He got lost in the forest for several hours. He only found his way out after loudly proclaiming his guilt in the forest. C) The eyes of a craftsman bulged after cutting a tree in the sacred forest to craft a hoe handle. The craftsman's eyesight got restored after returning the piece of wood to the sacred forest. d) A young woman had an abortion after her mother perjured herself in the sacred forest of Djeugo. E) A young man was paralyzed after killing an antelope in the sacred forest.

#### **2.6.4. Control system for compliance with proscriptions**

As in the case of the application of sanctions to offenders, no authority is set up to enforce the compliance with laws and proscriptions. Compliance is effected through self-control at individual, family or social class levels. Any time there is a violation of proscriptions, it is reported immediately to village elders or the parents of the culprit.

#### **2.6.5. Transmission system**

The transmission system of laws and proscriptions throughout generations relies on the family. In fact, the family nexus is responsible to pass on through the lineage laws and proscriptions that govern the sacred forests. At the household level, women bear the responsibility to educate and pass over sacred forest laws and proscriptions to their offspring.

#### **2.7. Local management techniques of the sacred forests' resources.**

Resources extraction in the sacred forests is strictly regulated and limited to non-destructive harvesting. The table 6 bellow gives the list of resources that can be extracted from the sacred forests

**Table 6: Resources extracted from the sacred forests of Bahouan, Bamenyam and Bati**

Sacred forest of Bahouan	Sacred forest of Bamenyam	Sacred forest of Bati
1- Firewood	1 - Firewood	1- Firewood
2- wood for handicraft	2- Wood for handicraft	2- Wood for handicraft
3- Antelope	3- Antelope	3- Antelope
4- Medicinal Plants	4- Medicinal plants	4- Medicinal plants
5- Edible fruits	5- Edible fruits	5- Edible fruits
6- Condiments	6- Condiments	6- Condiments
7- Jujube	7- Honey	7- Honey
8- Honey		8 - Bamboos
		9 - Raffia (bamboos and wine)

It is evident from Table 6 that resources extracted from these sacred forests are identical and, as is described below, their extraction is not damaging to the forest.

### **2.7.1 Firewood**

Firewood collected from the sacred forests is made exclusively of dead branches or dead trees on the ground and overturned by senescence. Standing living or dead trees are not harvested. However, in special circumstances, dead standing trees can be cut down and extracted. The use of certain plant species such as *Ficus sp* and *dracaena sp* as firewood is forbidden as they are qualified as sacred owing to the fact that they are planted in places of worship in sacred forests.

### **2.7.2. Wood for handicraft**

Tree harvest is forbidden in the sacred forest, though under strict conditions some trees can be extracted for community services such as the construction of shelters or bridges in the village.

### **2.7.3. Wildlife**

Hunting is forbidden in sacred forests. Animals in these areas are viewed as totems by the notables of the village and are considered as human beings. Hunting is allowed only in agrarian areas bordering the sacred forest as an animal moving out of the sacred forest loses its status of totem, and could therefore be slaughtered for proteins. In this case, hunting equipment consists of a locally-made gun, nets, a trap or a controlled forest fire.

### **2.7.4. Medicinal plants**

These are extracted from the sacred forests with no restriction and include barks, leaves, fruits, roots or simply herbs.

### **2.7.5. Honey**

Collection of honey is allowed in sacred forests for the benefit of all the people in the village.



## 2.8. Role and responsibilities of different players in sacred forests

Players vary according to the sacred forest type and players have different roles, responsibilities and authority vis-à-vis sacred forests. The table below gives the list of different stakeholders in the descending order of authority in all of three sacred forests surveyed.

**TABLE 7: Role and responsibilities of different players in sacred forests**

Sacred forest of Bahouan	Sacred forest of Bamenyam	Sacred forest of Bati
1- The security guards	1- The chief servants	1- Servants or "Tchofo"
2- The village chief	2- The village chief	2- Notables
3- Notables and population	3- The "nine"	3- Queens
4- The visitors	4- The Gendarmes	4- Village chief
	5- The "seven"	5- Priestesses
	6- The princes	6- Primes
	7- Traditional doctors	
	8- The population	
	9- Visitors	

## **2.8.1. Roles and responsibilities of players in the sacred forest of quartier (case of Bahouan)**

### **2.8.1.1. The security guards**

Two notables called security guards are responsible to manage the sacred forest. Each of them plays a definite role assigned by the ancestors. The first, known as “POOH DEFO”, is the main person responsible to perform sacrifices. He is the only one allowed to offer sacrifices to the gods of the forest. The second, called “TABOULA” is the traditional healer, responsible for harvesting medicinal plants from the sacred forest.

From time immemorial, the transmission of both roles is patriarchal.

### **2.8.1.2. The Village Chief**

He is the second and most important player. He works in close collaboration with the security guards from whom he requests numerous services such as going inside the forest to offer sacrifices to the gods. The village chief has control over sacred forest resources and is the only person to authorize timber harvesting for social services.

### **2.8.1.3. The village notables and the populations**

Notables and populations’ interventions in sacred forest are twofold; a) with the authorization of the village chief, they can enter the forest to offer sacrifices to the gods; and b) ensuring the protection of the forest by reporting any violation of proscriptions.

#### **2.8.1.4. Visitors**

These are tourists and neighbors from surrounding villages. This last category is largely descendants of guerrilla fighters who, during the civil war for independence, entered the sacred forest and in so doing violated proscriptions. Their intervention is limited to sacrifices presented to the gods to atone for their fault.

### **2.8.2. Roles and responsibilities of players in the sacred forest of the chieftainship (Case of Bamenyam)**

#### **2.8.2.1. “Aides” of the village chief**

Each and every village of Western Cameroon is headed by a supreme chief who has around him two to three aides. They are generally young men who help the chief to carry out certain functions, including the maintenance of all secret society instruments and of the meeting room. At the village chief's request, they are also in charge of leading activities such as firewood, medicinal plants and timber harvesting in the sacred forest.

#### **2.8.2.2. The notables**

Notables in villages are provided by the clans making up the village. Depending on the size of the village, clan can provide seven to twelve notables. They hold regular meetings and offer sacrifices to the gods in the sacred forest.

### **2.8.2.3. The village chief**

His access to sacred forest is very limited. He can only do so when a member of the royal family is suffering from misfortune and there is a need to offer sacrifices to the Gods.

### **2.8.2.4. The princes and the queens**

Their action in sacred forest is limited to firewood collection.

### **2.8.2.5. The priestesses**

They provide assistance to the village chief when the latest goes inside the sacred forest to offer sacrifices to the gods.

### **2.8.2.6. Traditional healers**

They can only enter the sacred forest if they also happen to be the aides of the village chief. In that case, they serve as supply source of medicinal plants for all traditional healers in the village.

### **2.8.2.7. The gendarmes or village security guards**

These are members of the secret society of a clan. They play an important role in regulating or mitigating conflicts in the village. In the case the violation is witnessed, their role is to ensure that the person who violates the sacred forest's proscriptions are prosecuted at the customary court and punished accordingly. Punishment varies from several weeks' jail to complete exile from the village.

## **2.9. Access and control of sacred forests resources**

Access and control of sacred forest resources is governed by customary laws and proscriptions, the type of sacred forest, one's social status in the village and the nature of the resource. In any case, the village chief assisted by security guards and the chief's aides assure the control over sacred forest resources.

### **2.9.1. Access to the sacred forest's resources of the "quartier"**

#### **2.9.1.1. Firewood**

Access to the sacred forest's firewood is exclusively reserved to security guards and their families and can be collected by unmarried men, women and children. However, once married, the family members of the guards lose this access right. Firewood collected can not be sold and can only be used by the security guards and their spouses.

#### **2.9.1.2. Wood for handicraft**

According to the laws and proscriptions of the sacred forest, only the security guards can harvest wood for handicrafts. However, the village chief can request harvesting timber for community services (building or fixing a bridge for example).

#### **2.9.1.3. Medicinal plants**

They are collected by the security guards and "naturopaths" assisted by their children, particularly the boys they want to initiate in their healing practice. Female traditional healers do not have access to medicinal plants in the sacred forest.

#### **2.9.1.4. Wild animals**

Under very restricted conditions, the village chief can order the hunting of a particular wildlife species. In this case, hunting is exclusively done by men, specifically young men. The products of hunting are generally sold either in the village or in neighboring villages and big towns.

#### **2.9.1.5. Fruits**

Edible fruits present in the sacred forest are harvested by both men and women without restriction and are exclusively for local consumption.

#### **2.9.1.6. Condiments**

Access to condiments is exclusively reserved to the family of the security guards. It can be harvested by both men and women. Condiments collected from the sacred forests cannot be sold but can be shared with neighbors in the quartier.

#### **2.9.1.7. Honey**

Honey collection is performed by the security guards or their children

#### **2.9.1.8. The jujube (*Ziziphus sp*)**

The security guards of the sacred forest are the only ones authorized to harvest the jujube. However, their spouses and their children can also harvest it.

### **2.9.2. Access to the resources of the sacred forests of the chieftainship**

Only the princes, the queens and the aides of the village's chief have access to resources in the sacred forests of the chieftainship. The queens and young princes are particularly interested in firewood, condiments, medicinal plants, fruits and honey.

If necessary, and under strict instructions from the village's chief, timber trees can be harvested by the aides to manufacture various instruments used in secret societies' ceremonies and practices, or for community services. Hunting is not allowed in any shape or form in the sacred forest of the chieftainship. Apart from hunting, which is forbidden, other resources can be harvested under certain conditions.

## **SECTION II: LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF TREES**

Several studies have highlighted local knowledge in trees management. For instance ICRAF research on farmers' perceptions and management strategies to land degradation under slash and burn agriculture in the humid forest zone came out with a top ten trees species indicating fertile soil and referred to as good trees (J. Kanmegne, 2004: 21) Strangely, the same farmers identified some as indicators for poor soil indicators. This guided their selection of land during land preparation for cropping. Farmers even tied the presence of certain tree species in the field during land preparation to certain crop species to be planted for better yield.

Furthering our understanding of the traditional use and management of forest resources with specific reference to trees led us to an ethno-botanical and socio-ecological survey in four villages in the south province of Cameroon where slash and burn agriculture is a serious threat to biodiversity conservation.

Our research confirmed that communities have various local techniques to sustain biological resources. During clearing and land preparation, some trees with local multipurpose uses and functions are left standing and protected in the field. Uses and functions rank from providing shade, improving soil fertility and pests control, harboring edible caterpillars, protecting the field against "occult" maleficent forces; as well as supplying food, timber and healthcare to local community.



Tree management during agricultural land preparation demonstrates the importance of traditional, indigenous, or local farmer knowledge and practices in sustainable conservation of biodiversity and related natural resources that have to be taken into consideration in designing any technology that addresses sustainable natural resources management likely to be adopted. Our findings are summarized in table 8 in the annex.

## **CHAPTER III: SEARCHING FOR A COMMON GROUND**

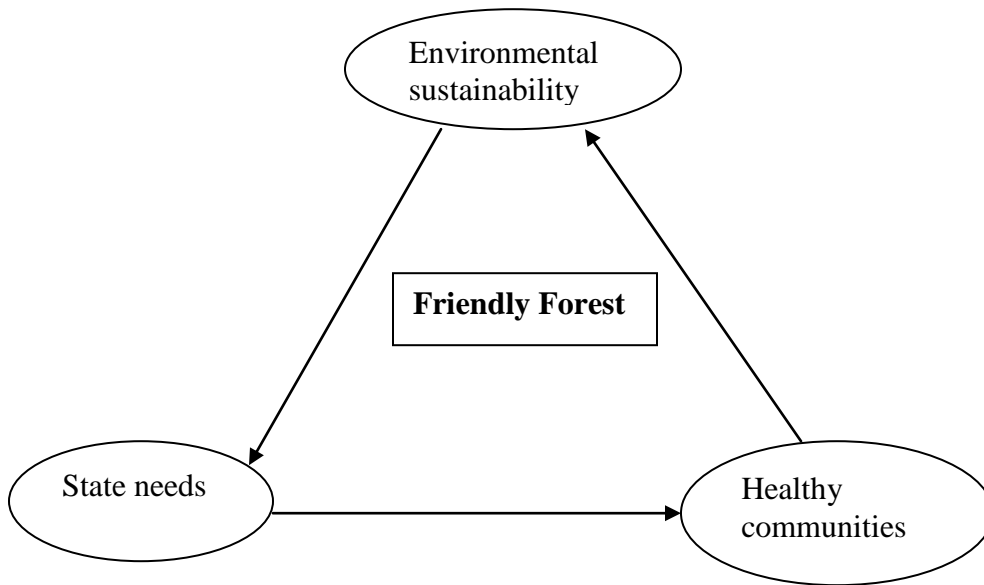
The stake for sustainable forest management is high. Intertwining both sacred forests and community forests in a melting pot as it is the case now is bound to failure. The need for a new model that would shrink all elements of failure, convert elements of successes from both side and frame regulatory systems and elements that would guarantee its sustainability is key for achieving conservation in Cameroon in particular and Central Africa in general.

### **3.1 Friendly Forests**

Having studied the environment in Cameroon in particular and the Congo Basin in general, the “**Friendly Forest**” appears to be the way forward for positive and effective engagement of local communities in the sustainable management of natural resources. This new model should be multidimensional to balance the stated needs to healthy community and supported with sound scientific findings coupled to a complete set of procedural manuals.

Spatial key functional elements of an integrated “friendly Forest” can be represented as follow (see figure 1, page 74 below).

**Figure 1: Spatial representation of a “Friendly Forest”**



### **3.2. Designing the model**

Getting to this ideal model require an integrated multidisciplinary team approach to study and understand the impediments to the development of community forests, the function and functionalities of sacred forests and other type of traditional management of natural resources.

The ideal team will comprise; socio-ecologists who will be looking at the interaction between local community and natural resources. Anthropologists, researching organizational diversity, traditional, and indigenous local knowledge and practices in sustainable conservation natural resources, the social and dimensional distribution of natural resources, land tenure and local rights, and challenges in local governance, ethno-

botanists studying the traditional use and value of forests resources, environmentalists looking at the environmental compliance aspects of the model, economists will be studying its economic return and the state devising suitable governance structures such as the administrative guidelines, the simple management guide and a business support service as describe below, that would suit its “regalian” role of control over resources and set up micro-credit scheme to ease local community appropriation of the model.

### **3.3. Tools required for success**

Friendly Forests as well as Community Forests are about business though the forefront idea is to involve the local community in the sustainable management of natural resources. Fostering good business behavior and a sense of ownership require some prerequisites.

In doing so, three functional tools are imperative to render this model operational: administrative guidelines to apply and acquire a “Friendly Forest”; a simple management guide that describes how to run a “Friendly Forest”; and business service support that would provided technical and practical knowledge to support the development of “Friendly Forests.”

#### **3.3.1. The Administrative Guideline**

This manual should be well elaborated to include: a) a clear definition of the Friendly Forest, its main objective and what this model is trying to achieve, b) categories of

authorized activities in the friendly forests (legitimate versus legal activities) and; c) the required legal regulatory framework that would legitimate community secure and long term tenure rights and provides following provisions for clear steps in preparing and submitting applications and; designing and developing the management plan.

### **3.3.2. The Simple Management Guide**

A simple management guide is a manual that would help local community understand and run through all steps of the business. It would include elements such as a) a clear definition of a “community” in local community terms as this definition can vary substantially from one community to another; b) how to develop a community business plan; c) provisions on how to form the committee responsible to manage funds; d) provisions for a legal framework that would lead negotiations between local communities and private sector for logging and bio-prospecting in the Friendly Forests; e) a conflict mitigation plan; f) how to develop simple contract with private firms; g) how to prioritize and invest the friendly forests revenues to improve local livelihood; h) provisions for a consultancy firm paid for by the government or donors.

### **3.3.3. Consultancy Firm or a Business Service Support**

This entity would be tasked to: a) provide technical advices and assistance to local community in the pre-award phase to the granting of Friendly Forests; b) work with local communities and the government to write an agreed upon Simple Management Guide (SMG) for “Friendly Forests”; c) work with local communities and local government to design and conduct a strategic land planning and zoning to ensure proper delimitation of

potential “Friendly Forests” zones to avoid forests fragmentation and disturbance of fragile ecological zones such as wildlife corridors, watershed beds etc.

The Business Service Support should be replicated in each forested province of Cameroon to ensure that a) local realities are taken into consideration for local communities’ livelihood improvement; b) environmental concerns and mitigating measures are incorporated and monitoring provisions for sustainability are clearly defined and c) the regalian role of the States is not overlooked.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many authors (Idham Kurniawan and Al, 2004, Patrice Bigombe, 1998) have documented that ignoring local community rights to forests and other natural resources perpetuates poverty, conflict, hastens degradation of environmental resources, and undermines economic growth. Cameroon is the first Central African country to introduce community forests into its forestry legislation. Community forests are forest blocks of up to 5,000 hectares whose management is entrusted to local communities, with benefits accruing to them and governed by a convention between local communities and the state. Cameroon's new forestry legislation is now being implemented. The Cameroon Ministry of Forests has now granted about 116 Community forests. Nowadays, in Central Africa, there is a growing trend for the allocation of rights over forests to the local communities as steps in promoting sustainable forest management. Progress is mixed. Cameroon is the most advanced country in the region in the transfer of management responsibilities to rural communities. Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Congo have developed Forestry Codes with provisions for community Forests but they are not yet fully implemented.

### **Community forests' failure and need for options**

It is now evident that community forests' allocation and management is a complex process that goes beyond the Ministry of Forests alone. It involves changes in legal, regulatory as well as trade frameworks to enable rural communities to compete fairly in

national and international markets, while at the same time managing their forests in a sustainable way

As described above, local communities under certain conditions have long since developed their own strategies to manage natural resources in their own ways. The imposed community forests as a mean to involve communities into natural resources management is bound to fail. Impediments are so numerous that it is imperative to research other options to better engage local communities in natural resources management. Recasting and rethinking the community forests is inevitable if one wants to safeguard our rich ecosystem and biodiversity. Meanwhile community forest is being advocated in the region as means to cope with natural resources depletion. Moreover, this is being done without any thorough evaluation of Cameroon experience in the domain. Whereas any in depth study of Cameroon case can yield result such as the friendly forests.

### **Way forward: Friendly Forests**

The success for community managing sustainably natural resources is a factor of secure local rights to the resource, the institutions governing those rights, decision-making chain, management tools, and regulations in place and how the resources are exploited and for what purpose which are described in detail in the friendly Forests paradigm. The friendly forests model has the competitive advantage to respond to both local communities and the state needs, improve the condition of forests at the local and national level; bolster collective action around forest resources at the community level;



and improve the management of forest resources for the social and economic development at the local and national levels and improve biodiversity conservation. “Friendly Forests” is a promising new approach to forest conservation which could also address the new opportunities of payment for environmental services such as avoided deforestation – referring to the prevention or reduction of forest loss in order to reduce emissions of global warming gases. In this paradigm, communities in the local meaning of the word would have their “Friendly Forests” completely delineated from other forest type, ruled under customary rights and, could therefore sell and gain money for carbon locked up in their forests for their own improvement.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Alexander Wood, Pamela Stedman-Edwards and Johanna Mang. The Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss. WWF International, 2000

Andre Djeumo. The development of community Forests in Cameroon: Origins, Current Situation and Constraints. Rural Development Forestry Network, July 2001

B. Essama-Nssah and James J. Gockowski. Cameroon Forest Sector Development in a Difficult Political Economy – Evaluation Country Case Study Series. The World Bank, 2000

David Brown and Kathrin Schreckenber. Community Forestry: Facing up to the Challenge in Cameroon. Rural Development Forestry Network, July 2001

Emile LE Bris, Etienne Le ROY and Paul MATHIEU. L'appropriation de la terre en Afrique Noire – Manuel d'analyse, de décision et de gestion foncières. Edition karthala, 1991

Guha, Ramchandra. The Unquiet Woods: Ecological change and peasant resistance in the Himalaya. Delhi: oxford university Press, 1989

Idham Kurniawan and Al. Paper presented at the Regional Community Mapping  
Network Workshop, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, November 8 – 10, 2004,

J. Vivien et J.J. Faurre. Arbres des forêts denses d'Afrique Centrale. Agence de  
coopération culturelle et technique

Jacques, Kanmegne. Slash and Burn Agriculture in the Humid Forest Zone of Southern  
Cameroon : Wageningen University, The Netherlands, 2004

Martha Klein, Brice Salla and Jaap Kok. Attempts to establish Community Forests in  
Lomie, Cameroon. Rural Development Forestry Network, July 2001

Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of Cameroon. Manual of the  
Procedures for the Attribution, and Norms for the Management, of Community  
Forests. Edition clé, April 1998

Owen J. Lynch and Kirk Talbott. Balancing Acts: Community-Based Forest Management  
and National Law in Asia and the Pacific. World Resources Institute, September  
1995

PAFT du Congo. Ressources végétales non ligneuses des forêts du Congo. Rapport  
d'études, mars 1993

Pampa Mukherjee. Community Forest Management in India: The Van Panchayats of  
Uttranchal, 2003

Patrice BIGOMBE LOGO and Al. La décentralisation de la gestion forestière au  
Cameroun: Situation actuelle et perspectives. Collection Débat, presses de  
Infocoms, November 2000

Ph. Auzel, G.M. Nguenang, R. Feteke and W. Delving. Small Scale Logging in  
Community Forests in Cameroon: Towards Ecological more Sustainable and  
Socially more Acceptable Compromises. Rural Development Forestry Network,  
July 2001.

Ruth Malleson. Opportunities and Constraints for “Community-Based” Forest  
Management: findings from the Korup Forest, Southwest Province, Cameroon.  
Rural Development Forestry Network, July 2001

Souanke THIRAKUL. Manuel de dendrology du Cameroun, Coopération Canadienne,  
Mars 1983.

Terborgh, John. Diversity and the Tropical Rain Forest. Scientific American Library,  
1992

Timothe Fomete and Jaap Vermaat. Community Forestry and Poverty Alleviation in  
Cameroon. Rural Development Forestry Network, July 2001

Wynet Smith. Mapping Access to Benefits in Cameroon using Commodity Chain  
Analysis: A Case Study of the Azobé Timber Chain, Department of Geography,  
University of Cambridge, UK.

## ANNEXES

### LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. Community Forest surveyed
- Table 2. Community Forest in process (2003)
- Table 3. Community Forests granted and reserved or in the process of being reserved as of
- Table 4. Community forest granted so far in Cameroon
- Table 5. Offense and corresponding sanction in Sacred Forests
- Table 6. Resources that can be extracted from the Sacred Forests
- Table 7. Different players in Sacred Forest
- Table 8. Indigenous trees management during clearing for agriculture

### LIST OF MAPS

- Map 1.** Distribution of Community Forests in Cameroon as of 2006. All the reds dots are community forests – Note that two to three red dots can indicate the same community forest as it does not have to be contiguous)  
(WRI/GFW, 2006)
- Map 2.** Sacred Forest study area in the west province of Cameroon (Laurence N., 2006)

## **LIST OF PHOTOGRAGH**

**Photograph 1.** A well built from the meager resources earned from managing a community forest for about two years in “Ndongo” village. Meanwhile housing quality and conditions are still miserable (see in the background)

**Photograph 2.** Sacred Forest in Bahouan Village

**Photograph 3.** Participatory mapping in Bahouan village with focus group (Men)

**Photograph 4.** Participatory mapping in Bahouan village with focus group (women)

**Photograph 5.** Matrix of score in Bamenyan village

## TABLES

**Table2. Community Forests in process per provinces in 2003**

<b>Province</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
East	93	36,3
Centre	65	25,4
South	49	19,1
North-West	19	7,4
Littoral	14	5,5
South – West	10	3,9
Far North	3	1,2
Adamaoua	2	0,8
West	1	0,4
North	0	0,0
Total	256	100



**Table 3: Community Forests granted and reserved or in the process of being reserved (Minef, 2003)**

Province	CIII	%	CII	%	CI	%
East	15	16,1	25	26,9	48	51,6
Center	28	43,1	14	21,5	21	32,3
South	5	10,2	7	14,3	28	57,1
North West	8	42,1	6	31,6	5	26,3
Littoral	3	21,4	2	14,3	9	64,3
South West	3	30,0	2	20,0	4	40,0
Far North	-	-	-	-	3	100,0
Adamaoua	-	-	-	-	2	100,0
West	1	100,0	-	-	-	-
North	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	63		56		120	

**CIII: Community forests Granted**

**CII: Community forests Reserved but not yet granted**

**CI: Community forests in the process to be reserved**

**Table 4: Statistics of Community forests granted as of 2006 in Cameroon (WRI/GFW, 2006)**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
1	East	Mpemog Biwalai	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	2050	29277/AMS/MINREST/ INC/DGPT/SP	
2	East	GIC Mbielabot Massea Yokadouma	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	3164/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
3	East	GIC Mpewang		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	4009/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
4	East	GIC Biwiegui Bi Mboyi	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	00056/AMS/MINREST/ INC/ DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
5	East	Communaute Mbimboue	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	1997	3920		
6	East	Ass. Eschiambor	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2000	4490	29745/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	overlie with UFA 10-037
7	East	Communauté Baka de Moangue le Bosquet	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2000	1662	29744/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
8	East	Association Kongo	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	3000	29612/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	Overlie Messok Community Forest
9	East	Association Koungoulou	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	3180	29746/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	Overlie with UFA 10-037

**Table 4: continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
10	East	Communauté GBO, PA et Bamouh de Ngoila et Achip	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2000	4200	29747/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
11	East	GIC TRAN		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	2007	156/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/DR/DA/SC	overlapping with UFA 10-048
12	East	AVILSO		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	3600	181/AMS/MINREST/INC/DR/DCT/SC	
13	East	GIC Zienga Mileme	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	1600	00335/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	overlapping with UFA 10-048

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
14	East	GIC Mebougban Me Tsoung Amande	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	00678/MINREST/ INC/DCT/SC	overlie with one Community Forest
15	East	CODEVIR-Lomie	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	4100	00669/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
16	East	GIC FOURMIS DE Kabilone 1	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	2550	2306/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/CS FC	
17	East	GIC Beyo e Beyo de Doumo	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	1000	AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT / SP	
18	East	CODOUM		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	550	00667/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
19	East	CODEM	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	1300	00072/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
20	East	CODEVIE		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	2750	00677/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
21	East	CODENVI		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	2300	00679/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
22	East	COVINKO		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	3220	00671/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	Overlie with UFA 10-032
23	East	COBAM		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	3500	00696/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	Overlie with UFA 10-032
24	East	COVILAM		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	650	00668/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
25	East	COBA'BA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	2300	00695/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	overlie UFA 10032 & 35
26	East	CODEL		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1400	00666/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
27	East	GIC Amical de Djolempoum/ Ekoh	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	2300	00598/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
28	East	Communaute Banane de MEDJOH	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	020117/MINREST/INC/DCT	
29	East	FC P3E		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	0276/AMS/MINREST/INC/DR/DCT/SC	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
30	East	AGRIBE Community forest		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	0277/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DR/DCT/SC	
31	South West	Community forest Bimbia B	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	3735	0702/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
32	South West	ASSO NDECUDA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	SATET Cameroun	
33	South West	TINTO	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	1295	0	
34	South West	Akwen Village Community	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2005	3981	00338/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
35	West	SPREFOGMA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	3320	GEOTOP	



**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
36	North West	Communaute Mboh Mbolem	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	421	3006/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
37	North West	GIC Ajung	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	1225	3002/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
38	North West	Communaute Njuambum	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	424	3004/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
39	North West	Communaute T. Y. biMunoin	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	1301	3007/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
40	North West	Communaute LAIKOM - GIC	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	1335	3003/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
41	North West	UPPER SHINGA CIG		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1500	990/INC/DTT/ST	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
42	North West	GIC KEDJEM MAWES		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1750	088/INC/DTT/ST	
43	North West	GIC - Ijim Forest Management I.		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	600	107/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
44	North West	GIC BIKHOV	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	2040	3005/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
45	North West	MBAI Forest Management	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	484	3727/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
46	North West	GIC Nghiiy	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	974	3728/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/ CSFC	
47	Littoral	PREFODE - Cameroun	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	1999	5000	SATET Cameroun	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
48	Littoral	GIC Dipan - Di Long Nkokom 1	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	2040	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
49	Littoral	GIC Dipan – Di Long Nkokom 2	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	2040	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
50	Littoral	GIC Mylndem	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	0307/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
51	Littoral	GIC des Agriculteurs de Dikous	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	MINEF/ONADEF/CETELCAF	overlapping with Ebo forest Reserve
52	Littoral	GIC NKOBYEBA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	CITRACAM	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
53	Centre	GIC Essayons Voir De Bikang	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	4800	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/ SC	
54	Centre	GIC AGREM	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	00885/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
55	Centre	GIC FOVYVE	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT	
56	Centre	GIC Action pour le Développement	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	020164/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DCT/SC	
57	Centre	GIC AES	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	996/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
58	Centre	GIC APPEL		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	1/INC/DTT/ST	
59	Centre	GIC Ascobadjoka		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	4800	180/AMS/MINREST/INC/DR/DCT/SC	overlie with UFA 10041 and 10042
60	Centre	GIC des Agroforestiers d'Endoum	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2000	5000	0	
61	Centre	GIC des Agriculteurs d'Endoum	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	00804/MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
62	Centre	GIC Des Amis Env. & Dev. D'Endoum	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	00805/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DCT/SC	
63	Centre	GIC BIA BIA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
64	Centre	GIC Ebolo – Mbama de Mimbiam	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	00226/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
65	Centre	GIC CCI	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	4700	00847/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	overlie with UFA 00-004
66	Centre	GIC Foconyamzom	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	00071/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	overlie with UFA 08-005

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
67	Centre	GIC SODENKANG	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	2000	00811/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	overlie with Community Forest 803-135
68	Centre	GIC ENTENTE de Nkang	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	2550	00810/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
69	Centre	GIPROFO - CODJA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	3680	22220140/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	
70	Centre	GIPROFO - COBO	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	080/AMS/MINREST/INC/DC T/DR/DA/SC	
71	Centre	GIC ABBEGONG	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2005	5000	00977/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
72	Centre	GIC ADE		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	0431/AMS/MINREST/INC/DR/DCT/SC	
73	Centre	GIC FOCOTSONGO	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	00048/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	overlie with Community Forest 803-136
74	Centre	GIC SODENGUEN	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	0302/MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	overlie with Community Forest 803-135
75	Centre	GIC Abeng Ayem Mendjanvouni	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	00057/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
76	Centre	Kong - GIC des Agriculteurs	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	



**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
77	Centre	GIC NGARGONG	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	00339/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
78	Centre	Association ADRGM 1	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
79	Centre	Association ADRGM 2	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
80	Centre	APDD	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	4800	00832/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
81	Centre	GIC YANGAFOCK II	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	00054/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
82	Centre	GIC APED	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	975/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/COM MUNITY FORESTC/CSFC	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
83	Centre	CODANTI	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	00898/AMS/MINREST/INC/D GPT/SP	
84	Centre	GIC JAN	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	5000	0009/AMS/MINREST/INC/D GPT/SP	
85	Centre	GIC ITOC	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ SP	
86	Centre	GIC DAPSBI Ntui	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	01013/AMS/MINREST/INC/D GPT/SP	
87	Centre	GIC JAM	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2005	4722	145/AMS/MINREST/INC/DC T/SC	
88	Centre	GIC Les Fermiers Reunis	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	AMS No 093/INC/DTT/ST	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
89	Centre	GIC DECOMI		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	5000	839/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
90	Centre	Association Paysanne B. K 1	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	01020/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
91	Centre	Association Paysanne B. K 2	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	01020/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
92	Centre	Association Paysanne B. K 3	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	5000	01020/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
93	Centre	GIC LANG-MBOUANG	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	
94	Centre	GIC GROMOMA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	5000	01001/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
95	Centre	CAAD	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2005	4500	AMS/MINREST/INC/DR/DCT/SC	
96	Centre	GIC OYENGA (Domaine I)	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	FR/MINEF/SG/DF/COMMUNITY FORESTC/CSFC	
97	Centre	GIC OYENGA (Domaine II)	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	FR/MINEF/SG/DF/COMMUNITY FORESTC/CSFC	
98	Centre	COVIMOF Melombo Ekekat	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	5000	00329/MINREST/INC/DCT	
99	Centre	ASSOCIATION ADINNBIA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	4736	/MINEF/ONADEF/CETELCAF	
100	Centre	ASSOCIATION ADIZAN	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	4992	/MINEF/ONADEF/CETELCAF	

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
101	South	GIC AMOTA	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	4000	0069/MINREST/INC/DCT/SC	
102	South	AFHAN		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1022	097/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/DR/DA/SC	
103	South	AVENIR de NKAN		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1272	096/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/DR/DA/SC	overlie with Community forest Djoum
104	South	Association APAN Akom N.		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1203	095/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/DR/DA/SC	overlie with UFA 09-011
105	South	INFOYO (Bloc I)		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1054	094/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/DR/DA/SC	overlie with UFA 09-010 and 09-011

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
106	South	INFOYO (Bloc II)		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1054	094/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DCT/DR/DA/SC	overlapping UFA 09010-11
107	South	Association COFAYET- B.	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	1997	5000	/MINEF/ONADEF/ CETELCAF	
108	South	ADPD		Attributed	SM plan approved	0	1655	227/MINREST/INC/DGPT/ ST	
109	South	POKO-ZOETELE	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	467	/MINEF/ONADEF	
110	South	Ngam II - GIC des Agriculteurs	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	01003/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DGPT/SP	
111	South	COFONEABA de Mvagan	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2001	5000	4084/AMS/MINREST/INC/ DCT/SC	overlie with UFA 09017-18

**Table 4: Continued**

No	Province	Name of legal entity owning the community forest	Validity in 2006	Attribution status	Legal status	Year attributed	Area in ha	Reference at the Ministry of Forest	Observations
112	South	GIC GROPAM	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	790 0		
113	South	GICAF-Mbango	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2002	1994	/AMS/MINREST/INC/DGPT/SP	
114	South	RAPDO de Kribi	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2004	4000	1453/AMS/MINREST/INC/DCT/SRC	Overlie with a Plantation
115	South	Association SDM de Mboke	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	0	2282	2337/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/COMMUNITY FORESTC/CSFC	
116	South	GIC FOREST - COM	Valid	Attributed	Convention signed	2003	3340	0814/FR/MINEF/SG/DF/COMMUNITY FORESTC/CSFC	

**NB: in the tables: 0 means the data is unavailable and blank means nothing to report on**

**Table 8: Local management of trees during clearings for agriculture in four villages in the southern Cameroon**

**Nsélang Village**

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afubewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Andok	<i>Irvingia Gabonensis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, traditional medicine and shade	1	Fruit, bark and tree crown
Abeu	<i>Cola acuminata</i>	2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Assa	<i>Dacryodes edulis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Adjap	<i>Baillonella toxisperma</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, traditional medicine, lumber	1	Fruit, bark, logs and Tree crown
Akom	<i>Terminalia superba</i>	1 and 2	improve soil fertility and lumber	1	Lumber
Assie	<i>Entandrophragma xylandricum</i>		Harbor edible caterpillars	1	



### Nsélang Village: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afubewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Ayous	<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>	1	Shade, harbors edible caterpillars, lumber and improve soil fertility	1	Logs and tree crown
Eteng	<i>Pycnanthus angolensis</i>	2	Shade and soil fertility	1	Tree crown
Doum	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	2	landing strip for shamans, soil fertility	1	Tree crown
Ebay	<i>Pentachlethra macrophylla</i>	1 and 2	Improve soil fertility	1	
Nsongomo	<i>Allanblackia floribunda</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility	1	
Ekuk	<i>Alstonia boonei</i>	1 and 2	Traditional medicine Shade and soil fertility	1	Bark and tree crown
Ebam	<i>Picralima nitida</i>	1 and 2	Traditional Medicine	1	Fruit and bark

### Nsélang Village: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afubewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Essoussouk	<i>Alstonia Boonei</i>	2	Traditional medicine and shade	1	Bark and tree crown
Atui	<i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i>	2	Traditional medicine and soil fertility	1	Bark and roots
Oveng	<i>Guibourtia demeusei</i>	2	Traditional medicine And lumber	1	Bark and logs
Etum	<i>Treculia Africana</i>	1 and 2	Traditional medicine	1	Bark
Kanleu	<i>Allophylus Africana</i>	2	Medicinal plant	1	Bark
Abang	<i>Milicia excelsa</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and lumbers	1	Bark and logs

### Nsélang Village: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Assie	<i>Entandrophragma xylandricum</i>	2	Lumbers and shade	1 and 2	Logs and tree crown
Eyeng	<i>Distemonanthus benthamianus</i>	2	Shade and Lumbers	1	Tree crown and logs
Andok tangan	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition and Medicinal plant	1 and 2	Fruits, leaves, barks, roots

### Village Bissam

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afubewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Ayous	<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility, shade, lumbers, harbors edible caterpillars	1	Logs, tree crown
Adjap	<i>Baillonalla toxisperma</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plants, shade, lumbers	1	Fruit, barks, tree crown, logs
Andok	<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant, shade	1	Fruit, barks and tree crown
Ebam	<i>Picralima nitida</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant	1	Barks and fruit
Assa	<i>Dacryodes edulis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Akomgoué	<i>Terminalia cattapa</i>	2	Nutrition	1	Fruit
Akom	<i>Terminalia superba</i>	2	Shade, lumbers	1	Tree crown and logs

### Village Bissam: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Ekuk	<i>Alstonia boonei</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal Plant	1	Barks
Doum	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	1	Soil fertility	1	
Atui	<i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i>	1	Soil fertility	1	
Goyave	<i>Psidium guijava</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	2	Fruits
Mbanga	<i>Azelia bipindensis</i>	1 and 2	Wind break and shade	1	Logs Tree crown

### Village Ngomebae

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Abang	<i>Milicia excelsa</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility and Lumber	1	- Logs
Akom	<i>Terminalia superba</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility	1	
Doum	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	1	Soil fertility	1	
Ekuk	<i>Alstonia Boonei</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility Medicinal plant	1	- Bark
Ayous	<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility, edible Caterpillars and lumbers	1	Leaves, and logs
Adjap	<i>Baillonalla toxisperma</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant, and shade	1	Fruit, bark, logs, and tree crown

### Village Ngomebae: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Abing	Combretodandron macrocarpum	1 and 2	Harbor edible caterpillars	1 and 2	
Andok	Irvingia gabonensis	1 and 2	Nutrition, shade and medicinal plant	1 and 2	Fruit Bark
Angongui	Antrocaryon klaineinum	1 and 2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Abeu	Cola acuminata	2	Nutrition Soil fertility	1 and 2	Fruit
Abam	Gambeya sp	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and Soil fertility	1 and 2	Bark
Voe	Cola lepidota	1 and 2	Nutrition, and Soil fertility	1 and 2	Fruit

### Village Ngomebae: Continued

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Ebom	<i>Anonidium mannii</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Vout	<i>Trichosipha acuminata</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1	Fruit
Oveng	<i>Guibourtia demeusei</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and lumbers	1	Bark and logs
Akomgoé	<i>Terminalia cattapa</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Ongo' ovoo	<i>Ricinodendron heudelotii</i>	1	Nutrition		Fruit
Meveni	<i>Diospyros crassiflora</i>	1 and 2	Lumbers	1	Logs
Nsa'a	<i>Dacryodes edulis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	2	Fruit



### Village Nkolenyeng Yeminsen

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Eteng	<i>Picnanthus angolensis</i>	2	Shade	1	Tree crown
Andok	<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, shade and medicinal plant	1 and 2	Fruit, bark and tree crown
Adjap	<i>Baillonella toxisperma</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, shade, medicinal plant, shade, and soil fertility	1	Fruit, bark, logs and tree crown
Assie	<i>Entandrophrama xylandricum</i>	2	- Harbors edible caterpillars	1	
Doum	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	2	Shade	1	Tree crown
Assa	<i>Dacryodes edulis</i>	1 and 2	nutrition	1 and 2	Fruit
Etotoo	<i>Terninalia mentalis</i>	2	Shade	1	Tree crown

**Village Nkolenyeng Yeminsen: Continued**

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Abeu	<i>Cola nitida</i>	2	Nutrition, soil fertility, and shade	1 and 2	Fruit, tree crown
Ayous	<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility, lumber and edible caterpillars	1	Tree crown and logs
Ebay	<i>Pentachlethra macrophylla</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility	1	
Essodum	<i>Bombax buonoposense</i>	1 and 2	Soil fertility	1	
Ekuk	<i>Alstonia boonei</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant, shade, and Soil fertility	1	Bark and tree crown
Abing	<i>Combretodendron macrocarpum</i>	2	Shade and harbors edible caterpillars	1	Tree crown
Fia	<i>Persia Americana</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	2	Fruit

### Village Abanbendoman

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Ndo'ok	<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant and shade	1	Fruit, bark, and tree crown
Adjap	<i>Baillonella toxisperma</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant and shade	1	Fruit, bark and tree crown
Ezezang	<i>Ricinodendron heudoletii</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant and shade	1 and 2	Fruit, bark, and tree crown
Atom	<i>Dacryodes macrophylla</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1	Fruit
Engokon	<i>Myrianthus</i> sp	1 and 2	Nutrition	1	Fruit
Vout	<i>Trichosipha abut</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition	1	Fruit
Apkwae	<i>Tetrapleura tetrapteura</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition and shade	1	Fruit, and tree crown

**Village Abanbendoman: Continued**

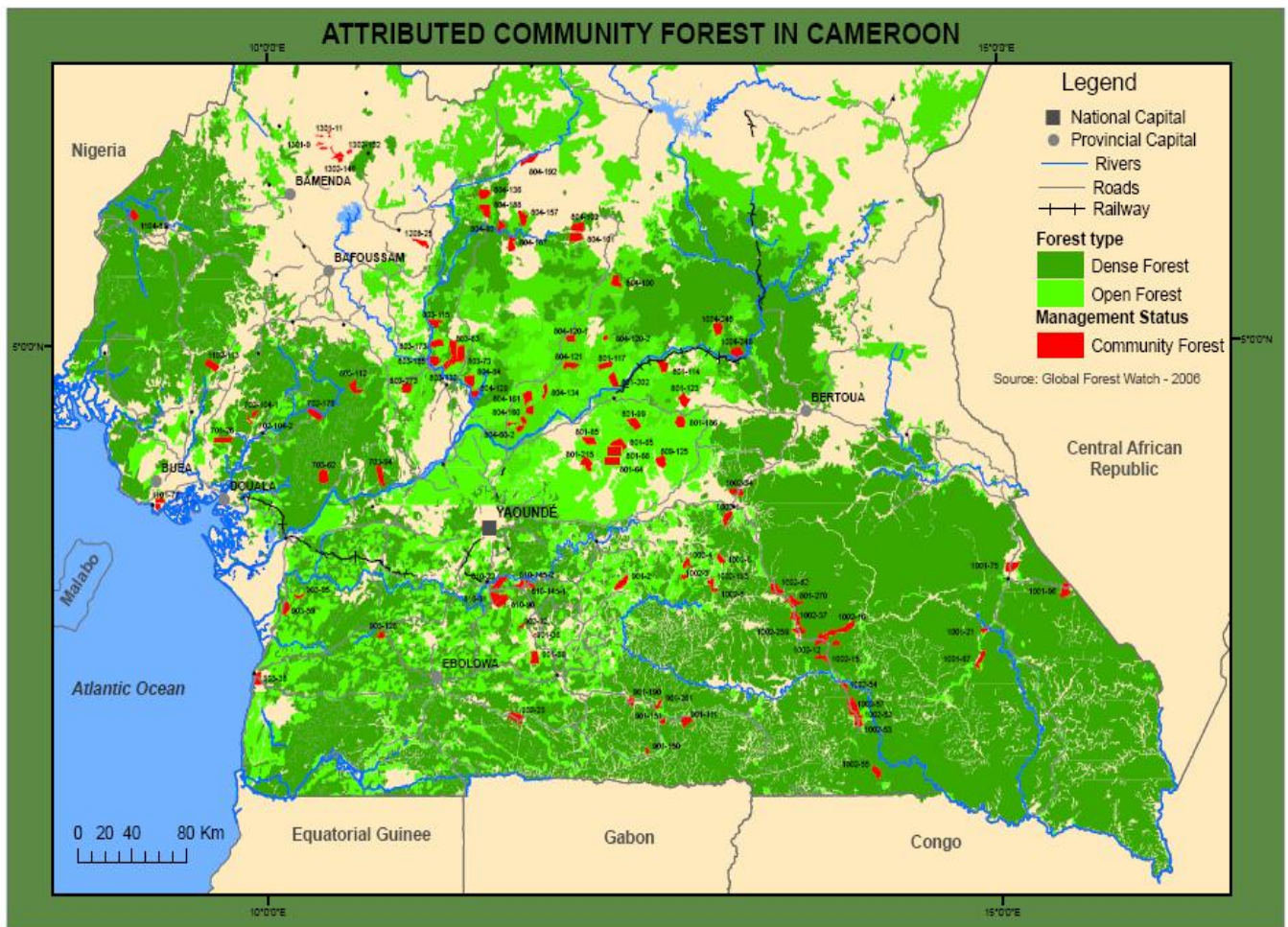
Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afub ewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Esseng	<i>Parkia sp</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and shade	1	Bark and tree crown
Atui	<i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant	1	Bark
Etedamba	<i>Funtumia Africana</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and glue	1	Bark and sap
Ntoam	<i>Dacryodes macrophylla</i>	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant	1	Fruit and bark
Ekuk	<i>Alstonia Boonei</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and shade	1	Bark and tree crown
Ebam	<i>Picralima nitida</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and shade	1	Bark and tree crown

**Village Abanbendoman: Continued**

Local Name	Scientific name	Field Type: Groundnuts (afubewondo) field = 1 or plantain field (esep) = 2	Reason for preserving the tree during clearing of fallow or forest	Tree just being kept (1) or also grown (2)	Part of the tree which is useful/used
Essok	<i>Garcinia lucida</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant and palm wine adjuvant	1	Bark
Ognie	<i>Gardenia</i> sp	1 and 2	Nutrition, medicinal plant, shade and palm wine adjuvant	1	Fruit and bark
Bubinga	<i>Guibourtia tessmannii</i>	1 and 2	Medicinal plant, timber and shade	1	Bark and logs
Obatom	<i>Tabernaemontanum</i> sp	1 and 2	Medicinal plant	1 and 2	Bark

## LIST OF MAPS

**Map 1: Distribution of Community Forests in Cameroon as of 2006 (WRI/GFW, 2006). (All the reds are community forests – Note that two to three red dots can indicate the same community forest as it does not have to be contiguous)**



## TABLE BOX

### **Table Box 1: Forest zoning types according to the 1994 Cameroon Forestry law**

**Permanent forests:** Forests set aside for the preservation of animal and plant species and where logging is not allowed

**Non-permanent forest:** designated as conversion forest for other uses, provided that they are kept under forest until required, and harvested according to some guidelines as permanent production forest.

**Communal Forest:** A forests set aside or planted, governed by the local council in a way compatible with sustainable development.

**Production forest:** Forests designated for sustainable production of timber and other forest products

### **Table Box 2: Definition of various legal Entities**

**Association:** A legally registered group of individuals who meet for a common purpose

**Common initiative group:** A legally registered assemblage of people ready to embark on bold new ventures from which revenues or outcomes will belong equally to or shared equally among all members.

**Cooperatives:** A legally registered association of individual with similar interests, intending to cooperate and then share the profits based on the production, capital or effort of each. Or a non-profit organization formed by a group or organization who themselves owns and control it for their own benefit as services are offered to them.

**Economic interest group:** A legally registered assemblage of people from which the business attention is focused on financial rewarding

### **Table Box 3: Case study from the common interest group Biwegui - Bi – Mboy**

The common interest group (GIC) Biwegui- Bi – Mboy in charge of the management of Bibimbo community forest experienced in 2005 a swindle of about \$28,000 by a private company, namely “ONY BROS”. The company helped the GIC to acquire the community forest and in compensation, the company was supposed to log the community forest for eight months for just a modest sum of \$28,000 to pay back to the GIC. The contract signed between the community and the company had no provision for a lawsuit. Hence, the company disappeared right after logging out all the valuable timber trees, leaving the poor community penniless, putting the life of the head of the GIC in real jeopardy as he is now

