

An Assessment of the Community Forest Model in Cameroon

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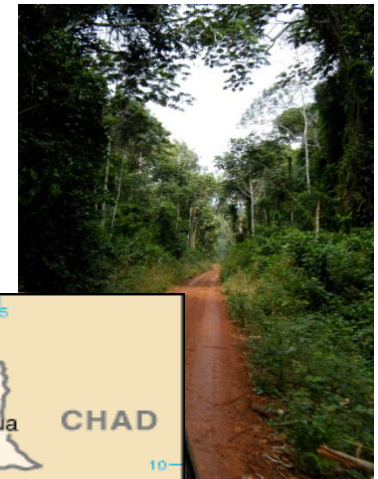
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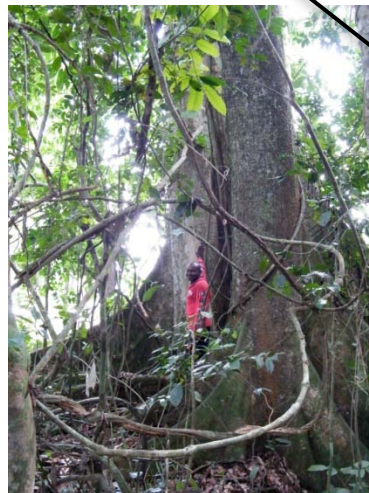
Forestry
University of British Columbia



Cameroon



Map: CIA – The World Factbook, 2009



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Community Forestry in Cameroon

- 135 licenses; 637,000 ha (Oyono 2009)
- Location: near village(s) with customary rights to forest; 'non-permanent forest estate'
- Evolution of community forest model=
 - 1960s → expansion of forest concession model
 - International pressure → 1994 forest policy reform
 - New law → increased participation for poverty reduction and engender conservation of forests
 - 2008 new manual



Study Rationale

To assess how Cameroon has evolved from the post-colonial forest concession model to one that is inclusive of the notion of community forests.

Methodology

- Data = primary and secondary sources
 - Unstructured interviews (March/June 2008)
 - Participation data = random sample survey of 422 individuals in eight communities (April 2009)
 - Grey and peer reviewed literature
- Assessment of criteria under four* themes

Themes for the assessment of the community forest model in Cameroon

1. Legislation governing community forests
2. Procedures for forming community forests
3. Other measures for maintaining and improving community forest operations

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Size	5000 ha (vs. 200,000ha for concessions)	Limited size reduces risk-taking, innovation and competitiveness (Mbile et al 2009); increase size

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Land entitlement and exploitation of NTFPs	*Aboriginal mgmt rights granted; can exploit NTFPs but no entitlement to the land	Marginalized Aboriginals have benefited; "co-habitation of customary and statutory systems" (Oyono 2009); conflict

2. Procedures for forming community forests

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Public Consultation	Majority not involved in any forest mgmt decision-making; level of contribution to decision-making low; intimidation	Promote complete public participation/consult stakeholders

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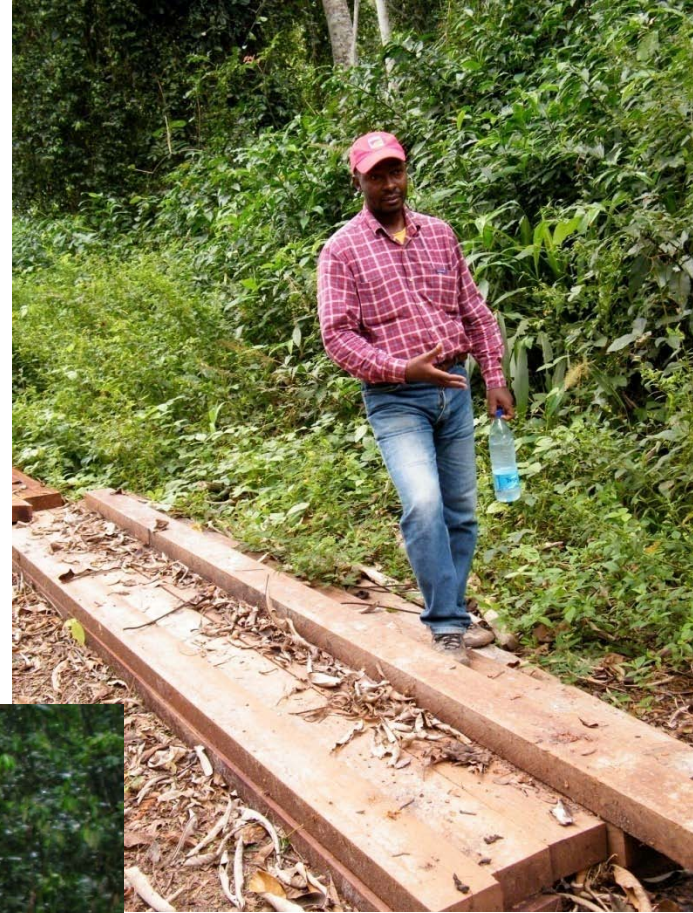
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Submission of application and average time to procure a license	Avg. 18months to process; susceptible to bribes; cost can lead to illegal operations	Need less cumbersome and cost effective legislative procedure → communities easily obtain community forests (Alemagi and Kozak 2010); decentralize decision-making authority

3. Other Measures for Maintaining and Improving Community Forest Operations

Criterion	Status	Assessment
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Legalized logging	Illegal logging practiced on a large scale	Promote public participation + more cost effective legislative procedures = communities more easily obtain CF licenses = curb illegal logging

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Conclusion

- Established the legal, administrative and procedural framework for community forestry
- Instituted a monitoring and enforcement system; enrichment planting
- Benefits to previously marginalized Aboriginal communities; general access to cultural sites within the forest
- Room for improvement re: cost, processing time, level of decentralization, susceptibility to corruption

Funding

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