Mobilising partnerships in Cameroon to advance rights-based REDD+ forest governance

Synergies between IUCN, government, civil society and key forest governance initiatives in Cameroon are effective mechanisms to streamline and scale-up support for rights-based approaches to REDD+.

Demonstrating how REDD+ can benefit the poorest communities

Establishing strong partnerships is essential for fostering rights-based and pro-poor oriented REDD+ frameworks. These synergies ensure successful demonstration and learning, and are effective sustainability mechanisms for REDD+ and forest strategies that deliver tangible environmental and sustainable livelihood benefits. IUCN’s facilitation of multi-stakeholder
processes and partnerships with various initiatives are proving to be a good mechanism for participatory REDD+ design that take into account rights-based considerations.

Connecting REDD+ initiatives and partners to advance rights-based REDD+ approaches

IUCN is working with a range of partners in Cameroon to enable and sustain multi-stakeholder participation as a mechanism for fostering rights-based REDD+. Leveraging other IUCN and non-IUCN initiatives is helping to generate the necessary momentum to accomplish this. Partnerships help broaden and intensify efforts to clarify and protect rights, ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable communities, facilitate conflict resolution, and propose options to enhance livelihoods while promoting sustainable forest management.

IUCN’s initiatives to mainstream rights-based approaches to REDD+ in Cameroon involve many partners, including:

- The National REDD+ coordination;
- Réseau des ONG du Sud-Est (ROSE)- a network of local NGOs operating in the Sangha Tri-National (TNS) and Tri-National Djاوي-Odzala-Minkélé (TRIDOM) landscapes;
- The African Institute for Social and Economic Development (Inades-Formation);
- The National Civil Society Platform for REDD+ and Climate Change;
- IUCN-Cameroon’s Radio Environnement; and
- The National IUCN Committee.

IUCN has established formal agreements with a number of these partners, such as ROSE and Inades-Formation, who lead field implementation with the technical and strategic support of IUCN. A partnership between IUCN and the National Civil Society Platform for REDD+ and Climate Change provides an important mechanism to advance gender-related issues and share experiences of mainstreaming rights-based approaches with the broader civil society network. Collaboration with the IUCN National Committee is linking local results with national and regional processes, while engagement with the National REDD+ Committee is providing a system for integrating experiences and lessons from landscape demonstrations into national policy design. IUCN-Cameroon’s Radio Environnement is instrumental in REDD+ education and communication, and its campaigns are informed by the findings of IUCN and its partners. All of these partnerships are helping to connect practice to policy and creating the context for long-term sustainability of IUCN’s REDD+ work in the country.
IUCN and partners enable multi-stakeholder participation among local and indigenous communities in Cameroon’s REDD+ efforts

Strategic partnerships and synergies are the vehicles for the successful demonstration and scaling-up of rights-based approaches into landscape, national and regional REDD+ policies.

● **National REDD+ coordination**: Through a partnership with the National REDD+ coordination, IUCN promotes in-country ownership and policy integration of its REDD+ work and related findings. IUCN’s activities are promoted within and carried out as part of the national REDD+ process, resulting in significant and immediate contribution to the national strategy. In turn, IUCN provides financial and close technical and strategic support to the National REDD+ coordination to implement landscape and nationally-oriented actions that demonstrate strategic REDD+ options.

● **Réseau des ONG du Sud-Est (ROSE)**: This partnership ensures successful implementation of landscape activities. As a network of local NGOs operating in the target landscapes for a long time, it is easier for communities to identify with them. ROSE’s presence on the ground has been an asset for IUCN’s REDD+ work. ROSE leads on IUCN’s fieldwork related to land-use planning and identification, assessment of livelihood-enhancing options for REDD+, and strengthening of landscape governance frameworks (i.e. the analysis of the Mambele convention). In turn, IUCN contributes financially to the implementation of activities within ROSE’s action plan, especially on wildlife resource management within the TNS landscape. This has also strengthened the collaboration between ROSE and TNS councils and municipalities. As a result, ROSE has been selected to carry out council development plans, and to facilitate the establishment of a management committee for forest royalties, which has further enhanced the network’s technical and financial credibility.

● **The African Institute for Socio-Economic Development (Inades-Formation)**: The Institute is supporting IUCN’s work in developing methodologies and models for livelihood-enhancing options to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. Collaboration with Inades-Formation builds on an outreach initiative with local and indigenous communities on sustainable management of biodiversity and local socio-economic development of the poorest communities. The Institute’s knowledge of both TNS and TRIDOM landscapes, and its long-term work with indigenous people are assets that IUCN builds on to advance several rights-based initiatives. IUCN has, in turn, provided financial support to Inades-Formation and contributed to capacity building of its staff on rights-based approaches.
IUCN’s activities have also increased the Institute’s awareness on REDD+ issues, which has resulted in the integration of REDD+ and climate change issues within the institute’s work plan.

- **The National Civil Society Platform for REDD+ and Climate Change:** This platform has taken on a watchdog role to ensure that stakeholders participate in, contribute to and are able to influence sustainable forest management initiatives. It has been particularly effective at advancing gender-related actions, including the establishment of Cameroon’s national gender task force. The platform has received technical and financial support from IUCN, both in its local structuring process, and in attaining its advocacy goals on mainstreaming environmental and social safeguards. This platform was created with support from IUCN during the initiation period of the REDD+ projects in the region. Actions implemented by the platform demonstrate how multi-stakeholder engagement bolsters the implementation of actions from the local to national level and, in turn, the long-term sustainability of REDD+ contributions of IUCN’s work and related initiatives.

- **The National IUCN Committee:** The committee has been a valuable platform for advocacy and is an important mechanism for upscaling the results of IUCN’s REDD+ work. It is currently supporting the establishment of a working group to discuss proposals for improving land tenure for communities in both TNS and TRIDOM landscapes. IUCN provides financial and technical support to the National IUCN Committee in landscape implementation and nationally-oriented actions.

- **IUCN-Cameroon’s Radio Environnement:** This IUCN radio communication channel helps advance the issue of tenure rights by broadcasting several important radio debates and documentaries, as well as developing and disseminating impactful communication pieces that are aligned with key messages and results related to the IUCN’s rights-based approach to REDD+.

**New knowledge**

In addition to implementation partnerships, IUCN has also seen the benefits of linking this work with other IUCN and partners’ initiatives in Cameroon that are advancing rights-based approaches to REDD+ and sustainable forest management.
Support to multi-stakeholder participation in the REDD+ process: Working in the TNS and TRIDOM landscapes and funded by the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), IUCN has carried out several capacity building initiatives to catalyse ownership and broaden scope of available expertise in rights-based approaches to REDD+.

These efforts are supporting and collaborating to:

- mainstream gender and enhance the role of women and indigenous people in the REDD+ process;
- analyse the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation within the TNS and TRIDOM landscapes;
- develop a proposal document for land tenure law;
- support multi-stakeholder participation in REDD+; and
- develop complementary communication tools such as REDD+ notebooks, brochures and training material.

IUCN’s other REDD+ initiatives provide both technical support (i.e. results sharing) and financial support (i.e. co-funding of activities) to these CBFF-funded activities. Results from IUCN’s analysis of livelihood-enhancing options in the TRIDOM landscape were used in the CBFF-funded activities to develop demonstration activities for REDD+. Thus, IUCN’s REDD+ work is field-testing two of the identified livelihood-enhancing options in both landscapes as a result of this additional funding from the CBFF. The CBFF-funded activities are also building on gender arrangements put in place by IUCN in an effort to advance the implementation of Cameroon’s gender roadmap for REDD+, and the Cameroon national strategy for the involvement of women.

Ensuring participation of Congo Basin stakeholders in REDD+ activities at the national, subregional and international levels: IUCN supports the engagement, empowerment and influence of civil society in REDD+ in the Central African subregion. IUCN has identified the possibility to host an experience-sharing session between civil society organisations involved in its REDD+ work to promote rights-based approaches to REDD+.

Promotion of inclusive stakeholder participation in REDD+ within the Congo Basin: IUCN works with networks across Central Africa (e.g. CEFDHAC, REPAR, REPALAC) on forest-related issues and plans to adapt some of its sub-regional gender-related studies, position papers and tools to be used at the national level.
IUCN and REDD+

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) can improve lives, protect forests and biodiversity, and mitigate climate change. Forests serve as natural storage for carbon, and deforestation is the second leading cause of carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. Furthermore, more than one billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods, and tropical primary forests are particularly high in terrestrial biodiversity.

IUCN’s REDD+ work focuses on the integration of rights-based approaches as the foundation for the design and deployment of landscape, sub-national and national climate change mitigation and forest management strategies. A pro-poor orientation delivers tangible environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits to the poor. In this regard, IUCN works with partners and REDD+ stakeholders in tropical countries to ensure that by 2020, national climate change mitigation policies and initiatives have incorporated and are implementing the tenets of right-based approaches and pro-poor principles.

With support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Germany’s Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), IUCN is engaged with partners in Cameroon, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru and Uganda to pilot and upscale frameworks and mechanisms that support and deliver rights-based and pro-poor outcomes.