Exploring the potential impact of better governance in SE Cameroon

Highlight: The resulting simulation created by the NGOs showed that under the bad governance scenario (the current situation), more than 90% of the concession forest tax money destined for local development is corrupted.

Introduction

A two-day workshop was organised with local NGOs to introduce them to the visioning tools CIFOR is using in the TNS landscape and explore whether these visioning tools can be used by the NGOs. Especially their usefulness to communicate the importance of better governance in the region was discussed. After explanatory presentations and a summary of the workshop organised in Mambele 2006 (where the NGOs were not present), it was decided with the NGOs to create a small model which would reveal their activities and impacts.

Selection of the model's parameters

For the creation of this model, the NGOs wrote down their objectives, activities and working area based on which the basic parameters for the model were chosen. For example, one of the NGOs was working to financially empower women and therefore it was decided to simulate the income generation of women and man separately (as well as their spending).

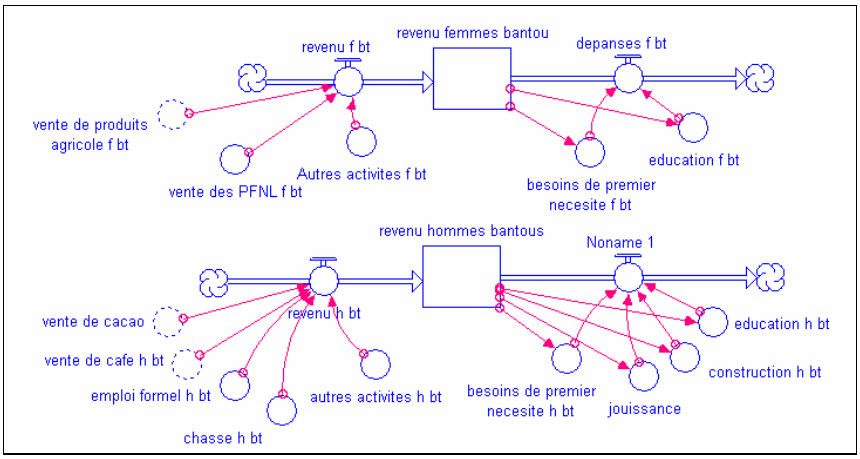

Figure 1 Model of income generation of an average Bantu woman and an average Bantu man (at productive age) in the Yokadouma *arrondissement*

In Figure 1, the model created by the NGOs of the average income generation and spending of Bantu women and men is shown. It shows women and men get their income from different activities and thus the NGOs explained, when aiming at an increased income for women one should focus on their main activities (sale of NTFPs and agricultural products). The NGO could also clarify why it focuses on the financial independence of women through the model which reveals women spend their income mainly on products of prime necessity and education of their children, while man in general spend part of their income on pleasure (*jouissance*), often implicating alcohol consumption.

The result of the cash income modelling based on estimated annual income per activity is shown in Table 1. This shows us the income of Baka men and women is almost the same, while that of Bantu men and women differs substantially. It also reveals that the Bantu's income is much higher than the Baka's income.

Table 1 Average annual cash income for population in productive age

	Bantu woman	Bantu man	Baka woman	Baka man
Average annual cash income (in FCFA, 1 US$ = 580FCFA)	186,000	303,686	55,770	62,420

Better governance

The NGO's modelled the government aid (mainly HIPC and a percentage of forest exploitation and safari hunting taxes for local development), the corruption of government aid and the inefficiency in its spending. In Figure 2, the way the concession forest tax money (RFA) makes from the central government to the realisation of development projects is modelled.

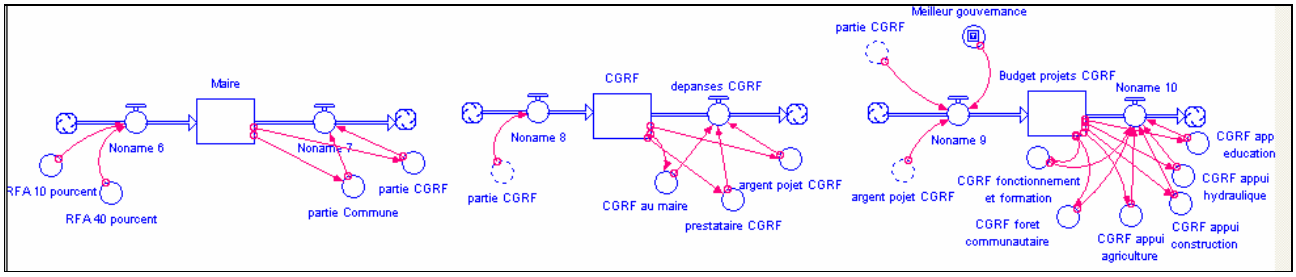

Figure 2 Model of the forest exploitation taxes destined for development of the local population surrounding Yokadouma

A button is then introduced called better governance (*meilleur gouvernance*) shown in the upper right corner of the model. This way, we can easily run a simulation of "bad governance" and "good governance" to show the difference considering the budget of the committee managing these forestry taxes: under bad governance the tax money passes through the major and the "*prestataire*" before being spent on projects while with good governance, the tax money goes directly to projects. Both scenarios then deal with the same costs of the functioning of the committee itself (the inefficiency). The result of these 2 different simulations is shown in Figure 3 indicating corruption of this RFA is huge.

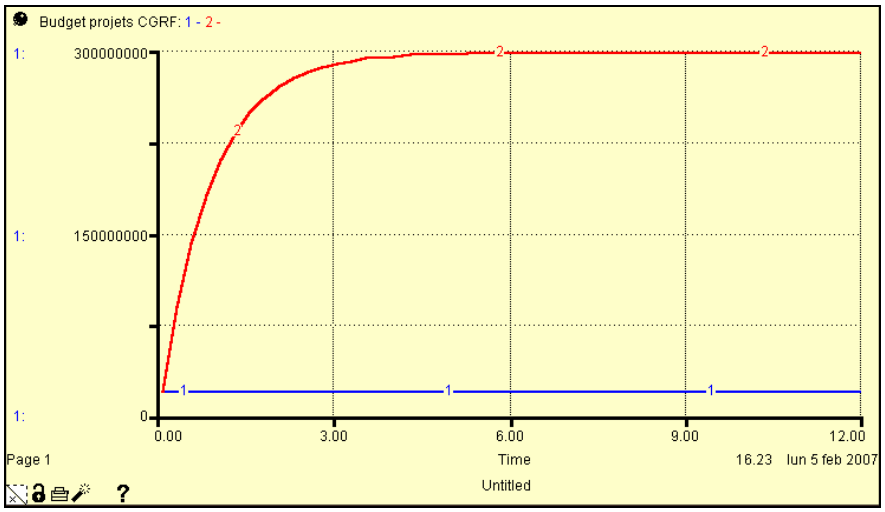

Figure 3 Result of simulation of budget for projects from forestry taxes (RFA) under bad governance (blue) and good governance (red)

Concluding remarks

Though the time did not permit to integrate the NGO's impact in the model, the exercise was well received by the NGO's and seems a good communication tool. Though the modelling language itself is still thought to be a bit complex, with the help of a modeller the construction of the model was experienced as quite easy and the output graphs (as shown in Figure 3) were thought to be easily understandable for a broad public.

Workshop dates: 29/01/07 – 02/02/07

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