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GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME
BULLETIN



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Local Governance of Natural Resources in Southern Cameroon: Summary of a Study

René Oyono, CIFOR-Cameroon

As with many other African countries, Cameroon has been striving to reform its forestry policy over the last decade. While there are many aspects to this reform, devolving and decentralizing forest management stand out, attracting growing interest from policy and social researchers. Unlike the country's other reforms, Cameroon's forest decentralization policy is based on the fact that the transfer of forest management responsibilities and benefits to local communities is expected to generate forms of micro-governance likely to lead to social and environmental justice, and environmental sustainability, through better ecological awareness.

The paper¹ summarized here presents research carried out jointly by CIFOR and World Resources Institute (WRI) in southern Cameroon in 2003 and 2004. The aim of this research was to evaluate local governance (or micro-governance) of natural resources in this part of the country, where local communities are very forest-dependent. The research was structured around the following key questions. Will the forest management decentralization process necessarily lead to forms of local governance? If they emerge, what is the nature of these forms of governance? What are the results in terms of poverty reduction, social transformation, justice, local democracy, and environmental sustainability? Thematic case studies were conducted to analyze existing local forest governance regimes, particularly community forests, annual forestry fees, and parafiscal community compensation. We also extended our investigations to "black gold," by exploring the oil compensation regime generated by the passage of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline through some of the research sites. In addition to traditional semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and so on, this research has added the identification of local governance indicators and the mapping of governance regimes in developing village-level case studies.

The case studies demonstrate that if governance means the availability of powers over resources, the exercise of those powers, and the existence of forms of authority, then one can speak of local governance, with regard to community forests and parafiscal community compensation. It becomes less obvious, however, when we examine the cases of annual forestry fees and oil compensation, which are structured more from outside and

governed by little or no local decision-making authority. The case studies also show that current practices are not representative of "good governance"—that is, of democratic governance. In most cases, local actors—the local communities in this case—have not received consistent powers, e.g., pertaining to decision-making, and remain highly subject to the decisions of administrative bodies, municipal authorities, and timber market forces. When communities do have powers and responsibilities, they are poorly exercised by those who hold them.

Five factors account for this assessment:

- (i) the timidity and porosity of local organizational and institutional arrangements implementing local governance;
- (ii) the shortcomings of environmental representation as established in rural Cameroon, due to its dependency on external actors, the absence of institutional identity, and its failure to link with other components of local communities;
- (iii) reciprocal, or triangular, adaptation of this basically irresponsible environmental representation, sub-national administrative corporatism and regional elites, ultimately resulting in the capture of decentralized management and local forest governance, and the sedimentation of forms of social and environmental injustice;
- (iv) the weakness—and sometimes absence—of positive socioeconomic results that can be evaluated in the light of sustainable transformations and the birth of new forms of socioeconomic mobilization; and
- (v) indices highlighting the fleeting nature of community forests, which were meant to be tools for fighting poverty, achieving sustainability, and heralding ecological risks in the wake of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

The paper identifies five local governance indicators: local community decision-making potential, primacy of law and sanctions, the fight against corruption and embezzlement of funds, downward accountability, and positive socioeconomic effects. The case study assessment of these—an innovation in relation to previous domestic research—demonstrates the substantial unevenness of the four regimes studied (community for-

¹ "Green Gold and Black Gold in Rural Cameroon: Natural Resources for Local Governance, Justice and Sustainability" – to be published by World Resources Institute.

ests, parafiscal community compensation, annual forestry fees, and oil compensation). In addition to these descriptive and analytical parameters, the main findings of this work emphasize, firstly, the proliferation of local-level conflicts, due to problematic power relationships and conflicting accumulation and survival strategies. Secondly, they show that the institutional (non-democratic) quality of local forest governance is not merely the result of the involvement of regional administrative and municipal corporatism, but also of local deviations in control of

forest (and financial) resources and of decentralization itself, as demonstrated by the political ecology analysis of these processes. The case studies also show a related shift of “struggles” within local communities from those of the pre-decentralization period. Thirdly, these findings draw attention to the fact that when it is poorly monitored from “the top” and poorly managed “from within,” the decentralization of natural resources management—just as any other sectoral or administrative variant—can only result, at best, in a partial failure.

Participatory “Etat des lieux” of Local Development in D.R. Congo: The Ongoing Partnership between CIFOR and IRM²

Anne Marie Tiani, CIFOR-Cameroon

“It is as if we look at ourselves in a mirror.” This was the response of a Congolese facilitator, expressing the general impression of a training exercise on COAIT methodology in Congo’s Equateur province.

COAIT (Community Options Analysis and Investment Tools) is a comprehensive capacity building methodology developed by IRM (Innovative Resource Management) with technical support from CIFOR and CIRAD. It was developed to respond to the need for community participation in natural resources management (NRM); and because IRM field experience had demonstrated that community choices and decision-making regarding NRM options were often dictated by simple opportunism. The methodology insists on collaboration and the exchange of information between researchers and local communities in determining feasible communal development strategies. As such it shows considerable overlap with participatory action research as developed under CIFOR’s Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) program. Considering the convergence between the two approaches, CIFOR and IRM signed a partnership contract in 2002 in order to test COAIT methodology in Cameroon and apply it in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

As part of the latter task, I co-organized with IRM seven 2-day workshops in Equateur province in the DRC, for about 80 local facilitators, 1-24 June 2004. They were aimed at transferring and adapting the first stage of the COAIT methodology; a participatory inventory called *etat des lieux* of local development. This participatory inventory consisted of three components. The first was an historic assessment of development initiatives, whether launched by natives (individuals or groups) or by out-

siders. It concerned the level of success and failure of these initiatives, their strengths and weaknesses and the lessons for the future that could be drawn from their analysis. The second was an evaluation of local systems of production, resource use, commercialization and locally generated revenue allocation. The third was a discussion about historical trends of resource availability, and the prospective availability of natural resources in the future, considering contemporary usage. The latter provided the starting point of a common vision for sustainable resource management.

After the training, the 80 participating facilitators went to their seven respective villages of origin to use the newly acquired means and methods. Some conclusions: in the seven sites the history of development revealed a weakness of social capital, i.e., the failure to mobilize villagers to take collective action in the interest of the community as a whole. Practically no investment of locally generated revenue was directed towards the maintenance and improvement of collective goods like schools, hospitals, markets, roads and transport facilities.

Concerning the system of production there was no trend to specialization whatsoever; each man was engaged in agriculture, hunting, fishing and livestock rearing; women were involved in all activities apart from hunting. The growing of cash crops was poorly developed due to a lack of buyers. Despite the abundance of non-timber forest products only a few species were marketed. Transport to markets was still unorganized, irregular and difficult. However, it was clear that certain products could very well be marketed profitably. For example, a basket of cassava costs 800FC in the fields, 1000FC in the village,

² Innovative Resource Management is an American NGO based in Washington, DC.

1300FC at Lake Toumba and 1500FC at markets in Iranga and Mbandaka. With regard to the future availability of resources villagers indicated that these are diminishing at an alarming rate, due to population growth.

The *etat des lieux* tools were used again by local facilitators to conduct participatory context studies within their communities. This provided communities the opportunity to reflect and discuss, to exchange ideas and take decisions on their common future. It allowed communities to diagnose their development problems and take the matter of development into their own hands. However, as mentioned, the participatory inventory was only the first phase of the COAIT methodology. It allowed local facilitators and their communities to unite around

a common cause. Therefore, a second fieldwork exercise was scheduled from June 2004, aimed at developing a more elaborate community vision on sustainable resource management and identifying development options in relation with resources available on the site. Our next two COAIT activities in 2005 are participatory analysis of ecological costs, benefits and risks related to identified development options, and the facilitation of the research of partners.

Another trip to the same area of DR Congo is planned for late April and May of this year. I will confirm the successful training of the local facilitators. This represents part of the partnership between CIFOR and IRM, designed to strengthen the capacities of local communities.

“Levelling the Playing Field” in the Philippines

Herlina Hartanto, CIFOR-Bogor

The three villages/*barangays* of San Rafael, Tanabag, and Concepcion in Palawan, Philippines, have been home to our ACM project since 1999. At the end of the ACM project, positive outcomes were observed. These included increased capacities of community members in managing their community forests and increased collaboration and trust among stakeholders. Nevertheless, many challenges remained and we found that learning processes needed to be facilitated longer before they could be truly institutionalized.

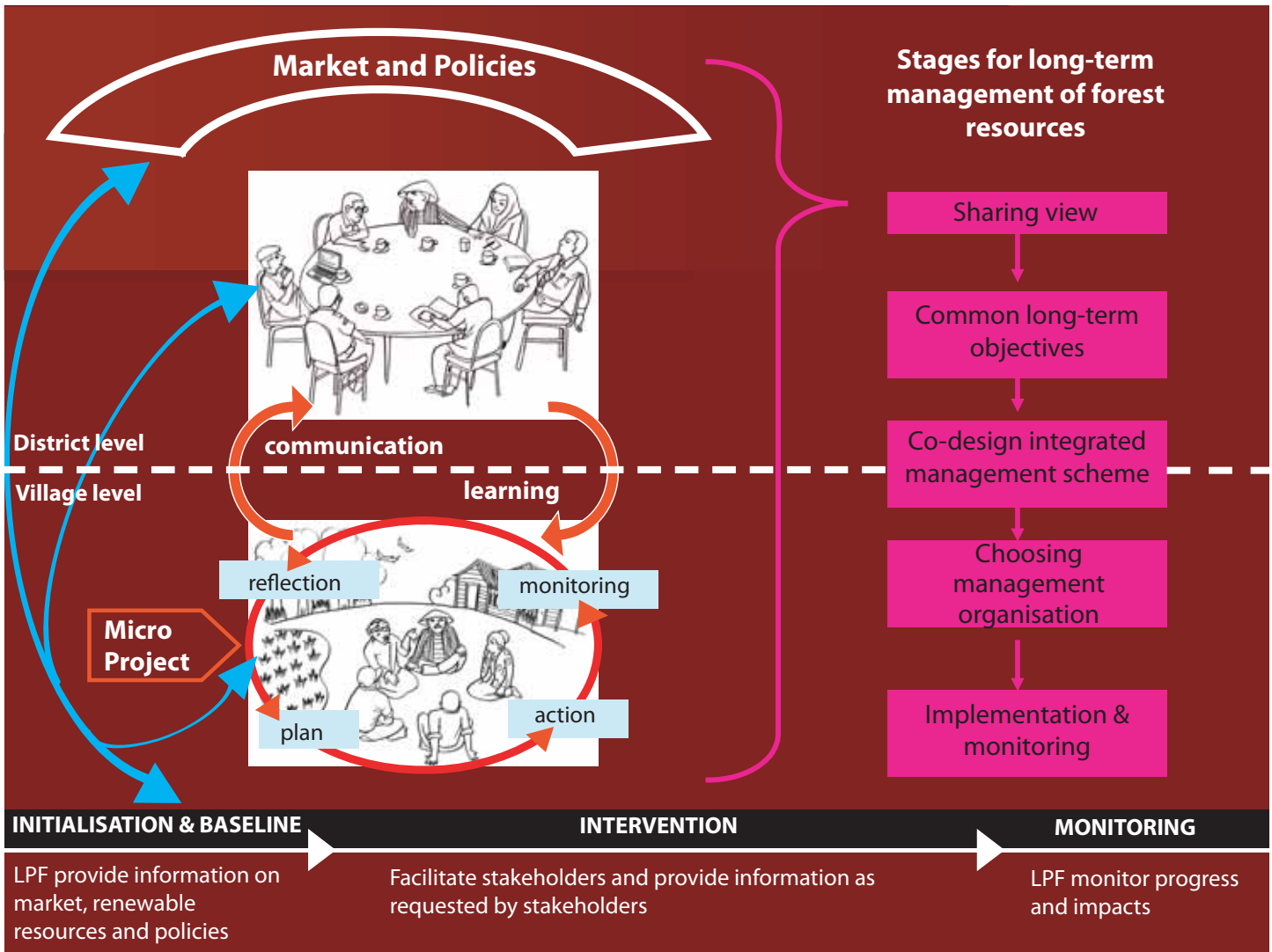
One year after the ADB-funded project ended in 2002, CIRAD received a research grant from the EU to implement the “Levelling the Playing Field” (LPF) project. After initial assessment confirming that there was a demand from the stakeholders in that site for the approach, tools, and processes LPF project could offer, our work in this site resumed in early 2004.

The LPF project aims at improving renewable resource management by facilitating coordination, communication, negotiation, and collective action among relevant stakeholders at different levels, from village to provincial. The project facilitates collective action among community members at the village level in addressing their pressing local issues. During the planning workshop in April 2004, representatives from the three *barangays* (attended as well by our previous ACM partners) identified these local issues and raised these issues to the different government institutions and NGOs at a provincial workshop. The community members then developed four informal working groups. Consisting of representa-

tives of village officials and community members from the three *barangays*, the working groups collectively address these issues with or without the support of other stakeholders. The ACM learning-based approach is used to facilitate learning and action within these groups.

In parallel with collective learning and action at the village level are activities to facilitate the community and provincial stakeholders to come up with a long-term management plan. The plan must be based on considerations of several possible management scenarios, taking into account their implications for people’s livelihoods and the environment. The LPF project uses the multi-agent system (MAS) as a tool to facilitate learning, negotiation, and decision-making processes among the stakeholders. The team has recently introduced MAS and will continue seeking inputs from community members and different provincial stakeholders on what issues and what management scenarios they would like the team to model. The model itself, however, is secondary to the discussions among stakeholders and the better understanding they generate on the issues being modeled. We expect the lessons learned will be incorporated by the community and other stakeholders into their management plans.

The project tries to level the playing field in Palawan, an island oriented heavily toward biodiversity conservation, by identifying ways for the community to increase the income generated from commercialization of certain natural products. Information will continue to be collected by LPF consultants and Philippine scientists with regards to the price and trade networks of tree bark, honey, almaciga



resin, cashew and seaweeds. We will also assess the community's training needs and how the techniques and tools used by community members in planting, harvesting, and processing can be improved at the same time.

Realizing that the indigenous Batak communities are an important community group whose resource use and management, and perceptions about resources are often misunderstood or ignored by other stakeholders, the LPF project conducted a Multi-stakeholder Landscape Assessment study in the Batak village of Kalakuasan. Results of this study will be available very soon. The participating Philippine scientists and stakeholder representatives will also be encouraged to identify ways to channel the information to key stakeholders in the province so that conservation policies in Palawan will not further marginalize and impoverish this community.

ACM laid a very important foundation for LPF. We are now working with capable community members, research partners and field staff as the result of ACM's capacity building efforts. LPF provided the Governance Program the opportunity to look at governance issues of renewable resource management (encompassing coastal, lowland, and upland ecosystems) and to continue applying the learning-based approach in this site on a much wider scale, including community members/groups from the three villages and at the provincial level (with the establishment of the Philippine Steering Committee).

Besides the Philippines, the project also works in three sites in Indonesia and two sites in Malaysia. This project is led by Philippe Guizol (a CIRAD scientist), with participation also from Governance team member, Dr Herry Purnomo.

Film Mania

Input from Miriam Van Heist, Linda Yuliani, and Eva Wollenberg, CIFOR-Bogor

Several research teams in Indonesia have been producing films. In September 2004, Sian McGrath and Dede Wiliam coordinated the production of a film called “Suara Masyarakat Papua” produced by Jungle Run Productions. Linda Yuliani together with Yayan Indriatmoko and Hasantoha Adnan coordinated the production of two films, produced by Inspirit. One on Danau Sentarum in West Kalimantan (called “Danau Sentarum National Park: The Abandoned Paradise”), which was launched by the Indonesian Ministry of the Environment, 28 March 2005. The movie presents current conditions of the Park, concerns/hopes from various stakeholders and management complexities. The other one is on the ACM work in Baru Pelepat, Jambi (in progress, to be launched in late May 2005).

Now, Miriam Van Heist and Michael Padmanaba have also begun working with Jungle Run Productions to produce a film on Malinau in East Kalimantan. It concerns the views of local communities and other stakeholders on the “values and importance of Malinau’s forest landscape, the changes in land use that are taking place,

and their significance.” Eva Wollenberg and her team are also producing a companion film on the same area, also with Jungle Run Productions. A central message is to examine how local governments can better facilitate the determination of community land use priorities. The team would also like to look at how to acknowledge and balance competing needs and visions. They want to show how local communities are diverse, including diverse and legitimate needs and visions; and they want to highlight the fact that district governments do not yet acknowledge local needs and visions—specifically, local governments promote modernization and income generation at the cost of traditional livelihoods, conversion of forests, and risks of increasing economic dependency and vulnerability. They conclude that decentralization creates opportunity for local people to have more of a role in governance but has not gone far enough. Finally they show some of the difficulties in achieving cooperation and agreement among such diverse stakeholders. These include traditions from the New Order, a lack of basic infrastructure for communication, the power of money politics, and a shortage of trust.

Accountants Help Stop Illegal Logging in Indonesia

Bambang Setiono, CIFOR-Bogor

We don’t normally think of accountants as important players in stopping illegal logging, but Bambang Setiawan, Deputy Head of Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan (PPATK), the Indonesian Financial Intelligence Unit, and Ludovicus Sensi, a partner of Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu, demonstrated a clear role for them, at a one-day seminar titled “The Role of Accountants in Disclosing and Detecting Money Laundering Activities in Natural Resources Based Industries,” organized by the Economics Faculty of the University of Indonesia and the Indonesian Accountants Association (IAI) on 12 April 2005. The seminar was sponsored by CIFOR, Bank BNI, Bank Indonesia, Harsono Hadibroto Consulting, and PT Aneka Tambang, Tbk.

Accountants interface with the forestry world when they function as accountants of a financial service provider (e.g. banks), providing loans to forestry companies and as an internal auditor or an external auditor (public accountant) of a company dealing with forestry transac-

tions. When they review financial transactions related to forestry business, accountants can identify transactions with third parties that are used as vehicles for laundering proceeds of illegal logging activities. As a public accountant, they can identify the involvement of the client (forest-based companies) in illegal logging and money laundering activities. Under these circumstances, Indonesian accountants should now make a confidential report to PPATK as requested by Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 82, of 2003.

In their role as a public accountant of a forest-based company, an accountant can face a law suit from anyone injured from using the audit report of the forest-based company. The accountant has a legal liability when the following four elements are proven. First, the accountant failed to find a misstatement or an omission of a material fact that forest-based companies were involved in illegal logging activities. Second, the plaintiff has reasonably relied upon the information. Third, the plaintiff suffered

a loss, and fourth, the accountant was in error. If the accountant is guilty of gross negligence or fraud, anyone injured using information provided by the accountant

can file a law suit against him/her. Hopefully, Indonesian accountants can begin to play a more active role in stopping various kinds of illegal activity!

“Democracy is always a movement of an energized public to make elites responsible—it is at its core and most basic foundation the taking back of one’s powers in the face of the misuse of elite power. In this sense, democracy is more a verb than a noun—it is more a dynamic striving and collective movement than a static order or stationary status quo. Democracy is not just a system of governance, as we tend to think of it, but a cultural way of being.” Cornel West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight against Imperialism*. 2004, The Penguin Press, New York, page 68.

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Presentations

Kaspar Schmidt made a presentation entitled "NTFPs and Poverty Alleviation in Kyrgyzstan: Potential and Critical Issues" at the workshop "Between Market Forces and Poverty Alleviation: The Contribution of Non-Timber Forest Products," 31 January 2004, Berne, Switzerland. The workshop was organized by the Working Group on Trees and Forests in Development Cooperation and convened by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Other speakers with links to CIFOR included: Ousseynou Ndoye, CIFOR Cameroon, Geneviève Michon, IRD, and Manuel Ruiz-Pérez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. A summary of the presentations delivered and the discussions held on this workshop is currently in preparation.

News Flashes

Our one-time consultant, Bev Sithole, has been living and working in Darwin, Australia for about eight months. She is working on two exciting topics, closely related to our concerns: She is: 1) evaluating the effectiveness and quality of community-based natural resource management among the aborigines of the Northern Territories, for CSIRO; and 2) developing benchmarks for joint management of national parks in the same region of Australia.

Dede Wiliam, who previously worked with CIFOR's Decentralization project and is now a consultant for the CAPRI project, married Alex de Vries in Sumedang, Java on 14 February. Many happy returns of the day.

*A mind is like a parachute; it only works when open.
(quoted by Dani Munggoro, 17 March 2004)*

*Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift.
That's why it's called the present!*



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