



Tropical Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (TroFCCA) West Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. As a region whose economy depends heavily on climate-sensitive sectors (agriculture, pastoralism, fisheries and forestry), the impact of climate change has the potential to slow down socio-economic progress, undo years of national development efforts and put at risk livelihood support systems linked to these sectors. The forest is a common resource pool and how well the forest is managed will determine how less vulnerable community livelihoods and national development will be to climate change impacts. Considering the important role of forests for the livelihoods of the majority of the population, there is need for forest to be integrated in climate change adaptation planning in the region. Forests cut across all other livelihood sectors, and safeguard other ecosystems, while providing physical buffers against desertification, drought, scorching heat, dust storm, land degradation and flash floods, which are common expressions of climate impacts with records of disasters in the region.

Who we are

Tropical Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (TroFCCA)-West Africa is part of a global project financed by the European Union and hosted by CIFOR, and is also implemented in Asia and Central America. In West Africa, the project currently works in Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana in 3 development sectors linked to the forest ecosystem:

- Water
- Wood fuel
- NTFPs (food, fodder, healthcare).

These sectors have been chosen by stakeholders in the regions due to their livelihood importance, development relevance and vulnerability to climate change.

Our objectives

Working with stakeholders in partnership across local, national and regional levels, TroFCCA West Africa aims at achieving the following:

- Raising awareness of forests, climate change, and the need for adaptation through frequent science-policy dialogues across various levels and layers
- Facilitating regional and international collaborations for climate change adaptation
- Enhancing adaptive capacity at municipality, national and regional level to ensure sustainable and equitable development of the prioritized sectors through knowledge sharing and learning
- Supporting participating countries with their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)
- Building capacity of students and researchers from different disciplines by providing training opportunities.

Approach

As part of a global network program, a common TroFCCA approach with common objectives is followed to facilitate comparison across regions. However, there are specific regional adjustments to address the diversity of the sectors chosen by stakeholders and the degree of spatial and temporal variability which are highly linked to the existing climate gradient from northern Mali bordering the Sahara desert, down to coastal Ghana. This gradient and variability are reflected in biome and ecozone types, biophysical and socioeconomic characteristics, human and cultural interactions. These characteristics determine livelihood opportunities including the pattern of forest dependency and the vulnerability to climate impacts which result in the need for specific adaptation strategies. Simultaneously, these characteristics shape the space for policy formulation and implementation.

Using a coupled human – ecosystem approach, methodologies are being developed to assess the vulnerability and to facilitate the formulation of relevant adaptation strategies by decision makers at the different levels.

Outputs

- Methodology framework to assess vulnerability
- Policy Briefs
- 9 Master students' theses from the region
- Contributions of TroFCCA members to scientific and policy-related conferences and workshops at national, regional and global level

Achievements so far...

TroFCCA-West Africa is contributing to the mainstreaming of adaptation into development by engaging stakeholders since the onset of the project in setting the adaptation agenda, and in undertaking demand-oriented research in the sectors relevant to their national development. A science-policy dialogue has been initiated in the region; methods to assess vulnerability are developed; and there are steps towards an enhanced adaptive capacity at district level through policy action research. Three students have successfully completed their graduate studies under TroFCCA-West Africa graduate fellowship research awards for 2006. TroFCCA – West Africa organized training for regional climate simulations and predictions (PRECIS modeling), with the continuation of the simulations hosted by the project. Some results of on-going research have been published and presented at regional and global conferences and workshops.

For further information, contact:

Project Coordinator: Johnson Nkem (j.nkem@cgiar.org)

West Africa Regional Coordinator: Monica Idinoba (m.idinoba@cgiar.org)

Website: www.cifor.cgiar.org/trofcca/

Photos by Fobissie Kalame, Joffrey Monnier and Monica Idinoba

