

Impact Monitoring of Tropical Forestry, Cameroon

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Background

Cameroon is home to some of the most biologically important forests in the world. Nearly half of Cameroon (21.2 million hectares) is covered by tropical forests of which 7.3 million hectares are zoned for sustainable timber exploitation, and about 4 million hectares are declared protected areas (2007).

Since 2001 the Government of Cameroon has embarked on a National Forest and Environment Sector Program (*Programme Sectoriel Forêt et Environnement – PSFE*) with the objective of guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the economic, ecological and social functions of the forest ecosystems. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) supports the Government of Cameroon in the implementation of the PSFE through its own program called ProPSFE (*Programme d'appui au PSFE*).

As part of its support, the GTZ has financed the creation of an impact monitoring system. This system is based on an **Online Indicator Database** of 33 indicators (in the categories “natural resources,” “good governance” and “poverty alleviation”), as well as an interactive **Online Atlas** and an **Online Library**. Since 2005, AFC Consultants International, a Bonn based consulting company, has been responsible on behalf of the GTZ for the development and the execution of the national impact monitoring system. Today the system is one of the fully operational impact monitoring systems in Central Africa.

Achievements

The Online Indicator Database: The PSFE impact monitoring indicators and their corresponding variables were identified with the participation of representatives of the PSFE ministries early in the first phase of the ProPSFE (2005-2007). A baseline of the indicators was published in October 2006 for South-East and the South-West Regions. Since 2007 data collection has been formalized and a multitude of partners are contributing to keep the database up-to-date. In 2008, the system was upgraded to a network server with a web interface. This Online Indicator Database was first presented in December 2008 at the “Promote Fair” in Yaoundé. The monitoring system now runs on a PostgreSQL database with decentralized data entry access.

<http://www.cameroun-foret.com/geobiep/indicateurs.php>

The Online Library: A database of documents relevant to the Central African forestry sector was also developed during the first ProPSFE phase. This ISIS standard database of 3215 documents is now accessible to the public on the Internet through an Online Library. As many as 1370 documents can be downloaded from this site.

<http://www.cameroun-foret.com/wwwisis/camfor/form.htm>

The Online Atlas: An Online Atlas that provides interactive maps combining forestry and socio-economic data using Mapserver technology was launched in 2008. The overlay of information on conservation and logging areas on top of Google Maps, allows users to get a better picture of forest cover and forest use.

<http://www.cameroun-foret.com/geobiep/atlas.html>

Perspectives

During the current program phase (2007-2010) we are working on an extension of the monitoring system over the entire territory of Cameroon. The accompanied move to web-based services is an important step in this direction. Furthermore we are working in association with the national Ministries to integrate the system into their national structures, and provide training at all levels on data-entry and database management. Finally, under the framework of COMIFAC and through the FORAF program, we plan to integrate and expand the system into a Congo – Basin wide impact monitoring system.

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