

FOREWORD

Cameroon forest sector has gone through profound institutional and legislative reforms, aiming to shift emphasis from tree to the entire forest and to insure sustainable management of its forests. The Tropenbos-Cameroon Programme (TCP) was established in 1992 thanks to these reforms, by the Cameroonian Ministry of Environment and Forests (MINEF) and Tropenbos International (TBI), the 2 executive Agencies, as a result of the government of the Netherlands' willingness to support the government of Cameroon in implementing actions planned within the framework of the National Forestry Action Programme.

The Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD) and its Dutch counterpart, Wageningen University (WU) were honoured to see the responsibility of the main executive agencies delegated to them and as such, to be responsible for the scientific content and standard of the TCP. Apart from their scientific and administrative management of the Programme, the two institutions were involved in the implementation of research projects with the contribution of other Dutch and Cameroonian institutions¹.

The involvement of so many institutions and therefore so many disciplines is an illustration of the complexity of sustainable forest management, which can only be achieved through an interdisciplinary approach. The TCP is therefore an interdisciplinary research programme. The general objective was to develop methods and strategies for natural forest management, directed at sustainable production of timber, and other forest products and services, taking into consideration ecological, social and economic dimensions of forest functions.

This book is formulated to address the main integrated findings of the TCP. Those findings range from ecological to social, technical and economic aspects of sustainable forest management. The Programme in this respect produced a large number of publications.

Research results are nothing if they are not applied. Therefore, I hope and expect that they will be applied in order to boost Sustainable Forest Management processes in Cameroon.

I would like to express my thanks to institutions and persons who contributed to the TCP: first of all to the two governments, who made possible the establishment of the Programme, and the donors who co-financed it namely ITTO, CFC, European Union, Tropenbos International, CIFOR, NOW and KLV. Secondly, the participating Cameroonian and Dutch institutions, which through the salaries of the TCP members, financed part of activities. Last but not the least, I would like to express my appreciation for the TCP management team, researchers, administrative staff, technical staff, supervisors and students for their contributions and stimulation. Because they are so many – the number of researchers, for instance, is 37 – I cannot

¹ In the Netherlands: University of Leiden and Alterra. In Cameroon: Universities of Yaoundé 1, Dschang and Ngaoundéré, IRGM and ONADEF.

mention all of them by name and mentioning only a few persons would do injustice to the others. But all individuals involved in TCP can be assured that their work is highly valued.

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