



“SUPPORTING THE KADEY COMMUNITY FOREST FEDERATION IN THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING CERTIFICATES OF LEGALITY AND TIMBER MARKETING” PROJECT

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Outcomes and lessons learned



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Supporting the Kadey Community Forest Federation in the Process of Obtaining Certificates of Legality and Timber Marketing Project

Outcomes and lessons learned

1. CONTEXT

The Kadey Community Forest Federation (ASFOCKA), a beneficiary of this project, is the largest organised community structure in Cameroon and indeed in Central Africa. It was created in 2011 as part of the governance support project for the community forestry project to combat poverty in the Diocese of Batouri with the support of the FAO/FLEGT programme.

Following a capacity test of 26 community forests, members of ASFOCKA, to comply with the requirements of the VPA/FLEGT, this project revealed numerous constraints that were affecting the performance of the community forests in Kadey. The most important of these were the lack of accreditation of subcontractors and the heavy expenses related to carrying out environmental impact studies. In addition to these, there was the lack of financial means to boost logging activities and the marketing of timber from these community forests.

If these community forests did not receive support from financial and technical partners, we would have been heading towards the side-lining of these forests, at least if we stick to the terms of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement signed between Cameroon and the European Union. Indeed, community forests that are unable to comply with all the requirements of the legality grid will remain illegal forever and will never obtain the certificate of legality.

Fortunately for ASFOCKA, the European Union has responded favourably to its expectations by granting significant funding to enable the community forests to face these challenges through the project " Supporting the Kadey community forest federation in the process of obtaining certificates of legality and timber marketing " under the ENRTP programme.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Name of grant beneficiary: African Centre for Applied Forestry Research and Development (CARFAD).
- Name of Action partners:
 - Community Forestry Network (CFN); and
 - Diocesan Committee for Social and Charitable Activities of the Diocese of Batouri (CODAS Caritas Batouri).
- Start and end date of the reporting period: 1 January 2014 to 28 February 2017;
- Target country or region(s): Cameroon ; Amount of the grant awarded by the European Union: 1, 472,145 Euros

3. RESULTS, EFFECTS/IMPACTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.1. PROJECT OUTCOMES

Expected result N°1: the performance of the existing federation is strengthened

Result achieved:

Amended statutes and internal regulations, new leadership for ASFOCKA

The revamp of the old texts gave rise to new texts (statutes and internal regulations). These texts were introduced at the SDO's office in Batouri. New members were elected for a renewable three-year term. An administrative act concerning changes in the executive board of ASFOCKA and amendment of the statutes and internal regulations is available.



Existence of an operating fund

An operating fund for ASFOCKA has been set up and secured in a local microfinance institution. The membership fee per member is set at 25,000 CFA francs while the annual subscription fee is set at 100,000 CFA francs. The project granted a working capital of about 6,861 Euros.

These funds were used to: equip offices, execute missions, facilitate the acquisition of secure documents, to run ASFOCKA, cover general assemblies, seek partners and to support members of the association. Loans were granted to members and have been repaid in kind (wood) or in cash. To benefit from a loan, it is necessary to have a guarantee (wood in the forest) or a guarantor (another member association of the federation). Only associations in good standing benefit from the fund. The fund's sustainability is ensured through the search for partners, the expansion of ASFOCKA's activities and paid services to non-members.

The transformation into a cooperative

In order to meet the requirements of international trade, ASFOCKA was transformed into *Société Coopérative Simplifiée des Forêts Communautaires pour la Transformation du Bois de la Kadey (SCOOPS-FCTBK)*.



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Community cabinets for data archiving

Communities were provided with 26 cabinets for archiving data and 52 members were trained to do so.

The umbrella structure and the administrative, financial and accounting management procedures set out in a manual

A manual of the federation's administrative, financial and accounting management procedures has been drafted. It takes into account the transfer of ASFOCKA into a Cooperative.

Expected result N°2: forest governance is strengthened and the major constraints related to compliance with the legality grid are lifted

Result achieved:

Communities better equipped for income and conflict management

- A revenue utilization plan has been elaborated and is available in each community.
- The capacity of 52 members of the federation has been strengthened on revenue and conflict management.
- A Conflict Management Committee has been established within the federation.

Communities better equipped with the legislative and regulatory texts governing the management of community forests

- 26 collections of texts were produced and made available to the communities (texts governing the management of community forests and a checklist on the legality grid n°6 relating to the controlled exploitation of forests);
- The capacities of 52 members were strengthened on the texts governing the management of community forests and on legality grid n°6.

Governance for all

Within the framework of governance for all, the initiative also made it possible to involve marginalised people (Baka, women and young people) in the federation's activities.

Environmental impact assessments are no longer a barrier

Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) have been carried out for all community forests (26 letters of approval of TORs, 26 environmental compliance certificates, 26 certificates of compliance with environmental obligations have been obtained).

within the context of environmental studies, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) also came into play after the publication of Decrees 00001/MINEPDED of 8 February 2016 setting out the different categories of operations whose implementation is subject to a strategic environmental assessment or an environmental and social impact study and 00002/MINEPDED of the same date defining the standard outline of the TOR and the content of the EIS

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) relating to the establishment of the legal wood processing unit in the community forests was produced and submitted to the Batouri commune for validation.

Expected result N°3: Wood production and processing capacities are increased

Result achieved:

Three production units and one processing unit set up to increase surplus value

- Three production units have been set up and distributed by group of communities in the three project zones, namely Mbang, Nguélébock and Mindourou;
- A legal wood processing unit has been set up in Batouri for secondary and tertiary transformation.



The federation has been provided with equipment for transport, production and processing of wood.

For transport:

- a truck for skidding the wood,
- a truck for transporting the wood to the delivery site;

For the operation:

- 3 Lucas mills,
- 6 chainsaws.

For the transformation:

- a 110 KVA generator;
- a 25 KVA generator;
- a radial saw;
- a band saw;
- a multi-functional machine (jointer, planer, mortiser);
- an edger-saw ;
- a wide belt sander;
- a grinding machine with water tank ;
- a dryer



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Community members sufficiently strengthened in the management and use of wood harvesting and processing equipment

- 52 community members have been trained in the management and use of wood harvesting and processing equipment;
- There are felling operators, Lucas mill operators and carpenters in the villages.
- The most successful of the trained people were recruited by ASFOCKA for wood exploitation and processing.



Revised Basic Management Plans (BMP)

- 24 of the 26 MMPs of ASFOCKA's community forest members have been revised;
- 2 community forests had already started the process of revising their BMPs.

Expected result N°4: FLEGT certificates of legality are issued to at least 75% of the federation's members

Result achieved:

- 52 members from different stakeholder groups were empowered on the modalities of issuing a certificate of legality, the file documents for obtaining a certificate of legality and the process of verifying legality. These different actors included communities, civil society organisations, state administrations, communes and private sector operators;
- 26 applications to obtain a certificate of legality were drafted and submitted to the Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF);
- The registration of each community and their partners in the database of the Computerised Forest Information Management System (SIGIF) is dependent on the implementation of the SIGIF.

Expected result N°5: the marketing of wood is better structured

Result achieved:

- A wood trading and marketing platform has been set up;
- There is a directory of representatives from the different categories of actors representing the platform;
- A charter has been drawn to run the platform;
- A website has been set up for communication, product development and promotion of ASFOCKA activities (www.asfocka.org);
- A commercial partnership contract was signed in July 2016 between ASFOCKA and the company CAMWOOD CORPORATION SA for the marketing of wood.



Expected result N°6: Lessons learned from the project are shared and visibility of actions ensured

Result achieved:

- A document containing the results and lessons learned from the project was produced and presented at the feedback workshop;
- A documentary summarising all the stages of the project's implementation in images was produced;
- A workshop was organised to present the results of the project and to share the lessons learned;
- A team of three people from the project went to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2015 to share the project's experience in the sub-region;
- In 2016, the project leader went to Hawaii in the United States of America for the IUCN World Congress to share the project experience and explore potential partners who might be interested in the Action;
- The project's actions have been publicised

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through:

- 2 appearances in CRTV *m'accompagne* programme;
- 2 interventions on *Radio Afrik 2* ;
- 2 interventions on *Radio Environnement*;
- 2 press articles in the newspaper *Le Messager*
- 1 press article in the newspaper *Mutations*;
- 1 appearance on *Vision 4* television;
- 1 appearance on CRTV television.

3.2. EFFECTS/IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

Effect/Impact n°1:

The project has helped to establish local democracy within the community forest associations that are members of ASFOCKA. Henceforth, when an association's office fails, the members come together to hold new elections and elect new leaders contrary to before as the most influential ones could stay in office against the wishes of the community.



An attitude of the participants during the renewal of the Bokendja community forest board

Effect/Impact n°2:

The use of logging equipment (mobile sawmills, chainsaws) and processing equipment (planers, edgers, etc.) has created many jobs within ASFOCKA. There is now at least one lucas mill operator, one feller and several labourers in each community



Young people from the village transporting wood into a truck, which constitute jobs created

Effect/Impact n°3:

Revenues have increase in communities that exploit and market their timber through ASFOCKA. This income has enabled some social works to be carried out (improvement of housing, equipment for the community centre, purchase of satellite dishes, etc.).



Ngoulmekong community centre equipped with a TV, a generator, chairs and a satellite dish thanks to the revenue generated (the community experienced the victory of the Indomitable Lions at the 2017 African Cup of Nations like the other populations in town)

Effect/Impact n°4:

Before the project, partner came along with the equipment. Currently, we are witnessing real management of community forests thanks to the equipment acquired for exploitation, which has made it possible to increase the quality and yield of production in community forests.



A member of a community forest turned feller



A community forest member turned Lucas mill operator

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Effect/impact n°5:

The communities have gone from "price takers" to "price makers". Before the project, the price of wood were imposed on the communities by the partners, mainly the "alhadji", at a very low price (7,000 FCFA/m³). Today, they are the ones who negotiate the price of their wood (which can be sold for some species as high as 280,000 FCFA per m³).



ASFOCKA board members delivering their wood to CAMWOOD (a company that only deals in legal wood)

3.3. LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson learned n°1:

To successfully manage a community forest, it must be considered as a business. This is why ASFOCKA has been transformed into a cooperative, which is a real community enterprise with its own management rules (business plan and operating account to be drawn up).

Lesson learned n°2:

The culture of business management remains another challenge for the communities, because they are yet to understand that the income generated by the sale of forest products, have to cover operating costs and the depreciation of equipment. This is another school of thought for the communities.

Lesson learned n°3:

The provision of logging and processing equipment to the communities and their empowerment has enabled them to take their destiny into their own hands, as they are now at the centre of all activities (from tree felling to marketing, including skidding and loading) whereas before they were simply spectators. They could hardly control the activities of the partners who exploited their forests.

Lesson learned n°4:

With a little more support, community forests can step up to the plate in the VPA/FLEGT process, but still need guidance to maximize the benefits of legality.

Lesson learned n°5:

The VPA/FLEGT hasn't yet found a solution to the problem of wood wastage during logging. Indeed, during inventories, the volume is only estimated on the basis of the useful height of the tree, leaving out large branches and spurs that could be well used.

4. CONCLUSION

The "Support to the Kadey Community Forest Federation in the process of obtaining legal certificates and marketing timber" project will have fulfilled many of the expectations of the populations concerned.

However, in view of the significant resources allocated to developing the exploitation and marketing of timber and the relatively short time the project has taken to make the positive impacts perceptible, CARFAD and its partners have agreed to set up a relief team for a period of six months from the end of the project to ensure the transition.

It is not obvious that at the end of this period that the communities can stand on their own, because the community enterprise set up is a whole new aspect, for which the communities have to acquire the required skills to manage.

The endeavour lies on the path to a real fight against poverty while sustainably exploiting forest resources and no advice or support would be too much to take advantage of on this pilot experience which could not only inspire other community forests in Cameroon but the entire Congo Basin sub-region.



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SOME EQUIPMENT DONATED TO THE KADEY COMMUNITY FOREST ASSOCIATION (ASFOCKA)

➤ Timber harvesting equipment



Chainsaw for felling trees



Mobile saw (Lucas mill) for sawing wood

➤ Wood processing equipment



Multifunction wood machine (jointer-planer-mortiser)



Dewalt table saw



Spindle moulder saw



Grinding machine



Grinding machine



110 KVA generator

➤ Transport equipment



All-terrain truck for timber skidding



Large truck for transporting wood to the delivery site

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