EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE

Advancing the roles and impacts of non-state actors in forest policy making and implementation in Cameroon

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Outline

I. FLEGT VPA and REDD+ in Cameroon

II. Key questions

III. Theoretical framewrok

IV. Data collection

V. Preliminary results

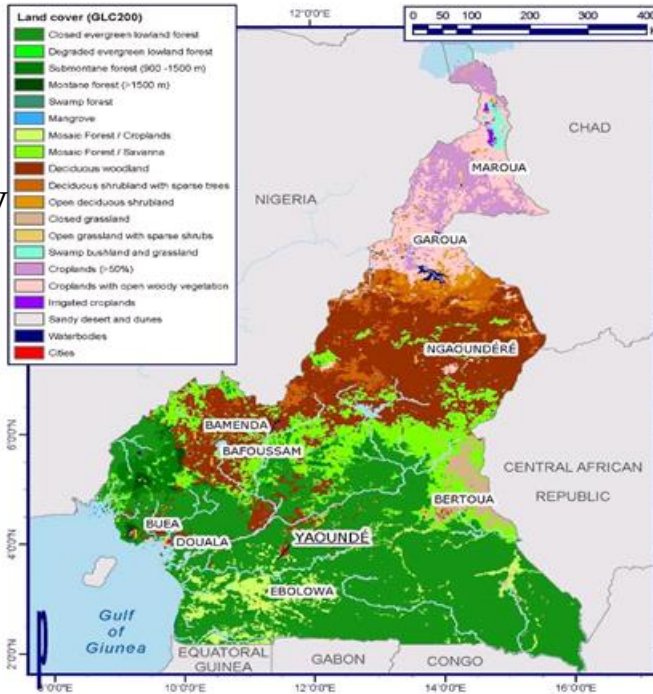
VI. Conclusions

FLEGT and REDD+

- FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade)
  - An Action Plan by the EU, endorsed in 2003
  - Aims to tackle illegal logging and improve forest governance in timber producing countries
  - Key element of FLEGT: a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)
  - VPA is legally binding bilateral agreement upon signature
- REDD+ (Reducing Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation)
  - Climate change-related mechanism under UNFCCC
  - Aims to reduce CO2 from loss of tropical forest, enhance forest carbon stock …
  - Several tropical countries involved in testing pilot projects, elaborating national REDD+ strategy, preparing institutions, building capacity

Cameroon: country context

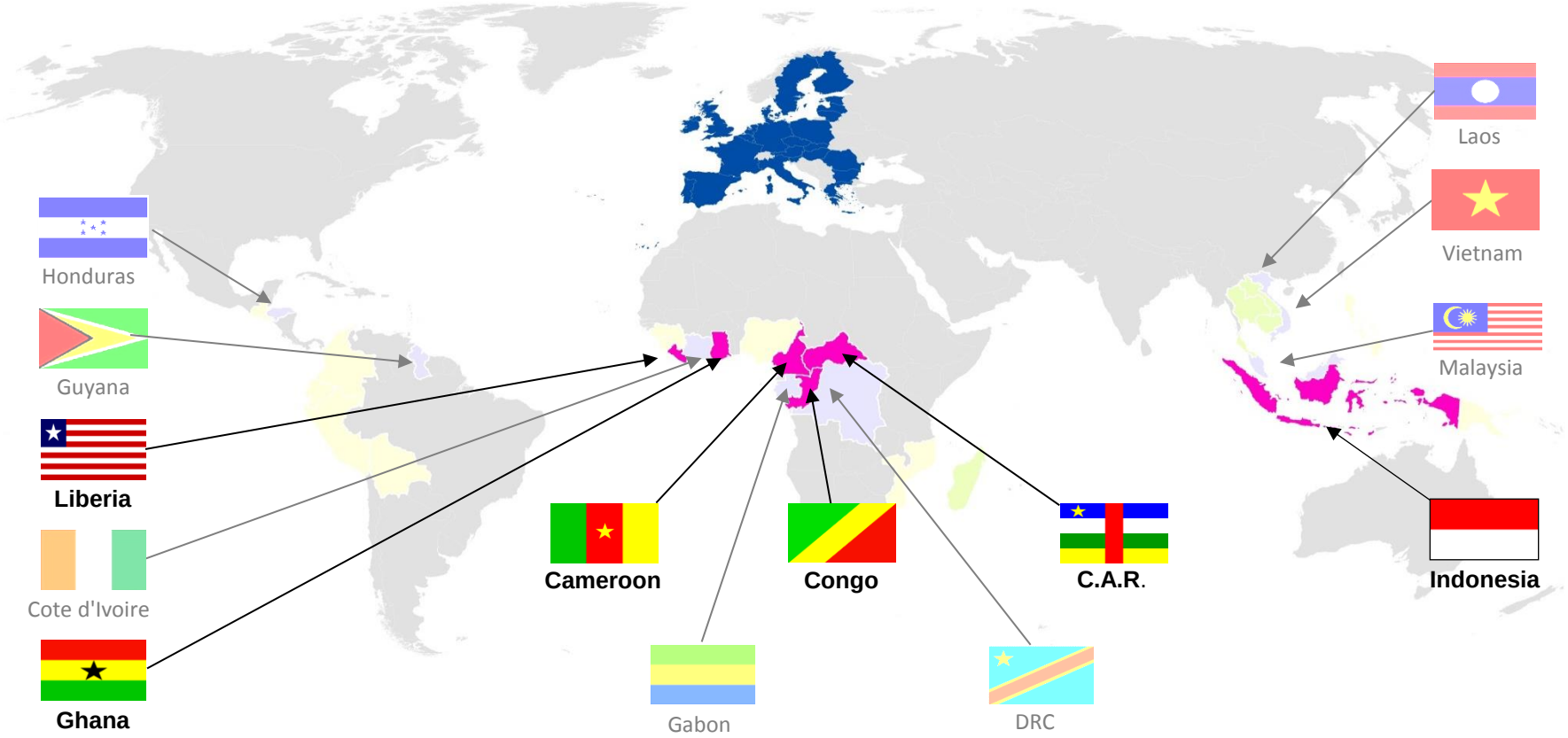
- Located in Central Africa, 42% forest cover, rich in natural resources, high biodiversity values, increasing rate of deforestation (COMIFAC, 2013, Tegegne et al.2016)
- (semi-) authoritarian
- Participating in both FLEGT-VPA and REDD+
  - Signed (in 2010) and ratified (in 2011) VPA and currently at system development stage
    - developing a legality verification system, reforming legislative framework, implementing transparency clause
  - Two main REDD+ initiatives: FCPF and UNREDD.
    - Currently engaged in elaborating national REDD+ strategy, capacity building



Research questions

- In spite of the increasing role of non-state actors in forest and environmental governance and policies, little empirical evidence exist as to how and to what extent these actors influence policy making (Somorin et al., 2014; Brockhaus et al., 2014)
  - How and to what extent non-state actors shape policy development and institutional change in forestry in Cameroon?
  - How can their engagement in and contribution to forest related policy development and implementation can be enhanced? and what are the main challenges that may stand?
- This is done for examining the roles of CSOs in FLEGT VPA and REDD+

Lessons learnt in Cameroon can be of interest to the currently 15 countries negotiating &/or implementing FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ and to many more who may enter into the processes



Data collection

A three-step approach:

1. **Literature review**: scientific literature, policy and project documents, grey literature**, including VPA negotiation agenda and reports**
2. **Interview survey**: 37 face-to face interviews with state and non-state actors/experts
3. **Conferences, workshops, meetings and seminars**

Theoretical framework (still in thinking)

Literature on role of non-state actors in environmental governance:

1) Gemmill and Bamidele (2002): info providers, develop policies, implement policies, conduct monitoring & advocacy

2) Andonova et al (2009): information sharing, capacity building & rule setting

3) Visseren-Hamakers et al (2012): agenda setting, policy development, policy implementation, ensuring good governance and meta-governance

The framework builds and blends elements developed by different scholars, especially Andonova et al and Visseren-Hamakers et al.

Examine the roles and contributions of CSOs to FLEGT-VPA and REDD+:

1) Agenda setting
2) Policy development,
3) Policy implementation
4) Ensuring good governance
5) Meta-governance
6) Capacity building

Policy discourse: agenda setting

1) **FLEGT-VPA**
   - Participation rights and openness
   - Appropriate structure for consultation
   - Recognition of customary rights
   - *Social impacts of FLEGT-VPA*
   - *Corruption*
   - Legality definition (considering domestic markets)
2) **REDD+**
   - Tenure and right
   - FPIC and social safeguards
3) **On-going revision of forest, land tenure and mining laws**

Changes in rules and regulation

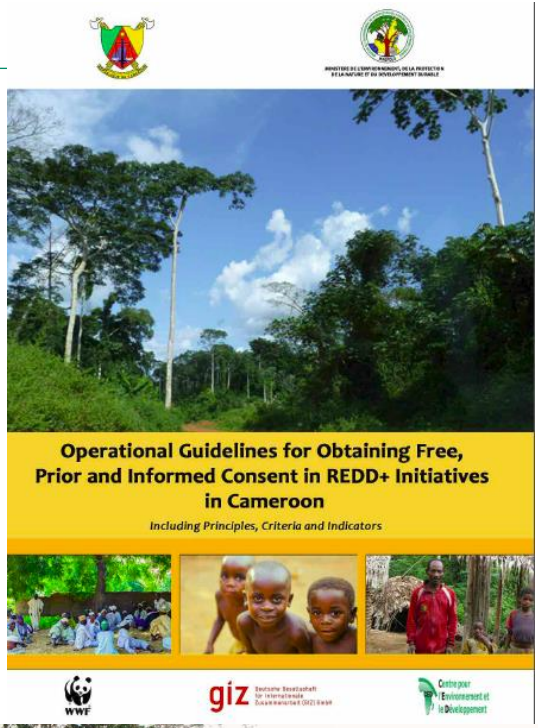
1) **FLEGT-VPA**
   - Participation rights and openness ➔ secured one seat
   - Appropriate structure for consultation ➔ National committee
   - Recognition of customary rights
   - *Social impacts of FLEGT-VPA* ➔ Article 17 on social safeguard
   - *Corruption* ➔ transparency annex
   - Legality definition (considering domestic markets)

2) **REDD+**
   - Tenure and right ➔ under elaboration
   - FPIC guideline endorsed and social safeguards under elaboration

3) **On-going revision of forest, land tenure and mining laws** ➔ early to evaluate

Policy implementation/developmental roles

- VPA impact monitoring – methodological suggestion
- Implementation of transparency clause
- REDD+/PES piloting projects (e.g. CED)
- Operationalization of FPIC
- Ad hoc benefit sharing mechanisms
- Capacity building and information sharing



Challenges in the egagment and participation of CSOs

1) Limited information sharing within CSO actors (between CSO and state actors)
2) In adequate financial and intellectual capacities
3) Problem of coordination, representation and conflicts (for funding, strategic position and leadership)
4) No clear boundaries between CSOs and state actors (some of CSOs are owned, managed directly or indirectly e.g. by retired civil servant or relative of political elite)
5) Mistrust between state and CSOs actors (Government is now closing down doors)

Concluding remarks

1) CSOs have made important contributions to policy discourses, policy development, information sharing and capacity building
2) CSOs in Cameroon are **fragmented and ideological divided**
   - **Inconsistencies and competition** between voices makes it difficult to influence policy elite for transformational change
3) **Weak coalition of CSOs** and strong interference of state actors
   - Hence their engagement brought '**shallow institutional**' change

Concluding remarks

4) Improve internal organization (to move from coalitions to representation to legitimize their participation and build greater unity for interests and discourses)
   I. Develop a vision and apply guidelines for collaboration
   II. Develop CSOs financial and intellectual capacity

5) Build trust among CSOs and between CSOs and state actors

Thank you

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