



Applied research in ecology and social sciences in support of sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa

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Over the next four years (2022–2025), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) will implement a support programme for applied research in ecology and social sciences. Its goal is to strengthen the impact of this research on the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- To organize and support applied research that seeks to strengthen knowledge in social sciences and in ecology on the management and enhancement of natural resources in the forest ecosystems of Central Africa
- To promote the use of this knowledge in the operating methods of targeted stakeholders and in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies and sustainable development assistance programmes in Central Africa.



For the benefit of stakeholders in the field

The goal of this EU-funded programme is to direct research towards the “operational solutions” that need to be invented and applied by stakeholders in the field who are confronted with the concrete challenges of sustainable management of natural resources as part of their duties or their everyday socioeconomic activities. The following categories of stakeholders are concerned:

- 1 National, regional and local administrations responsible for the environment and natural resources, land-use planning, infrastructure development, rural development and the various ways of exploiting and enhancing the natural and mineral resources of forest ecosystems and their peripheral areas
- 2 Managers of protected areas (PAs) who work either at public institutions or for independent operators that have signed public-private partnerships with the public authorities responsible for the management of PAs
- 3 Managers of forests managed for timber production (the administrative body in charge of the sector and forest operators involved in the sustainable management of their concessions, whether industrial players, local authorities or communities organized for this purpose, as in the case of communal forests and community forests)
- 4 Agro-industry operators and extractive industries, whose activities and geographical scope of operations may compete with forest areas
- 5 Civil society organizations promoting and overseeing local community development initiatives (community forests, conservancies, NTFP development cooperatives, etc.) and defending and promoting the rights of local stakeholders (with a particular focus on indigenous peoples).

The programme seeks to mobilize and “assign” university researchers to these various categories of stakeholders, so that they can benefit from dedicated scientific support that will enable them to implement innovative strategies of action in the management of natural resources.



By mobilizing academic and scientific research

The programme will fund applied research for the beneficiary stakeholders listed above, but based on an academic and scientific framework. The target academic and scientific partners are the following:

- Universities and research institutes in Central Africa and the EU with research programmes focused on the issues of socioeconomic development, governance or the management of natural resources in the countries of Central Africa
- Experienced researchers in ecology and social sciences (post-doctoral fellows) enrolled in a university in Central Africa or the EU, which will have expressed interest in becoming a programme partner. Through the university where they are enrolled, these post-doctoral fellows will benefit from grants funded by the programme. They will make a long-term (minimum 18 months) engagement with a beneficiary stakeholder, with which a research-support protocol will be signed.
- Master's students (in ecology and social sciences) enrolled in Central African universities and in European inter-university cooperation programmes (**Msc Erasmus+ / Erasmus Mundus**) within an EU university that will have expressed interest in becoming a programme partner. Through the university where they are enrolled, these students will receive specific financial support from the programme to cover the costs of their engagement in Central Africa. They will engage in one-off actions (maximum 6 months) with a beneficiary stakeholder, with which a research-support protocol will be signed.



Indicative list of eligible research topics

Social sciences / Economics

- Land tenure, land ownership and mapping of customary rights
- Population growth/shrinkage and demographic trends in forests
- Material cultures: what options for their enhancement?
- Local notions of consent
- How local powers and modern representational governance interact
- Acculturation, a new culture?
- Conflictual situations and conflict resolution
- Associative practices / locally-generated development
- Social and community forestry
- Ethnoscience
- International flows of tropical commodities
- Measuring and evaluating the improvement of economic conditions in PA peripheral areas
- Management of PAs by local communities and indigenous peoples
- Community conservation on PA (conservancy) peripheral areas

Ecology / Natural sciences

- Assessing agroforestry systems
- Impacts of hunting on natural regeneration
- Revising the IUCN Red List, especially for commercial tree species
- Long-term impacts of managed forestry: regeneration and dispersal of commercial species
- Agro-ecological intensification of itinerant agriculture systems
- Restoration of exploited forest areas (selective enrichment) and agricultural fallow land
- Sustainable wood fuel management
- Local and global health risks related to the intensification of human-induced interference in tropical forest ecosystems in Central Africa
- Increasing knowledge on the specific species and biodiversity of Central African forest ecosystems

Contact us if you are interested in support from the programme and...

- you manage a research centre at a university in Central Africa or in the EU,
- you fall within one of the categories of stakeholders in the fields that are targeted by the programme, and
- you are interested in developing a research-support protocol on one of the suggested topics or on another topic that you consider relevant.



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CIFOR-ICRAF

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.

