



# ***What makes Community Forest a success: **examining tenure, gender, community entrepreneurship*****



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# The African women's Network for community management of forests (REFACOF) :

## Securing Women's Forest and Land Property Rights!

### ***General background:***

- Created in May 2009 in Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Composed of 20 West and Central African countries and Madagascar
- **An advocacy platform** focused on African women's **tenure rights** in land and forest reforms

### ***Mission:***

- Promote women's rights in Africa and advocate to shape policies and practices for gender equity in relation to land and forest tenure

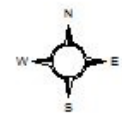
### ***Intervention areas:***

- Capacity building
- Tenure reforms
- Advocacy and Experience sharing
- Women's economic empowerment

### ***Contacts:***





















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# CARTE DES PAYS MEMBRES DU REFACOF



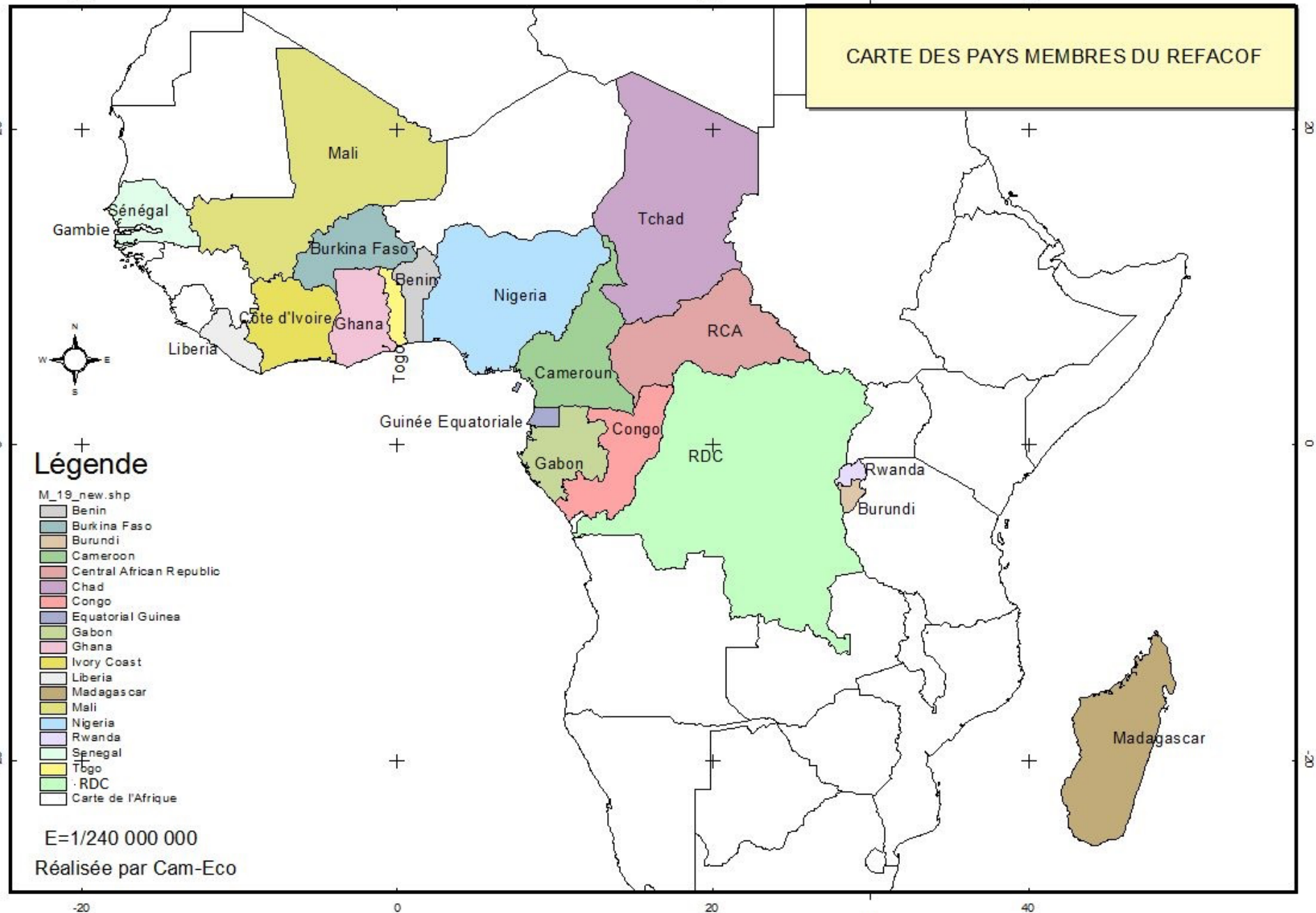
## Légende

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-  Benin
-  Burkina Faso
-  Burundi
-  Cameroon
-  Central African Republic
-  Chad
-  Congo
-  Equatorial Guinea
-  Gabon
-  Ghana
-  Ivory Coast
-  Liberia
-  Madagascar
-  Mali
-  Nigeria
-  Rwanda
-  Senegal
-  Togo
-  RDC
-  Carte de l'Afrique

E=1/240 000 000

Réalisée par Cam-Eco





# Community forestry in Africa: Short Historical background<sup>1</sup>

- Community based forest management is being implemented in Africa since 1980s
- Many countries of the Sub-Sahara Africa are promoting CBFM schemes: Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Congo, DRC, Gabon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, The Gambia, Tanzania, etc.
- Three main objectives:
  - Enhancing community engagement in forest management,
  - Reducing rural poverty, and
  - Promoting forest resources conservation.



# Definition of some key concepts

## Community forestry:

- RECOFTC (2011): Community forestry is a broad term used to describe models of forest management that give local people the majority say in making decisions.

## Community forest:

- An area (forest or other ecosystem) legally attributed to and managed by local communities. The definition varies from one country to another.

## Gender:

- We understand Gender as:
  - Issues that focus on women and on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, division of labor, interests and needs.
  - Culturally and socially constructed difference between men and women that varies from place to place and time to time.

## Tenure:

- We understand tenure as a bundle of rights (RRI) : from the weakest to strongest



# What is a Community Forest?

## Cameroon scheme:

- According to Cameroon's forest law - n°94/01 of January 20, 1994- a Community Forest is a natural forest of the non-permanent forest domain, subject to a management agreement between a village community and the Administration in charge of forests
- The area of a CF does not exceed **5000 ha** – attributed for **a renewable** period of **25 years**
- Management is based on a 5-years **Simple Management Plan** approved by the Forest administration and renewable every 5 years
- 4 legal entities are recognized for the management of the CF: the Association, the Common Initiative Group (GIC), the Cooperative, the Economic Initiative Group (GIE)
- Objectives:
  - Enhancing community engagement in forest management,
  - Reducing rural poverty,
  - Promoting sustainable management of forests, and
  - Contributing to the fight against climate change (since 2008)



## What is a Community Forest? (2)

### The DRC scheme:

- A Community Forest is a forest concession allocated free of charge and in perpetuity to a local community by the State on its customary land
- The FC in the DRC is in its experimental phase **2018 – 2023**
- The area does not exceed **50.000 ha** - attributed **for life**
- Management is based on a 5-years **Simple Management Plan** approved by the Forest administration and revised every year.
- Objectives:
  - Satisfy vital needs of the communities
  - Promote sustainable management of forests





## What is a Community Forest? (3)

### The Gambia scheme:

- A Community Forest is a demarcated forest administered and managed by a forest committee on behalf of one or more communities in accordance with the Preliminary Community Forest Management Agreement (PCFMA) or Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA) terms and conditions
- The area has no limit and the FC is attributed **for life**
- Management is based on a 5-years **Management Plan** approved by the Forest administration and revised every year
- Objectives:
  - Increase the welfare of local communities by applying socially accepted and ecologically adapted natural resource management practices within the confines of good governance.



# What do women do in the community forests?

## 1) Community forest business developers

- **Dead woods business in The Gambia:**
  - In 2013, **23 women** from Ndemban and **121** from Somita were involved in dead branch wood marketing for a cash income of **US\$1,372/woman/trip**
  - In 2017, **58 women** from Ndemban and **160** from Somita (97 permanent traders and 63 occasional traders) for a cash income of **US\$2,500/woman/trip**
- **Tree Nursery Enterprises in the Gambia:**
  - Tree seedling productions: the business can generate around **US\$1,960.0 annually** for women and the youth involved





## What do women do in the community forests? (2)

- **The “Pistaches” business in Cameroon:**

- In 2018, **20 women** from BOPO Community forest harvested and sold **8 tons** of “pistaches” generating an annual income of **US\$10,000**
- In 2019, they harvested and sold 11,200 tons for an annual income of **US\$15,273**
- In 2020, they harvested and sold 14,400 tons, generating an annual income of **US\$19,636**

- **The “Plantain” business in Cameroon:**

- In 2018, 10 women from LIBOCK Community forest harvested and sold **1200 bunches** of plantains and generated **US\$2,182**
- In 2019 **1420 bunches** were harvested and generated an annual income of **US\$2,582**
- In 2020 the entire production was lost because of Covid-19 lockdown: 1330 bunches of plantain for an estimated income of **US\$2,420**







## What do women do in the community forests? (3)

### 2) Community forest restoration and rehabilitation

- Tree nurseries development, tree planting activities
- Mangroves restoration
- Mainstreaming agroforestry practices into food cultivation, etc.

### 3) Involvement in the Community Forest Management Committee (CFMC)

- In Cameroon, **30-40%** of CFMC members are female
- In The Gambia, **1/3** of the CFMC members should be female by law
- In the DRC, Women participation to the CFMC is encouraged; but the process is still at the early stage!!!





## How to scale up: key challenges to address

- **Tenure rights**
  - Need for clarity and security of the rights of local communities and more specifically of women and IP
  - Need to **improve customary rights** and put in place mechanisms that secure rights to lands and forests for women
- **Gender equality**
  - Understanding roles, responsibilities and activities of women and men, as well as the involvement of young people to provide adequate support and access to decisions making processes
- **Access to funding, technology and market**
  - Adequate funding mechanisms
  - Technical, technological and financial capacity building of women in entrepreneurship and business development
  - Secure access to productive materials such as lands and forests for women
- Improve women organizational capacities and more flexible rules and regulations of the **informal sector where women mostly operate.**



## Keys to success

The success of Community Forests is also based on the five principles of successful CBFM outlined earlier by my previous colleagues. **The question is : What does this mean for rural women?**

- **Adaptative management and learning:**
  - Engaging local and indigenous women and providing adequate support to them – capacity building (Technical, technological, financial, organizational, institutional ...) - building resilience, ...
- **Availability of the resources:**
  - Facilitating access to forest resources for local and indigenous women (timber and non timber) – tenure security, ...
- **Effective governance and participation:**
  - Access to decision-making structures, gender-responsive laws and regulations, building partnership, ...



## Keys to success (2)

- **Rights and institutional setting:**
  - **Political will, enabling environment** (gender-responsive laws and regulations), **secure tenure rights, engagement and commitment to invest on Community Forestry Enterprises, ...**
- **Addressing community needs:**
  - **Livelihoods development initiatives, building resilience to climate change and other crises, .. Gender equality and intersectionalities, ... entrepreneurship development, market, technology, ...adaptation actions, poverty reduction, ...**



# Conclusion and perspective

- **What makes Community Forest a success?**
  - Going beyond policy to practice and translating or adapting this to the key forest management actor's vision, knowledge, needs and expectations: **forest small holders and women producers**
  - Global and collective commitment to invest on Community Forestry schemes
    - Providing adequate financial resources for Community Forestry Enterprises
    - Empowering local communities, women, youth and IP's
  - Political will to create enabling environment (gender-responsive laws and regulations, capacity building schemes, tenure security to women, ...)





# Thank you!

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