

Responsible Land Policy in Cameroon



THE CHALLENGE: Land use rights are hardly secured in rural areas

Cameroon's land tenure legislation dates back to 1974. Obsolete and in need of reform, it limits the proper and affordable recognition of rights to use forest, agricultural and pastoral land. In rural areas in particular, land use is often managed through traditional agreements that are not systematically documented or recognised by official legislation. The current practices put women, young people and marginalised groups at a particular disadvantage and exposes them to land grabbing.

Yet secure access to land is central to food security and the fight against poverty. Unclear land use rights, on the other hand, promote conflicts between different user groups and prevent them from investing in the

sustainable use of natural resources and thus the preservation of their livelihoods.

THE APPROACH: Modernising land policy - Documenting and strengthening customary and property rights

The project “Responsible Land Policy” (ProPFR) in Cameroon is being implemented since January 2023 and is strengthening land use rights in the Centre region of Cameroon (particularly in the municipalities of Nanga-Eboko and Yoko). The project aims to support the rural population not only in safeguarding their livelihoods but also in protecting and restoring forest-rich landscapes.

What are we doing? - Some project activities

- Promoting **political change** to ensure inclusive access to land (e.g. recognition of customary land rights, obligatory inclusion of local development plans (PLADDT))
- **Raising local population's awareness** on land rights and procedures for securing vital areas (housing, fields, pasture, etc.)
- Supporting small agricultural investors individually and collectively in preliminary activities: **geo-referencing, official registration of their land and obtaining securing documents** (concessions).
- Supporting the **civil society in its advocacy in the ongoing land reform process** (e.g. organisation of the symposium “Semaine du foncier” in 2024).
- Institutionalizing enlarged councils of notables for **conflict prevention and management** (conflicts between farmers, livestock breeders, neighbours, etc.), training in holistic livestock management and signing grazing land use agreements.
- Supporting state and traditional authorities in **archiving** documents concerning land rights
- Promoting **access to land for women, young people and minority ethnic groups** (e.g. internally displaced persons or transhumant herders)

Our aim:

Improving access to land for certain groups of the population, particularly marginalised groups, in the Centre region in Cameroon.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS: **Documenting land rights reduces conflict**

Recognising customary rights secures people's livelihoods. Land rights are recognised by both traditional and state authorities, which leads to a significant reduction in land conflicts. In the event of a dispute, the parties involved will be able to rely on the documents developed and piloted by the project (Certificates of possession of administratively recognised customary land rights, *Certificats de possession des droits fonciers coutumiers administrativement reconnus*). The intensive support regarding conflict resolution is already making it easier for farmers and herders to live together:

“There were too many problems between herders and farmers. With the support of ProPFR, we have set up transhumance trails. We discovered the value of each



other's work— which means that the conflicts have ceased.”

Bakary HALIROU, Mbororo farmer, Mekoassim – Yoko

A FACTOR FOR SUCCESS: **The Ministry of Land Tenure, a committed partner**

The explicit interest of the Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure (MINDCAF), at both central and decentralised levels, to collaborate with ProPFR certainly opens many possibilities. In February 2024, two circular letters were published, providing for state recognition of traditional rights. This would underline the position of traditional authorities such as village chiefs. ProPFR supports MINDCAF in its practical implementation.



“Women have the right to speak and they also have a right to land”

Violette SIMBIR, president of the “FEMMES SURES“ in Mangai – Yoko

STORY FROM THE FIELD

Before ProPFR intervened, husbands often made major decisions about their wives' plots of land– without consulting them. A woman's opinion didn't matter. ProPFR has raised awareness among women and men in the villages to the fact that women do have a right to land. They can– like men– receive land titles in their name. In Mangai, the association “FEMMES SURES” (*Confident Women*), a group of women working in agroforestry, has obtained the village's approval to farm a 30-hectare plot. With the support of ProPFR, it has taken steps to legally secure 10 hectares of it. The members proceeded to legalise their group with the necessary documents (charter of the association, list of members, etc.) and took steps to align themselves with the standards of good land governance: signing a certificate of peaceful use of land, geo-referencing the plot, signing agreement on the plot boundaries with the neighbours, etc. **The “FEMMES SURES” of Mangai have taken charge of securing their plot of land!**



Georeferencing of cocoa plots with GPS

Budget and duration

4.85 million euros / January 2023 to May 2026

Political supervision

Ministry of Domains, Cadastre and Land Affairs (MINDCAF)

Commissioned by

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Sustainable development



More information

[GIZ web site](#) and [Land Portal](#)