

Developing a standard community mapping methodology for effective land-use planning



The project developed, tested and achieved broad support for a **standard methodology for participatory community mapping** across different ecosystems and cultures – in 22 months

Project duration
30 June 2015
to 30 April 2017

Cameroonian communities' rights are recognized and protected in laws and regulations including the land laws, forestry law, the framework law on environmental management, and the mining code. Communities also claim customary land rights as property rights. However, the limit of communities' land is still an unsolved issue in Cameroon, and the lack of mapped boundaries contributes to the escalation of conflicts. Increasing investments in agriculture, forest and extractive industries threaten the rights of Indigenous People and local communities in Cameroon and increase conflict in rural areas. Cameroon's Land Use Planning Law of 2011 is today driving a wave of land-use planning and decision-making about economic development across the country at all levels. This project recognized the opportunity to gain formal recognition of the rights of Indigenous People and local communities through the window of land-use and development planning.

With Tenure Facility support, a joint initiative of the Centre for Environment and Development (CED, Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), Rainforest Foundation United Kingdom (RFUK), and the consulting firm Rainbow Environment Consult worked with government to develop and secure broad support for a standard methodology for participatory community mapping in Cameroon. The methodology lays important groundwork for explicit recognition of community rights and reduction of land and resource conflicts in Cameroon as the country implements new land use planning. If scaled nationwide, the methodology could secure community rights over more than 5 million hectares within five years.



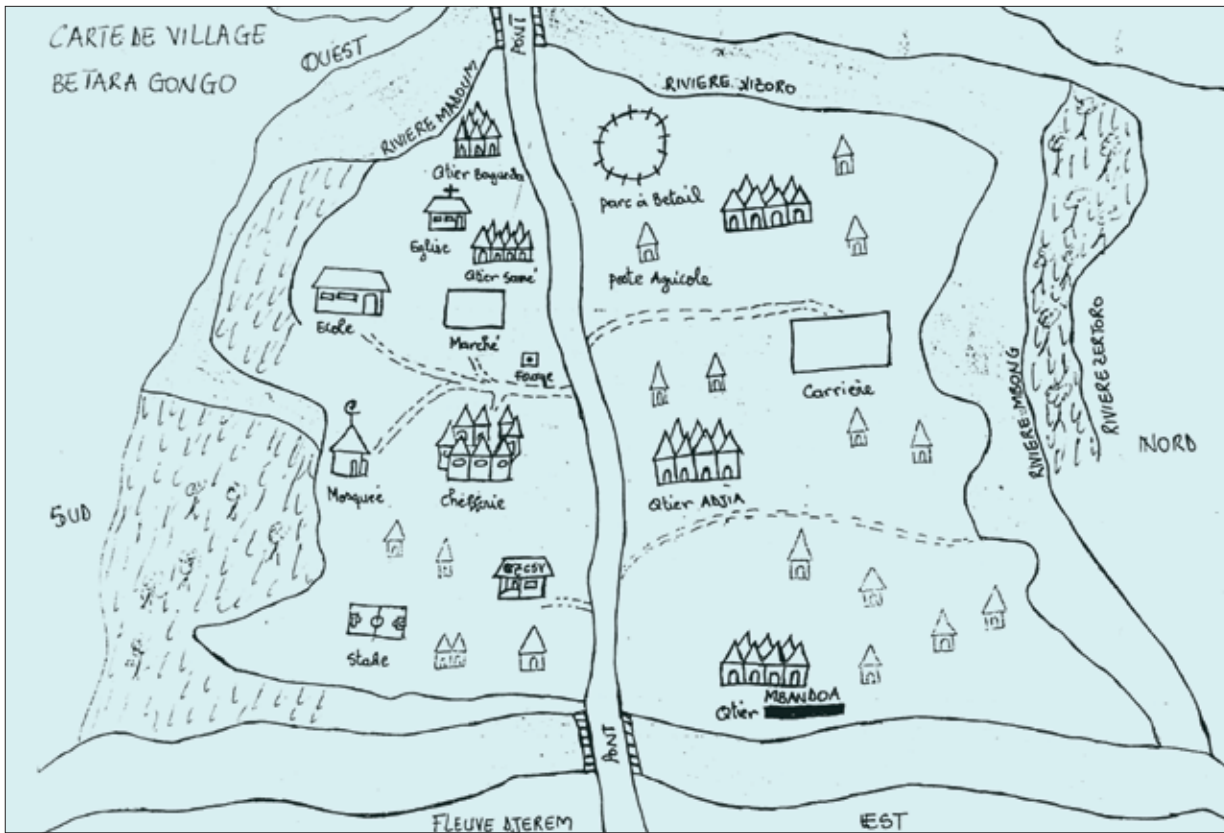
Results

- The project developed a standard methodology for participatory community mapping in Cameroon and tested it in 25 communities and five regions of the country.
- The projects' multi-stakeholder Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), which includes several government organizations, the National Cartography Institute and private sector organizations, endorsed the standard methodology.
- The project used the mapping methodology development and testing to enhance coordination among government ministries with responsibility for land tenure, resources and development planning, as well as recognition of participatory community mapping as an essential tool for reducing conflict over land and resources and for supporting tenure-sensitive land-use planning and investment.
- The resulting methodology could play a crucial role in securing community rights over more than 5 million hectares within five years, if applied across the country by government in council-level land use planning and national development projects.

For the full story, visit thetenurefacility.org/projects/cameroon



NGOs developed and tested the standard methodology for participatory community mapping in 25 communities and five regions in Cameroon with different ecosystems and cultures, as shown above. At left top, a participatory map drawn by villagers from Betara Gongo. Centre left, a man learns how to use a geographic positioning system. Centre right, traditional chiefs endorse the standard methodology. Bottom left, villagers listen to a leader of Cameroon's National Cartographic Institute speaking about his organization's support for participatory community mapping.



“There are many problems this approach can solve! The problems are there. We are working on this to forestall future problems and to avoid conflict. Thanks to all those who have made this dream come true. How do we carry this pilot forward? We must go all the way! This exercise is the salvation for many conflicts between administrations.”

– Chief Tanyi Robinson, National Council for Traditional Chiefs in Cameroon (CNCTC)



Residents of the village Bidou 1, near Kribi, believe their new community map will enable them to defend their land rights, which are threatened by expansion of a rubber concession.

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The Tenure Facility is the first and only international, multi-stakeholder institution exclusively focused on securing land and forest rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It provides grants to implement tenure reform within existing government and international structures and shares the knowledge, innovations and tools that emerge. Launched in 2014 by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), the Tenure Facility is dedicated to scaling up recognition of collective land and forest rights globally. The Tenure Facility is an international foundation registered in Sweden.

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The Tenure Facility is supported by several donors, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Ford Foundation and Norad.



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