

## **I. PROJECT TITLE**

**Pilot project for community reforestation through the development of cashew cultivation and important endemic plant species in the far north of Cameroon.**

## **II. CONTEXT**

"Development considered as a general action or a general process undertaken by a human community, with a view to constantly improving the living conditions of its members, was initially conceived at the outset exclusively from the angle of economic development and then brought to the social field "(1) This definition reveals that development supposes on the one hand a dynamism of the populations, which unfortunately is not always acquired, and on the other hand requires intervention public authorities to support the actions undertaken by the populations.

In Cameroon, already around 1948, the colonists had initiated cashew plantations with a purely ecological goal: to protect the soil against erosion. But from this ecological objective, another quickly results: the economic objective. Indeed, after a trial period on ten hectares from 1954 - 1960, a planting policy was developed in 1961, and allowed the installation of state plantations. The State, at the same time, encouraged the peasants to practice the cotton - cashew tree coupling in the regions of northern Cameroon. Hence the individual or private plantations which have continued to grow in recent years. In Garoua, many peasants have been cultivating cashew trees since that time because the area is ecologically favorable to it.

Likewise, the cashew tree contributes a not insignificant part to their income. But in 1987, the State will completely withdraw from the "cashew" sector following the closure of the shelling plant at the port of Douala. From then on, the only real exportable cash crop in the sector was limited to cotton, the production of which the State supports and encourages. But beyond the currencies that cotton provides, on the environmental level, consciously or unconsciously, the peasant destroys the trees, pollutes the water tables and impoverishes the soil. In this context, is it not urgent to rethink the issue of development, if not sustainable development, if it is agreed that the Beninese economy is based on the primary sector? A real policy of diversification of cash crops is therefore essential. The cashew tree could play a crucial role because of its dual function of production and environmental protection. Is this not an opportunity to seize to meet the challenge of sustainable development: meeting the needs of current generations while preserving those of future generations. A reflection on cashew tree plantations therefore appears necessary as the reason for this project.

The severe climatic conditions and repeated rainfall deficits in the Far North, which have persisted and worsened since the end of the 1960s, combined with increasingly strong human pressure, continue to worsen the degradation of natural resources. In Cameroon in the Far North, the area deforested between 1980 and 1990 is estimated at over 100,000 ha / year (Mbog, 1993). Restoring the balance of natural ecosystems is a major challenge for the

Far North region, whose economic and social development is based primarily on the use of agro-sylvo-pastoral potential. Thus, the policy option in environmental matters favors reforestation as a strategy to fight against climate change, desertification and poverty (Mbog, 1999).

The Community Reforestation Project in the Far North (PRECOMGN) through the development of cashew cultivation and other important plant species endemic to the regions concerned is in line with the actions carried out by the AEFÉ since the 2000s. as part of the fight against climate change, desertification and poverty in the far north of Cameroon. Following the failure of large-scale reforestation carried out by the Cameroonian government, the actions of this project will gradually be oriented towards a better involvement of the local populations and the taking into account of their vital needs for the improvement of their means existences.

PRECOMGN is Cameroon's first pilot forest project focused on community reforestation and aimed at meeting the growing needs for Non-Wood Forest Products (NTFPs), firewood and service wood. It will be characterized by four successive phases (04). The Pilot Project in more than one way, its history is in fact a reflection of the recent evolution of Cameroonian forestry, based on the implementation of the participatory approach and on a better integration of forestry activities in the whole. rural development sectors (regional approach).

### **III. RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **3.1. Problems**

Despite the assets Cameroon has for forest development, knowledge of the national forest potential is limited. While the productive forest area of the country is only 22,000,000 ha, or 12% of the country (Mbog, 2010), the deforestation rate in Cameroon at 0.6% per year, or 200,000 ha / year remains very high. Student. The low rate of reforestation in the country is due to land constraints, the weakness of technical staff and forestry research, the lack of funding, due to a lack of good knowledge of techniques for reforestation of other exploitable forest species. To resolve these problems, the development of a National Reforestation Program was initiated in 2009, but was not successful due to lack of resources and technical expertise required at the State level, which did not allow unfortunately, to find solutions to the real causes of the low rate of reforestation.

In view of the above, it is urgent to identify and describe the major constraints that have hitherto inhibited efforts to restore the vegetation cover with the participation of all stakeholders. To overcome these constraints, it seems useful to examine the points below as prerequisites for the development of reforestation in Cameroon. These are (a) the institutional, legal and human framework for reforestation in Cameroon, (b) the communication strategy on participatory forest management, (c) forestry research to suggest other species to be reforested in based on in-depth knowledge of soils and forest species adapted by agro-ecological zone, (d) financing of the forestry sector by the private

sector, (e) data and information relating to the legal framework on land to ensure the promotion of land contracts for reforestation.

The reforestation program should also take into account the opportunities created by Togo's adherence to the REDD + process, the place of forests and forestry in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post 2015 development agenda, the choice of forestry as a sector with a high rate of economic growth in the SCAPE and finally the place of forestry in the promotion of the green economy.

### ***3.2. Stakeholders and target beneficiaries***

The structures listed below will contribute to the realization of the project activities. It is :

- Alliance Ecological Forest Water responsible for the implementation of the project with the other partners of the project;
- Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF through its central and decentralized technical services, ensures the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the project;
- Ministry in charge of Agriculture and Rural Development through its central and decentralized technical services;
- Agronomic Research Institute (IRADU) for scientific support;
- Civil society organizations (NGOs, Associations) from the project regions constitute potential partners for the implementation of information activities, awareness raising / mobilization of grassroots populations;
- Target populations through grassroots community organizations;
- Private planters, schools, to benefit from training in planting seedlings and then in development.

In conclusion, this project will rely on grassroots populations, local NGOs, forestry administration, agricultural services and other ministries and other key players in the management of natural resources. It will expand, through awareness raising, the list of legal entities, in this case cooperatives, joint initiative groups working in the field of reforestation.

### ***3.3. Concept and rationale for the project***

During the past six years, farmers in the savannah and intermediate areas have found that the cashew tree grows well in their areas. They also discovered that the cashew tree being a shrub crop, it requires very little input and management. The tree grows in dry areas and on soils unsuitable for the cultivation of most staple food crops such as rice and maize. These data, along with other favorable characteristics of the plant, have captured the interest of the Cameroonian government and farmers who are anxiously awaiting the training and capital necessary to produce cashew nuts.

On the commercial front, favorable world prices and the existence of a market for raw nuts and almonds that could degenerate income and foreign exchange earnings have also caught the attention of the government and farmers. For these reasons, the Cameroonian Government will have to commit to promoting cashew production and set objectives to increase the cultivated areas in 10 years and 100,000 ha by 2035. Hoping that cashew will generate annually until 'to US \$ 50 million with the combined exports of raw nuts and processed almonds. If these objectives are achieved, cashew nut production could contribute significantly to poverty reduction in Cameroon.

The Cameroonian government must strongly support the development of cashew production, which is an expensive cash crop in the international market with large value chains. It should provide trade incentives to producers and processors, and commit to improving agricultural research and extension services. During the preparation of this project, farmers and other stakeholders have shown a great deal of interest and a strong commitment to producing cashew nuts and investing in processing infrastructure. Private sector stakeholders (eg exporters) and NGOs are already supporting farmers who grow cashew nuts by providing limited technical services and financial support.

By the time the current project was being designed, a number of alternatives had been explored on how the cashew industry could be effectively supported. Local authorities in the project areas then recommended that extensive research on culture be considered. To remain in line with the strategies of the Cameroonian Government and the ADB in favor of the country, the project will focus on improving the situation of poor smallholders. In this regard, the project will help develop cashew production by ensuring the supply of high-yield plants. Through the cultivation of cashew nuts, the project will provide income to poor rural populations and women, thereby contributing to improving their living conditions and reducing poverty. The increased domestic production of raw nuts will allow the establishment of processing units which, in turn, will create jobs for rural populations and promote exports of higher-valued kernels. The government will thus obtain essential foreign exchange by exporting both almonds and raw walnuts.

The project is designed according to a beneficiary demand-driven approach, with the full participation of the growers in the activities and the adoption of recommended practices. Project funds will be used to improve traditional farming methods used by farmers with the introduction of intercropping and intensification of cultivation (use of high-yielding equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.). As part of the project's transformation activities, the funds will be used to train potential entrepreneurs and finance the technical assistance necessary for the creation of thirty-two cashew processing units.

Cameroon knows, like most African countries south of the Sahara, the impacts of climate change, such as the alternation of droughts and floods, which has consequences on soil fertility, the living environment. populations, productivity and sustainability of agricultural production systems. In addition, the increasingly growing rural demographic pressure, the development of cash crops, the increase in agricultural areas, the practice of less sustainable

agricultural techniques in connection with a lack of knowledge or a bad appropriation of sustainable management practices. forest resources such as slash-and-burn agriculture and bush fires are likely to reduce the country's forest areas.

Aware of these problems of continuous degradation of natural resources (land, forests), the Cameroonian State, supported by local communities, development partners and NGOs, is carrying out ecosystem rehabilitation activities as part of the Day of 'Tree and cooperative actions, with a view to reversing this trend of degradation. However, the results of these various actions are still very weak. The 5000ha / year National Reforestation Program (PNR) initiated as an alternative in 2009 and supposed to boost the development and rehabilitation of forests, could not be properly implemented for reasons of various inadequacies, the most salient of which remain. the prerequisites to be lifted.

It is therefore strong in this situation, marked by: (i) the advanced degradation of forest resources in the country, (ii) the insufficiency of the initiatives taken by both public and private organizations despite the sector's strategic tools, (iii ) the manifest will of the local populations to act in solidarity to reverse the trends, (iv) the limited technical and financial capacities and (v) the low apprehension of the factors blocking reforestation in Cameroon, that this project is initiated as a result of to effectively implement forest policy through an in-depth examination of the above-mentioned bottlenecks.

#### **IV. THE PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES**

##### ***4.1 Development goals***

Improving the standard of living of rural populations, creating jobs in rural areas through the cultivation of cashew nuts and increasing the revenues of decentralized local communities in the country.

##### ***4.2 Specific objectives***

- Strengthen the intervention capacities of the forest service, consolidate technical knowledge in silviculture and monitor village forestry actions;
- Consolidate and develop the self-promotion capacities of rural populations, and in particular of women's groups;
- Create structures that will ensure the continuation of activities in the project area after its end;
- Sensitize stakeholders to the need to achieve appropriate silviculture in arid zones by prioritizing the quality of products and techniques at all stages;
- Promote the advent of self-managed rural forestry based on the principle that reforestation can only really develop if it can generate its own resources.

#### **V. CROP YIELD**

To maximize the cashew yield, it is necessary to respect the practice of the techniques

cultural. In addition, there must be adequate supervision of producers. The structures and NGOs that choose to intervene in the sector must take into account not only the training of farmers, but also that of supervisory staff. However, the integration of technical staff into the production process is a development imperative. At the end of this study, it appears that the envisaged project is viable with regard to the ecological conditions and the infrastructures of the site of implantation. The project remains worthy of interest on the one hand because of the easy access to credit under exceptional conditions (interest-free credit) and on the other hand the economic life of the plantation which is around 30 years. . The most motivating interest for promoters is that beyond 10 years, investments will be negligible for more substantial annual average income. The return on the monetary unit invested would be correspondingly improved. In addition, planting because of its perennial nature and because of the covering power of the treetops will certainly have an environmental impact in terms of preserving the soil against erosion and regulating the water balance.

## **VI. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Strictly focused exclusively on community afforestation, the project will gradually evolve towards a more integrated approach, taking into account the concerns of the populations and the need to better situate reforestation actions in a context of land development and management. To do this, it will first develop the principles of the participatory approach, then the terroir approach, considering the populations as the main players in local development.

The implementation of the participatory approach of the project will make it possible to establish a real partnership between the project and the local populations and to involve all the partners and grassroots structures in the management and monitoring of actions. reforestation. As such, the decentralized local authorities will be considered as privileged partners, in particular because they have their own budget at the level of each rural community and the authority for land management.

From the point of view of the terroir approach itself, the project marked a decisive turning point, in particular by taking better account of the "terroir" space and the preparation of the first agro-forestry development and management plans. of terroirs (PAGT). Their development, which was carried out initially at two levels (land and rural community), is based on the concentration and participation of all the partners (populations, technical services, project). It responds to the desire to make available to certain partners (populations of target villages, other partners intervening in the area: support services, municipal councils, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), other projects, etc.) grassroots planning and management enabling them to undertake development actions in full knowledge of the facts.

The adoption of the terroir approach and the development of PAGT mark the will of the project to go beyond its sectorial framework, to diversify its activities by taking into account

other sectors of activity (such as agriculture and livestock). , as well as the concerns of the populations, and to better situate reforestation activities in the development of the land. The PAGTs are designed as local development tools for the populations, who make them their own, and for the other partners (management, potential donors, NGOs, etc.) who support them in their implementation. They result from knowledge of the area and the terroir (diagnosis), numerous prior contacts with the populations and awareness-raising actions on the role of the tree.

## **VII. ACTIVITIES**

- 6.1. Production development
- 6.2. Selection of materials for seedlings
- 6.3. Import of high-yield propagating material
- 6.4. Creation of a multiplication plantation as a production base
- 6.5. Create 40 nurseries per region
- 6.6. Extension of the research laboratory at IRAD.
- 6.7. Improvement in steps of 300 km of feeder roads in the project municipalities.
- 6.8. Extension and Training
- 6.9. Organization of training workshops, seminars and visits to cultivation areas;
- 6.10. Study visits organized for supervisory staff;
- 6.11. Development of cashew production and technical processing and packaging
- 6.12. Mobilization and training of nurserymen
- 6.13. Mobilization and training of cashew producers
- 6.14. Mobilization and training of people responsible for processing cashew nuts.
- 6.15. Credit
- 6.16. Develop the credit facility.
- 6.17. Project management
- 6.18. Establish the PMU and recruit staff
- 6.19. Procure all goods and services (vehicles, motorcycles and office equipment);
- 6.20. Recruit technical assistance and local consultants and sign contracts;
- 6.21. Prepare the mid-term evaluation and the final evaluation of the project;

## **VII. PROJECT BUDGET: 100,000 \$.**