

## RRI Africa 2010 – 2012 Work-Plan Summary

### I. Regional Overview

#### Dates of planning meetings in 2009:

Oct 15: Sikasso, Mali

Oct 19-20: Monrovia, Liberia

Oct 27-29: Kribi, Cameroon

Nov 2-6: Accra, Ghana

Dec 16: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

	Strategic outcomes	Steps/Strategy	Partners
<b>Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have a clear platform and agenda on community ownership rights</li> <li>Community organizations more effectively advocate for their rights</li> <li>Parliamentarians engaged and advocate for community rights</li> <li>ATEMS well defined &amp; ready for adoption</li> <li>REDD process &amp; program strengthen community rights</li> <li>Gender rights recognized in formal tenure rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify appropriate mechanisms for the recognition of community rights in the regional policy institutions;</li> <li>Leverage pro reform experiences from other parts of Africa &amp; the world to influence policy reforms</li> <li>Clear analysis &amp; case studies of ATEMS &amp; critiques of concessions</li> <li>Support civil society in REDD</li> <li>Scoping of gender forest &amp; land policies</li> <li>Capitalize on Yaoundé conference outcomes and products</li> </ul>	CIFOR Civic Response Forest Trends FPP ICRAF Intercooperation IUCN
<b>Tier 1</b>			
<b>Cameroon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable ATEMS in new forest laws and related policies</li> <li>New forest laws &amp; policies recognize historic rights and agency of women, local communities and indigenous peoples</li> <li>Elected officials (parliamentarians and local advisors) commit to defending rights of local communities, women and indigenous peoples</li> <li>Issues of tenure and rights are incorporated into REDD and climate change policies and mechanism</li> <li>Land &amp; forest reforms coordinated and harmonized to foster better recognition of community rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy and mobilization in forming communities before national consultations on new laws</li> <li>Communities actively engaged in consultation of proposed new laws &amp; policies</li> <li>Information-sharing on REDD and climate change policies</li> <li>Preparation for strategic guidance &amp; implementation</li> <li>Collaboration between RRI and parliamentarians on community rights</li> </ul>	CIFOR FPP ICRAF IUCN
<b>Liberia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enactment of a Community Rights Law that is acceptable to all stakeholders</li> <li>Liberian local civil society platform capacity is strengthened and enhanced, and community forest management committees are brought into the mainstream discussion on forests</li> <li>State recognizes and regulates pit-sawyers</li> <li>Rights and tenure are part of Liberian REDD national policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical support to community organizations &amp; NGOs for CRL implementation</li> <li>Assist local NGOs guide implementation</li> <li>Civil society capacity-building to strategically engage dialogue and advocacy</li> <li>Policy draft and recommendations for regulations review on pit-sawing</li> </ul>	IUCN
<b>Tier 2</b>			
<b>Ghana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities' ownership rights guaranteed in national legislation</li> <li>Institutional reforms to support and regulate CFM</li> <li>VPA/FLEG(T) policy incorporate tenure and rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building &amp; strengthening rights work of existing institutions</li> <li>Help local organizations leverage VPA &amp; REDD to advance tenure rights</li> </ul>	Civic Response IUCN
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local conventions and community rights guaranteed in decentralization laws and process</li> <li>New laws support gender equity and the protection of socioeconomic and cultural rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to decentralization process and drafting laws</li> <li>Community mobilization &amp; advocacy</li> </ul>	IUCN CIFOR
<b>Mali</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local conventions and community rights guaranteed in decentralization laws and process</li> <li>New laws support gender equity and the protection of socioeconomic and cultural rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to decentralization process and drafting laws</li> <li>Community mobilization &amp; advocacy</li> </ul>	Intercooperation ICRAF IUCN

## **II. Planning Teams**

### **2.1 Regional Planning Team**

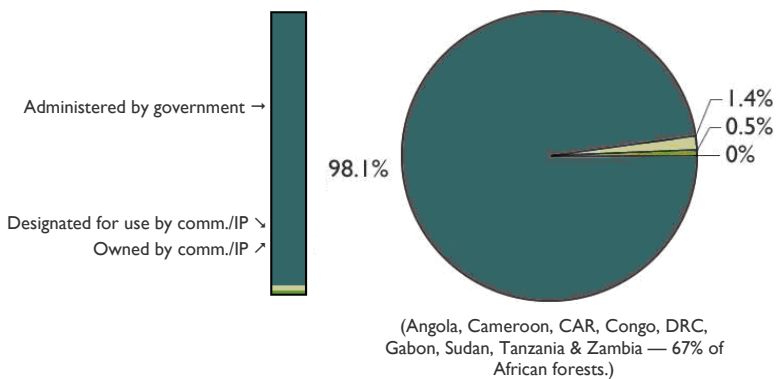
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### **2.2 Current collaborators in region**

Cameroon Ecology, Cameroon  
 Coopérative Agro Forestière Trinationale (CAFT), Cameroon  
 Center for Environment and Development (CED), Cameroon  
 Forests and the European Union Research Network (FERN), UK  
 Forests Monitor, DRC  
 Forest Watch Ghana (FWG), Ghana  
 Green Advocates, Liberia  
 Sahel Eco, Mali (based in UK)  
 Sustainable Development International (SDI), Liberia

### III. Africa - Regional

#### 3.1 Regional Overview



#### Poverty, tenure and emissions in Africa

- The Rural poor (<\$1/day) make up one third of the population of Africa — 229 million people.
- 98% of the region's forests claimed by government and 18% of global forest carbon emissions.
- UN-REDD: 3 countries; WB FCPF: 10 countries (two Tier I: Cameroon & Liberia.)

Sources: Ravallion & Chen. 2007. *Absolute Poverty Measures for the Developing World, 1981-2004*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4211.  
Sunderlin et. al. 2008. *From Exclusion to Ownership?* Rights and Resources Initiative.

#### 3.2 RRI Strategy in Africa

##### Background

One of the main challenges to forest tenure reform in Africa (notably in Central Africa) is that governments are strongly committed to a conventional forest economy model based on industrial timber concessions, at the cost of community based forest management, even though the latter has greater potential to contribute to equitable growth and livelihoods. In Africa, the forest area administered by government is 98% of the total; while the area of forest designated for use by communities and indigenous groups is 1.4%; and 0.5% of the area is owned by communities and indigenous groups (Sunderlin et al. 2008).

In the Listening Learning and Sharing (LLSL) Report of 2008, the alliance formed by the State and the private sector around natural resource is seen to illustrate a "State focused on rent appropriation" to the detriment of local communities. In Africa, governments claims statutory ownership of the majority and the richer of forest lands, in official denial of the vast area of forests and agroforests that are *de facto* or through customary rules and regimes under community management. Generally the state in Central and West Africa has retained control of high value forests and forest lands, and made it difficult (permits, detailed management plans) for communities to market high value timber. The status quo favors governments through income flows from private sector timber concessions to the state, and supports agency distrust of decentralizing forest lands to either co-management or recognized community ownership. Even on their own land, local communities have been disadvantaged by the informal nature of their land rights. Unnecessarily and paradoxically, communities living in forest rich areas in Africa are poor: "rich forests, poor people" (Oyono, 2005). It is the forested countries in Africa that will not meet the MDG goal of halving poverty by 2015, even when rich traditions and informal forest enterprises are found through the region (RRI, 2008, *Seeing People through the Trees*)

##### Key threats and challenges

Forest management in Africa faces many threats linked to conflicts and resources scarcity, poorly crafted REDD mechanisms and climate change policies, the promotion of industrial concessions over small and medium community forest enterprises, and lack of participatory democracy in forest governance and decentralization.

**Migration**

Migration is already a difficult issue within many forested countries. New entrants to the political economic mix complicate tenure relations and in many cases undermine security and stability (for example in Cameroon). This trend is set to escalate with climate change if predictions of a 50% reduction in rainfall and agricultural productivity in the Sahel by 2020 bear out. This could lead to a massive wave of environmental migration from e.g. northern Nigeria south towards countries in the upper and lower Guinea forests. Without serious regional planning, this can only lead to chaos. The Sahel is “drying up” and it has implications for some 30 million people mainly in the Mano River area where conflicts in spreading (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, and Ivory Coast).

**Regional Institutions power in framing regional policies**

Regional institutions like AU, SADC, ECOWAS, CEMAC, NEPAD, ACHPR etc are becoming increasingly important in framing policy on resource rights. Examples cited were the Africa Union / African Development Bank (AfDB) Land Policy Initiative, the Economic Commission for Africa / UNCTAD initiative on mining regimes, and the ECOWAS Forest and Mining Policy initiatives. This trend is likely to continue under pressure from the international community. Because the private ownership-oriented Land Policy was developed through a non-participatory process (although “consultative”) its adoption by heads of government could be a major set-back for national level advocacy around community rights.

**REDD and climate change**

The high-level global discussions on REDD do not yet feature practical guidance on the “social element” (e.g. rights, livelihoods, tenure etc.). Regional climate mitigation engagement lacks clear avenues for community empowerment, with REDD seen by the African governments mainly as a source of finance to the government. Instead of built in mechanisms whereby communities can benefit from REDD compensation and contribute a solution to climate change; in most African countries, there’s no discussion about adaptation. Further, there is evidence of new criminalization of farmers (themselves concerned about agriculture for survival) by the conservation community (more inclined to protected areas). There are already production shifts in response to climate change combined with new pressures from mining, eco-tourism and industrial plantations (carbon).

**Forest governance and decentralization**

Forest governance in Africa is hampered by extensive land grabbing and elite capture of resources for industrial concessions, bio-energy, rice-paddy, plantations and mining. There is widespread marginalization and exclusion of local people from ownership and administration of forest resources, and highly restricted resource use in protected areas and national parks. Long-standing customary community rights and forest tenure are in jeopardy: with use rights marginalized in national statutory law reform, indigenous community made effectively landless, and women limited in their access to land or resources. Governments and elected officials have limited accountability to communities yet donors pursue their own initiatives without ensuring resource management rights. Although the rhetoric of decentralization is promising, government transfer of power is yet to be effective, and power to set policies is shifting outwards towards the regional institutions (e.g. ECOWAS, etc), disempowering national advocacy.

**Social exclusion and inequity**

Notwithstanding the fact that their rights are often upheld in national laws and are protected by international law, women and indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable to violence and abuse. Gender discrimination in access to land resources, policy formulation, and government and market services is not only a longstanding, serious problem on its own, but finally and fortunately, increasingly recognized as a critical, underlying driver of these broader social, economic and environmental problems. In the Sahel, pastoralist indigenous communities live in arid territory and dry forests where climate and population shifts affect transhumant economies, politically marginal yet causing increasing conflicts with farmers over water and grazing lands. Across Central Africa, indigenous peoples, such as the Baka and Bagyeli, are also at risk as their tenure rights and livelihoods strategies are poorly understood and poorly respected.

RRI partners FPP and CED, have been engaged for a number of years in a strategy of rights mapping to address the cross-cutting issues of indigenous forest peoples' and their rights in forested areas that are designated for forest concessions, agribusiness or mineral concession or protected area set asides. This strategy involves awareness raising, bio-physical and socio-cultural mapping, advocacy, influence of political processes, and strengthening of local NGO organizations, and is now being expanded elsewhere in the Congo Basin and West Africa by other organizations, including CAR, Liberia, and DRC, with important impacts, as in Cameroon, where policy-makers are taking these issues into their reform processes.

### **Opportunities**

Despite the daunting obstacles to realization of improved statutory forest tenure reform, there are some visible signs of progress. In nine of the most forested countries in Africa (Central and Eastern) from 2002 to 2008, forest tenure distribution has shifted away from statutory government control of forests, and towards increasing access and ownership for indigenous groups and communities, individuals, and firms. Data from "From Exclusion to Ownership" show: the area of forest designated for use by communities and indigenous groups has increased in five of the nine countries, from 1.2 to 6.1 Mha. The area of forest owned by communities and indigenous groups has increased from nothing to 2.05 Mha. The area of forest owned by individuals and firms has increased from nothing to 0.11 Mha. Non-official data documents show an additional area under *de facto* or customary management where communities have strong experience in regulating conservation and income-earning activities, participating in complex markets.

In some countries recent decentralization policies and laws are shifting the balance of power toward local governance and community tenure rights, and away from centrally-mandated concessions. A growing set of social movements question the conventional tenure and enterprise models and call for reform of forest tenure and policy. Community organizations and local NGOs have gained substantial capacity in recent years and are becoming stronger and more credible voices in policy debates. The FLEGT, VPA, and REDD dialogues are providing important leverage platforms for governance reforms. RRI Partners are well established in the region and have strong connections to both community organizations and policy makers.

It is particularly good news to see the increased attention being paid to land reform issues across Africa. After years of debate, and sidelining of land issues, the most recent summit of the African Union July 1-3, 2009 adopted a "Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa" that states "...the centrality of land to sustainable socio-economic growth, development and the security of the social, economic and cultural livelihoods of [Africa's] people." The summit also endorsed a Framework and Guidelines on Land policy in Africa that encourages governments to recognize and strengthen indigenous, community and women's land rights. The new AU policy also supports the growing trend in the region of government's promoting decentralization policies, moving toward shifting some authorities to local government bodies and in some cases, devolution of some authorities over land and resources to local private and civil society.

Opportunities are also growing for local people to better benefit from markets: in small-scale enterprises for wood and non-wood forest products, social responsibility markets, community-led conservation, and emerging ecosystem service markets. Domestic markets in developing countries are growing. Good news, dramatic shifts in markets that include the growing demand for farm-produced wood and other forest products and shifts in demand to domestic and non-traditional markets. There is demand from governments, forest communities and supporting NGOs for sharing knowledge on the multiple options for and benefits of forest-based enterprises based on collective action

In May 2009, RRI, in collaboration with the ITTO and the Government of Cameroon, organized a major international conference on "Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise: New Opportunities for West and Central Africa" in Yaoundé to catalyze more learning and action across the region, as well as to stimulate broader debate on the forest policy reform in Cameroon. The meeting gathered over 250 leaders from communities, civil society, NGOs and governments from across West and Central Africa, catalyzed new momentum and connections for reforms and a strong set of recommendations for action by governments

and other critical actors. This event was widely received as a critical step forward for the region and served as the launching pad for new RRI interventions and strategies across the region.

In early 2009, RRI also began to develop more gender-focused analysis and engagement. This has included the initiation of a coalition-wide analysis and strategy on gender rights and tenure issues, and an analysis of women's tenure rights in Africa, with a case analysis in Southern Sudan. RRI also encouraged and facilitated the establishment of the newly created African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) formed during the international conference on tenure organized by RRI in May 2009 in Yaoundé. Partners and collaborators are particularly eager to build on these initial steps and strengthen linkages among civil society, community and women's networks in the region, connecting to East African experience and the comparative lessons from other forested countries that have already undergone reform.

### **Criteria for Selecting Tier 1 and Tier Two Countries**

RRI has prioritized Cameroon and Liberia as Tier 1 countries, and Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ghana, as Tier 2 countries for its interventions. RRI partners in Mali have made a strong and convincing case for upgrading Mali as Tier 1 for the main following reasons: opportunities for tenure reforms through decentralization and promotion of community rights in Local Conventions, a strong coalition of RRI partners with new collaborators (Sahel Eco, National Federation of Rural Women, *Réseau Réussir la Decentralization*, drylands and pastoralist networks).

RRI chooses to work in **Cameroon** because, on the one hand, it has been recognized as a leader in forest management, and thus plays a particularly influential role in the region; on the other, it has demonstrated lessons that are important for the other countries to avoid. Cameroon is also Tier 1 because of the increasing political will for reforming the forest law and because of strong convergence of RRI Partners. Cameroon will have a focus on regional initiatives and would increasingly seek a COMIFAC/ Congo Basin focus and as a Central African country role model could influence the direction of forestland tenure reforms in its neighbor if a cluster approach were adopted.

RRI has prioritized **Liberia** for three main reasons. First the post conflict situation has been an opportunity for substantive reforms – in terms of tenure and business models. Second, because Liberia is set to enact legislation in early 2009 to strengthen community tenure rights; the Community Rights Law (CRL), setting important precedents for community forest land rights in Africa. Successful implementation will require substantial and sophisticated engagement and support. Third, IUCN, Civic Response, and FPP are heavily engaged there, and well connected to the strongest national NGOs active in the sector. Engagement in Liberia will also enable RRI learning and influence across the Mano River Union countries, an outcome that Civic Response has been promoting through its networking.

**Ghana** is atypical in Africa in formally and constitutionally recognizing the customary tenure of families and traditional communities to all land resources including forestland, subject to the state's powers of compulsory acquisition for public purposes and to state ownership of subsoil minerals and of natural water bodies. There has been significant community resistance over the years to exclusionary state control and concessions-based management of natural resources. NGO networks (notably the National Coalition on Mining, Forest Watch Ghana, Civic Response, the Peasant Farmers Association and the Civil Society Coalition on Land) have sought to provide intellectual and policy support to this resistance. RRI work in Ghana pushes for forest institutional reforms and legal guarantees for community rights. There are key political opportunities: the National Forest Forum process, the REDD-readiness process, and the VPA implementation (governance reform) process.

RRI work in **Burkina Faso** and **Mali** is based upon: 1) the ecological, political-economy and reform agenda (decentralization) similarities of these countries; and 2) the framework within which both states and civil society in these countries are approaching forest rights. RRI strategic intervention also has a sub-regional focus on the Sahel including additional countries such as Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania, in dialogues around decentralization. Democratic decentralization in the Sahel can promote equity and

popular participation in decision making. However, major challenges for forest and land tenure in the Sahel include ineffective transfer of power from the state to local government and local conventions, and poor reflection of customary systems and local laws in statutory frameworks. Over the past two years, RRI partners in Mali and Burkina Faso have been developing strategies to create political spaces wherein communities can reclaim their rights and accelerate the effectiveness of the transfer of power and resources.

RRI's strategy reflects the differences between the **Sahel** and the **Congo Basin**, while exploiting the real synergies within Central and West Africa politically and in lessons of experience. RRI engagement in Africa is not limited in the identified tier 1 and tier 2 countries, but also draws upon both regionally.

In **DRC**, RRI is engaged with Forests Monitor on "Developing Community Forestry Management as a contribution to poverty reduction in the Democratic Republic of Congo" helping to identify appropriate models of tenure rights for DRC that are supportive of local enterprise and build on decentralization, drawing from Sahel's rich experience. DRC is strategic in terms of its resource endowment and the persistence of resource-related, civil conflict. All the partners are present or have networks there. In choosing Liberia and Cameroon as Tier 1 countries RRI was mindful of the relevant situation in DRC. Lessons learned in post-conflict Liberia may be applicable in DRC once peace stabilizes.

**Tanzania** has been of interest as a model for democratic local rights recognition in Africa, and especially the five countries of the East African Community. All Partners are engaged in or with Tanzania. The clarification of tenure and rights legislation is one possible area for RRI intervention. Other entry points could be Tanzania's VPA or REDD-readiness processes.

**Mozambique** is also a best practice that could inform tenure reforms in RRI countries. The innovative 1997 Land Law provided for the recognition of community tenure rights through the issuance of long term use rights (DUATS) and the 1999 Forest and Wildlife Act provides for the participation of local communities and other stakeholders in the management of forest resources. The interactions between government ministries (Ministry of Agriculture), departments (Directorate of Land and Forests), and civil society organizations was instrumental for successful implementation of the 1997 Law and demarcation of community territories.