

# Congo Basin Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (CoFCCA)

## BACKGROUND ISSUES

Climate change constitutes an additional burden that constrains national development in the Central African region from realizing major global targets like the millennium development goals and achieving the desired economic growth. Numerous factors underscore the vulnerability of the region to climate impacts. One notable aspect is that the livelihoods of the poor majority (especially women) are highly dependent on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, pastoral practices, and forests for household energy, food security, water supply, herbs, and tree barks as first line of health care products. These same livelihood activities also contribute a significant proportion (~75%) to the gross domestic product of countries in the region, stressing the fragility of national development vis-à-vis climate uncertainties and the unpredictability of successful implementation of any sustainable economic and national development plans. The Congo Basin Forests is a major transboundary natural resource pool and like other forest ecosystems, is likely to be impacted by climate change in various ways stated in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's fourth assessment report (IPCC 2007).

## THE CHALLENGE

The grand challenge is to develop adaptation strategies to climate change impacts in the Congo Basin Forests without jeopardizing the integrity of these forests to ensure the continuous provisioning of ecosystem goods and services vital for household livelihoods, national development and economic growth of the region.

## CONGO FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (COFCCA)

CoFCCA is a three-year effort of the Center for International Forestry Research funded by the International Development Research Center under the Climate Change Adaptation for Africa (CCAA) project.

The participating countries include Cameroon, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo.

## Project Vision

Communities are able to cope with climate impacts using their natural resource base in the forest ecosystem that provides livelihood goods and services. Forest resilience will ensure the continuous provision of these goods and services as the lifelines for the poor majority who directly depend on them. National policy integrates the contribution of all social groups and stakeholders for co-existence of their multiple interests represented in planning, development and implementation of national forest policies and climate response strategies, turning conflict of interests between local communities and logging companies, for example, into partnerships for enhancing co-benefits. Women, minority and indigenous groups have more shares and representation in the economic benefits, ownership rights, access and equity. The communities reduce deforestation and forest degradation activities, thus reducing adverse effects on the national economies, the environment, biological diversity, livelihoods and cultural heritage.

## OBJECTIVES

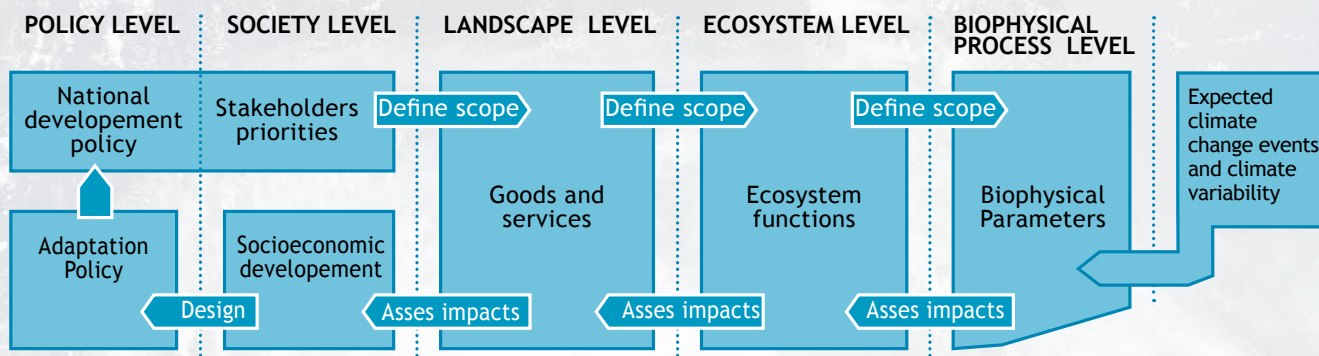
The main objective of the project is to contribute to national processes of adaptation to climate change through the development of policy-oriented adaptation strategies that also ensure sustainable use of forest resources in the Congo Basin Forests.

The specific objectives are

- to identify and prioritise regional development issues as climate impacts forests and society;
- to establish regional science-policy dialogue that engages the community and its participation in the planning and policy process for adaptation;
- to assess the vulnerability of gender, minority and indigenous communities in identifying their special needs for adaptation; and
- to build the capacities of communities and stakeholders and facilitating knowledge sharing

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A common Tropical Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (TroFCCA) framework will be used with adjustment to regional contexts. This framework starts with the definition of the regional focus of CoFCCA, taking into consideration what goods and services of forest are significant for development. The methodology will define a chain of linkages between variables at different levels as illustrated below.



## CROSS-CUTTING INTERESTS

Under emerging market opportunities in the region and increasing pressure for economic development, CoFCCA will explore various options and technologies in balancing trade incentives with adaptation needs and forest ecosystem resilience to maximise the co-benefits without necessarily compromising future climate change response.

The project aims to develop the potential synergies between mitigation and adaptation activities, especially harnessing the potentials of innovative mechanisms, e.g., reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation, clean development mechanism and payment for ecosystem services in financing adaptation activities in the region. The project will also encourage synergy platforms between international agreements like the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity using highlights from case studies that demonstrate the relationship between carbon storage and biodiversity and the implication for adaptation.

## EXPECTED IMPACTS

CoFCCA expects to contribute to the mainstreaming of adaptation into development. The assessments of vulnerability will increase the capacity to formulate relevant policies and raise the awareness of different stakeholders. At the regional level, the project intends to enhance co-operation relating to work on adaptation. The project will further build capacity by supporting students from the regions. CoFCCA also intends to raise awareness of the need to finance adaptation for tropical forest ecosystems.

## PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

CoFCCA has three boundary partner categories—local, national and regional. For each of these categories, there are partners such as, on the regional level, COMIFAC, CARPE etc; on the national level, national governments, scientists, nongovernmental organisations etc; and on the local level, community groups, community leaders etc. National and international research students including other scholars working in the area will be invited to be part of the project.

Contacts

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