

Participatory management of gazetted forests in Côte d'Ivoire: the experience of the Forest Development Society¹

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SUMMARY

As part of the integrated development policy of State forests, the Forest Development Society (Société de développement des forêts [SODEFOR]) chose an approach that takes into account the social and agro-economic factors that have an impact on the sustainable management of gazetted forests.

Farmer-Forest Commissions (CPFs) were created for the participation of neighbouring communities in the management of gazetted forests and in the implementation of a co-management policy.

The first phase of the Forest Sectoral Project included:

- identification of main users on almost 20 percent of gazetted forests;
- installation of 69 local CPFs;
- adoption of 31 plans by local CPFs;
- re-implantation actions in which 1 000 ha of fallow land were allocated to neighbouring communities;
- training of 2 000 farmer representatives; and
- implementation of several forest works contracts by neighbouring communities.

The implementation of the joint policy has been hampered by many difficulties, including the problem of communication at the level of field agents, population/logger conflicts, and renewed clearing in gazetted forests.



1. Only a summary of this case study is available in English. For the full text in French see p. 353-362.

The installation of the CPFs was decided unilaterally by SODEFOR and the forestry services. Farmers perceive the commissions as a mechanism for obtaining the adoption of decisions previously taken by SODEFOR.

The tools of joint management, designed and disseminated by SODEFOR, have not been used efficiently. They were generally designed without the participation of the beneficiaries, they were not tested before use, and distribution was very limited.

The forestry services and SODEFOR organized a workshop to review the CPFs and the tools designed to implement joint management. The workshop found that the system in place for achieving the joint management of gazetted forests with the riparian population is acceptable, but that a more participatory action must be taken to involve all the stakeholders, taking into account the needs of all partners and improving communication with stakeholders.

The workshop's encouraging finding was obviated a few days later by the government's decision to remove all agricultural operators from the gazetted forests.

Given this situation, what is the future of joint management of gazetted forests with the riparian population?