



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Agricultural Intensification - A Pathway to Protect Forests: The PSMNR-IITA Approach in SW Cameroon

HOLGER KIRSCHT¹, RACHID HANNA¹, STEFAN HAUSER², RICHARD CHIBIKOM¹, JULES LIENOU¹,
APOLLON FOTSO KUATE¹, MARC KLEINE³

¹*International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Cameroon*

²*International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria*

³*Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the South West Region (PSMNR-SWR), Cameroon*

Abstract

While agriculture has been a main driver of deforestation and land degradation worldwide the South West Region of Cameroon was not as severely affected as forests in Asia or Amazonia. However, degradation is increasing and the area is already part of large scale private investments in oil palm, rubber, bananas etc. In the area of implementation, IITA works together with the “Program for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the South-West Region” (PSMNR-SWR) to slow down the pressure on forests and protected areas by intensifying agricultural activities in communities riparian to three national parks. The projects overall objective is to “contribute to the preservation of high-value ecosystems in the South West Region of Cameroon and thereby contribute to improved livelihoods of the surrounding communities in a sustainable manner.”

Livelihood of the population living around the National Parks in the South-West Region still depends strongly on hunting, logging and collection of NTFP. Main commercial crops are cocoa and oil palms and important staple foods cassava and plantains. For these agricultural activities, land is needed, which puts the protected areas under pressure. Improved production on existing cultivated land is therefore an important way to increase cash income without adding to the pressure on forest areas. We assume that an increase in household income will reduce the need for illegal logging and hunting and therefore will contribute to the conservation of protected areas.

Currently production levels and cultivation techniques in the PSMNR target villages are not yet well developed, resulting in low productivity and increased soil degradation.

With the introduction of improved cassava and plantain varieties to increase the per hectare output, while at the same time introducing integrated crop management and sustainable production techniques with special focus on pest/disease and soil fertility management, IITA/PSMNR wants to support and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

The project aims at improving the livelihood of households through:

- Dissemination of improved cassava and plantain varieties
- Farmer training in best agricultural practices and soil fertility measures
- Processing and commercialisation of cassava products.

Keywords: Agricultural intensification, cassava, deforestation, livelihood security, NRM, plantains