

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
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MINISTERE DE  
L'ENVIRONNEMENT, DE LA  
PROTECTION DE LA NATURE ET  
DU DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE  
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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace – Work – Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,  
PROTECTION OF NATURE AND  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
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## MINI TRIALOGUE ON SCIENCE POLICY FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

22-23 May 2018 - Hilton Hotel

### WORKSHOP REPORT



Group photograph, Mini-Trialogue, Hilton hotel-Yaounde, 22 – 23 may 2018

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*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



## I. INTRODUCTION

The celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cameroon was organized from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of May during which commemorative activities were organized throughout the national territory, with special attention given to capacities building for the effective assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services within the objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Convention and the goals of the global and national biodiversity targets.

From the 22 – 23 of May 2018, a two-day Mini Trialogue on BES Assessments was organized in the Yaoundé Hilton hotel bringing together over 60 science- policy experts from among members of the National Biodiversity Committee, the National Platform for Science Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Authors of the BES Assessment. This dialogue constituted a major priority activity within the 25-day-long celebration of the International Day of Biodiversity in Cameroon as it sought to create awareness on the findings of Global, Regional and Thematic Assessments and the outcomes of the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenary of the IPBES, carried out within IPBES and to build capacity on the challenges of food security and climate resilient agricultural production as a useful contribution to the finalization of the Scoping Report.

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

The overall objective of the trialogue was to strengthen the science-policy interface through the conduct of an effective national BES Assessment. Specifically, this dialogue sought to:

- To raise awareness of the role of ecosystems in achieving the Cameroon Vision 2035 whilst providing greater climate resilience for national food security and agricultural production targets (*the Growth and Employment Strategy 2010-2020, the National Adaptation Plan 2015, the Cameroon Nationally Determined Contribution (2016) and the Rural Development Strategy (2009)*)
- To identify key policy questions on land degradation and restoration, ecological intensification of agriculture and ecosystem-based adaptation that can be addressed through the National BES Assessment
- To secure National validation of the Scoping Report for the National BES Assessment

The Mini Trialogue was sponsored by the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC, UNDP BES-Net, GIZ-ProPFE and the Network for the Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Africa.

### WORKSHOP AGENDA AND METHODOLOGY:

Key agenda items included an opening address by the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, and a setting of the trialogue context (see agenda as annexe 1). The methodology used was a participatory approach with high-level panel

discussions featuring panellists from diverse backgrounds. Discussions in plenary raised major questions and clarifications were given in each case.

The two-day meeting was chaired by the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development in the presence of the Minister Delegate of the same Ministry. The Mini-trialogue was supported financially by the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, UNDP BESnet, WCMC-UNEP, GIZ Cameroon and the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Africa.

#### **PARTICIPATION:**

The Mini-trialogue was attended by over 60 science- policy experts from among members of the National Biodiversity Committee, the National Platform for Science Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Authors of the BES Assessment (see a list of participants as annexe 2).

#### **OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY**

The opening ceremony that was initially scheduled to begin at 9:00 am finally took place at 11:30 am and was presided at by the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development. In his opening address, Minister HELE Pierre welcomed all participants in their different ranks and proceeded to situate the context within which the workshop is organised which is within the framework of Cameroon's celebration of the World Biodiversity Day, 25years after it entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which has recorded a number of key and concrete actions by MINEPDED towards its implementation. One of these actions, the Minister noted, is the adoption of a National Biodiversity Strategic and Action Plan (NBSAP) which has as one of its commitments that by 2021, scientific information should considerably influence policy and decision-making processes as far as biodiversity governance is concerned. To attain this objective, the minister continued by recalling that he signed a Decision on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 creating the very first National Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (SPBES) whose members were installed on November 27, 2017. He further highlighted the objectives of the workshop as stated above.

The Minister commended the UN System and GIZ for their longstanding support to Cameroon on the environmental and biodiversity conservation drive, on which note he declared the mini triialogue opened.

#### **BOOK LAUNCH:**

The declaration by the Minister paved the way for the SG MINEPDED to take the floor to introduce Miss Anne Juepner, Director of the Global Policy on Resilient Ecosystem and Desertification representing UNDP-BESNet to launch a key publication relating to BES. But before she did the launch, she made a presentation on the general concept underlying IPBES and its relevance to the work on Nation BES Assessment.

Miss Juepner started by appreciating the presence of the Minister and his colleagues from other ministries highlighting the fact that their initiatives and efforts reveal Cameroon's level of commitment towards Biodiversity conservation and the IPBES process, and extended her regards of other UN IPBES partner organisations (UN Environment and WCMC) to Cameroon. She then reassured the government of their commitment to work very closely with the National BES Assessment team to ensure that the assessment is done successfully.

It could be captured from Anne's presentation that the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an intergovernmental body established in 2012 with 130 members, formed at the behest of the governments of the countries involved to provide policymakers with objective and specific assessments on the state of knowledge to inform policymakers on BES benefits to people and promote sustainable development, why it is important, and what it sets out to do (provides expert evaluation, support policies, build knowledge etc.). She indicated that the mission of IPBES is *inter alia*, to strengthen the knowledge foundation for better policy orientation through science, for sustainable use of Biodiversity and monitor human wellbeing as well as sustainable development. This particular mission will be accomplished through four areas of activity including *inter alia*, carrying out expert assessment and identifying possible options for action, and building and strengthening capacity necessary to work in identification of knowledge and the uptake of assessment recommendations.

Anne proceeded to share some of key messages from the first IPBES thematic assessment on 'pollinators, pollination and food production', an assessment which was completed in 2016 after two years of work involving consultation of over 3000 scientific papers on pollinators and pollination and information on indigenous and local knowledge from about 60 different localities in the world. Some of these include the following;

- Annual world food production worth \$577 billion depends on pollinators
- Not only is agricultural production more than ever before depends on pollination, but also flowering plants;
- Great numbers of pollinators are threatened by extinction;
- Importance of pollination to food production is underestimated or even unknown meanwhile great consideration is given to other factors of food production like climate, water and land.

The assessment, she concluded, ended with the production of a summary for policymakers which proposed a range of actions that can be taken to help save pollinators including *inter alia*, greater habitat diversity, adoption of sustainable land use patterns, promoting sustainable agriculture and promoting traditional agricultural systems such as crop rotation. This she says had policy impacts all over the world in the form increase in the consideration of pollination and pollinators in the biodiversity strategic plans of nations worldwide ( e.g. France, Netherlands, South Korea, Brazil, South Africa), declaration of 20<sup>th</sup> of May as World Bee Day, wide referencing of the assessment in nature and science journals, etc.

## II. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

### 1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE AFRICA REGION ASSESSMENT ON BES.

This presentation set the stage for further discussion and also for the panel discussions that were to come later. Dr Chimere began his presentation with a brief background and origin of IPBES and dwelled on the findings of the Regional Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (BES) Thematic Assessment on ‘Evolution of biodiversity and their contribution to human wellbeing’, which he said began in 2015 and lasted for three years, involving 195 authors and 143 experts over 23 countries, using 2359 sources and 3112 commentaries.

It emerged from his presentation that according to the Regional BES assessment report, African biological and genetic richness is unparalleled as Africa is also host to the Congo basin which is second richest after the Amazon Basin in tropical forest and biodiversity as a whole, yet the paradox is that the contribution of biodiversity to development is usually undermined in Africa, not very evident and Africa is still entrenched in poverty. He added that African Biodiversity is threatened by a rapid decline in biodiversity in general, habitat loss, over logging, and between 2008 and 2010 Africa lost 3.4 million hectares of forest, concluding that Africa is under serious pressure from population growth and climate change. He was quick to state that the assessment provides summaries for policymakers (SPM) which gives room for hope for the continent if such SPM are duly considered by policymakers.

He concluded by highlighting a number of options available for Africa such as:

- The availability of policies, plans, programmes, strategies at various levels
- Tapping biodiversity for her economic development
- Exploiting her strategic position
- Exploiting its biotechnology potentials in terms of her culture and indigenous practices (African science)

### Conclusions from plenary discussions

From a question and answer session that ensued after the intervention of the discussants, the following issues came to the limelight:

- It was gathered that the regional assessment did not carry out an indepth study on how population control could influence the pressure mounted on Africa’s biodiversity;
- The biodiversity richness/poverty paradox (usually broadly expressed as the paradox of plenty or natural resource curse) in Africa is caused by the fact that biodiversity resources are exported in an unprocessed state and this can only be remedied through policy orientation towards the local transformation of natural products and capacity building to that effect.

## 2. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

*PANEL 1: ECOSYSTEMS, FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION*

This panel discussion was facilitated by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development Mrs GALEGA Prudence, who introduced all the panellists and then ushered Dr Chimere into a brief presentation on the above-stated theme. In his presentation, Dr. Chimere raised a number of issues for reflection regarding the theme of Panel 1 as stated above which provoked the thoughts and reactions of the discussants and the audience as a whole. Some of the issues raised and discussed included the following:

- What accounts for the fact that Cameroon has a vast arable land that is up to 65% unexploited but still has nutritional problems?
- What is the future of African Agriculture?
- Given that one of the major drivers of deforestation/biodiversity degradation is the need for food how can structural transformation guarantee between this need and biodiversity conservation?
- How can we transform structurally to achieve a balance between conservation and exploitation of biodiversity resources to increase jobs and solve the food crisis?
- What are the development options that can enable ecosystem conservation and solve socioeconomic problems?
- Extractive resource exploitation accounts for deforestation and biodiversity loss but does not prevent the nation from importing products of basic necessity or alleviating poverty.

Panel 1 recommendations:

From the deliberations that followed, the following recommendations could be gathered to taking up in the chapters on the national assessment:

- i. Creating transformative industries at the national level is a form of diversification which can help a country combat poverty by creating employment and diverting people's interest from agriculture which is the major cause of biodiversity loss;
- ii. There is a need to fetch into African cultural and traditional values and integrate them into modern agricultural systems to ensure conservation of biodiversity. Valorization of knowledge of such cultural and traditional values is pertinent for it can contribute to food security and biodiversity conservation;
- iii. Multi-cropping and shifting cultivation systems of agriculture can be adapted to increase resilience in the agricultural system;
- iv. Africa is not a heavy user of chemical fertilizers which is an opportunity to encourage the use of bio-fertilizers;
- v. Agroforestry provides a variety of insects for pollination and pest control thereby curbing the use of chemicals;
- vi. There is a need to package information for this is what will facilitate transmission of assessment results to the end user;

- vii. Encouraging research and creating links between research institutions and policy makers is crucial;
- viii. Create medium for valorization and publication of scientific information in order to increase access to scientific information;
- ix. Genetic technology can be used in enhancing agricultural production;
- x. Special consideration should be given to biodiversity transformation at the local level: consider options for transformative development through which the environment is not considered as an obstacle but a vehicle for Africa's development;
- x. Validate and evaluate Africa's indigenous and traditional knowledge or cultural heritage relevant to agriculture and conservation;
- xi. Improve on our ability to transform what we have;
- xii. Adopt sustainable agricultural systems that optimize our soil productivity through soil studies;
- xiii. Invest in innovative agricultural systems that will boost productivity;

*PANEL 2: TRANSLATING GLOBAL /REGIONAL IPBES ASSESSMENTS INTO ACTION*

Panel 2 was moderated by the SG of MINEPDED who introduced the panellists composed of: Professor NKWATOH, Professor TAMUNGANG, Dr DIAW, and Dr Anne Juepner, three of whom took part in the Regional Assessment with a mandate to brainstorm on the above-stated theme.

The panel discussion was preceded by a presentation from Anne Juepner on the second IPBES Thematic Assessment on Land Degradation (LD), through which presentation she indicated that LD caused by human activities affects 3.2 billion people, putting their lives in jeopardy, and concluded with some highlights on Cameroon's National BES Assessment.

Panel 2 recommendations:

At the end of the presentation, there were lots of inputs made by discussants from which the following salient recommendations could be gathered for uptake to the National Assessments:

- i. National Assessments should aim at collecting and validating existing data with respect to the IPBES conceptual framework and not generating data;
- ii. Global and Regional assessment reports should be used as guides to do national assessments;
- iii. BES assessments should not end at the stage of assessment but also documentation, improvement and application of results;
- iv. Chapters should take into consideration both scientific and valorisation needs
- v. Findings from assessments should be transmitted to policymakers in the medium, manner and language which will be understood and accepted by them
- vi. The grouping of authors for the national assessment should be multidisciplinary in nature, and

- vii. Authors at the national level should not see the assessment as a means of making money but as an opportunity for contributing to knowledge,

### *PANEL 3: NATIONAL BES ASSESSMENT ON MOVING FROM KNOWLEDGE TO DECISION-MAKING*

The Panel was moderated by Dr Chimere DIAW and composed of Coordinating Lead and Lead Authors of the National BES Assessment underway and two discussants with expertise both as scientists and also as administrators who have advised policymakers as follows: Dr. IROUME, Dr. MBAH, Ms. Marie Francoise NGOBANEG, Mr. TCHOFFO. The chair then proceeded to give the floor to the presenters, who did their presentations respectively on,

- Biodiversity and ecosystems services: benefits to economic growth and human wellbeing (chapter 2 of the ongoing national assessment).
- Status, trends and future dynamics of BES underpinning nature benefits to people (chapter 3)
- Assessing drivers and consequences of BES ( chapter 4)

#### Panel 3 recommendations

After the presentations, followed reflections by the discussants on the national assessment generally and inputs on how this could be conducted; in particular the concern was on how we can concretely ensure a strong link between scientists and the information they generate and its effective use by policymakers, if greater service is to be paid to biodiversity conservation. Two key recommendations were made as follows:

1. That the regional assessments should be consulted in the course of carrying out the national assessment in order to avoid duplication in the treatment of matters already addressed in that assessment.
2. That the thematic presentation on land degradation should serve as a case study with which to enrich the Cameroon assessment.

#### PANEL 4

Panel 4 was moderated by Pr. Nkwatoh who is one of the authors of the Regional BES Assessment for Africa. This panel was composed of a dynamic team of discussants made up of seasoned professors/researchers in the domain of governance, persons who have been policymakers or advised policymakers and resource persons from two partner NGOs with the main task of addressing the theme; “National BES Assessment: moving from knowledge to decision making in relation to the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of the National BES Assessment titled

‘‘Governance’’. The panellists include: Dr Rene Oyono, Professor William MALA, Dr. NGUENANG Guy Merlin, Mr. Durel Halleson.

The moderator started by commending the impressive attendance and the perfect gender balance of participants, before introducing the presenter Pr. Yves Mandjem who presented the content and chapter breakdown of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of the National BES Assessment.

Panel Discussions:

After the presentation by Pr. Yves, the chair opened the floor for the discussants one after another in order to elicit their contributions and observations, while underlining the importance of the chapter on governance especially in terms of translating assessments into action through policy.

The first discussant to whom the floor was given was Halleson Durrel from WWF who expressed so much delight in the fact that human wellbeing is put at the centre of the BES assessment as an understanding thereof will have the counter positive effect on the level of attention accorded to its protection by policymakers based on the slogan that nature says ‘‘*Take care of me and I will take care of you*’’. He further spoke about the importance of financing in the implementation of Biodiversity and ecosystem governance decisions and underlined the importance of the participation of key ministries like the Ministry of Finance in the mini dialogue and other related fora on biodiversity. While regretting the fact that Cameroon is not a member of the Governments Declaration on Natural Capital Valuation, he highlighted the importance of doing a Natural Capital Valuation as this enables the government to know the true worth of its biodiversity thereby positively influencing the attention and resources accorded to its protection by policymakers. He closed his thoughts by echoing the need for synergy amongst major ministries in biodiversity governance action given the fact that there are biodiversity-related conventions that are hosted by different ministries while underlining the fact that it is the role of MENEPEDED to lobby these Ministries into cooperating with her.

The second discussant to take the floor, Mr. Nguenang Guy of GIZ emphasised on the importance of the governance chapter as a key Chapter that will give dynamism to and translates the other chapters into action. He reiterate the fact that lack of transformation has been identified as the reason for the paradox that African countries are rich in natural resources but still suffer from poverty. He further indicated that governance is fundamental to overturn this trend through implementing *inter alia* policies on capacity building, financing and benefit sharing. To round off, he indicated that it will be fundamental for the chapter on governance to capture and explore financing options in biodiversity management.

The next discussant, Dr William Balla of the University of Yaounde I observed that it will be important for the chapter on governance to reflect on and clarify the following:

- The manner in which biodiversity can be integrated into the emergence and developmental agendas of Cameroon;
- How Intellectual property rights issues regarding biodiversity should be managed with regards to the cultural and knowledge rights of local communities

- What the economic value of protected species and areas is, if human wellbeing is to be put at the centre of biodiversity while considering what services protected/species can offer to host communities.

The last discussant Mr. Phil Rene OYONO reflected on the content and structure of the chapter and its general conceptual orientation, highlighting the fact that the right paradigm should be to put human wellbeing at the centre of biodiversity governance questions (anthropocentric) and not biodiversity at the heart of biodiversity if true socio-political pertinence should be given to biodiversity governance. He also added that the Governance chapter should be constructed on the concept and pillars of indicators so that governance can be evaluated after some time to measure if there is any progress in governance or not and such indicators must be measurable. As far as the chapter structure is a concern, he noted that over fragmentation of chapter should be avoided by creating syntheses among parts and paragraphs through merging paragraphs and parts containing related ideas. He concluded by highlighting the importance of including scenarios in the chapter in order to measure the effect of different trends and factors on biodiversity governance like population growth, policy changes etc.

The floor was then handed over to the other participants to make contributions or ask questions related to the theme. From the reactions from the floor, it was gathered that it is important to move towards a post biodiversity conservation paradigm which enhances the contribution of biodiversity to communities and ameliorate equitable benefit sharing from biodiversity both at the national and most importantly local levels. The need for the harmonisation of biodiversity-related laws and action by various related ministries in order to concentrate government action and efforts towards proper biodiversity governance and the development of an intellectual property rights system that encourages cooperation in the domain of biodiversity on a win-win basis, were underlined. This brought the work of the panel to an end after which participants were invited for a coffee break.

### **III. GROUP WORK: ENRICHING SCOPING REPORT CHAPTERS**

The SG of MINEPDED facilitated this exercise. Participants were grouped into four working groups headed by Coordinating Lead Authors. While the introductory and concluding chapters were suspended to be dealt with later on, Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 were enriched. The mandate was to examine each chapter and review it according to the recommendations that were made throughout the workshop. Mrs Galega indicated that chapter 5 had not been mentioned throughout the workshop because it was intended at the conception of the workshop that an international expert working on scenarios and modelling will be around and in the course of the workshop identify a local expert or partner working on same to handle chapter 5 on scenarios, which unfortunately did not happen as intended.

The SG quickly asked Dr. Chimere to give an expert opinion on whether there is a need for a separate chapter on scenarios or each chapter should contain a subsection on scenarios? This question provoked so much brainstorming from the floor and the conclusion was that there is

a strong need for a separate chapter on scenarios even though this may be done later after the other chapters must have been developed. On this note, she proceeded to call for people and partner organisations to volunteer to work on this chapter, with Dr. Chimere declaring his willingness and availability to work with any partner organisation that will volunteer to work on this.

At this juncture, the floor was handed to Dr. Chimere to give guidelines on how the working groups are going to carry out their deliberations. He indicated that chapter 1 will be based on setting the scene and defining the scope and the mandate of the assessment.

A question was raised from the floor on whether it is proper for chapter 2 to examine the conceptual framework since the other chapters may have to examine the conceptual framework. The SG underlined that the assessment is based on a particular conceptual framework which is that of IPBESS and this CF will be examined only in chapter 2 and the most the other chapters will do is define key terms at the beginning of each chapter in the context in which they will be used in the chapter. The round table discussions on the various chapters lasted for about one hour thirty minutes.

*Recommendation:*

1. There is a need for a scenario chapter to be included in the Cameroon assessment was recommended.

#### **IV. CLOSING CEREMONY**

The closing ceremony was characterised by several speeches, the first of which was given by the Inspector General at the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation and UN Representative to give concluding remarks before her closing remarks. The Inspector General cited a number of scientific works that were done in his Ministry that can be relevant to the assessment and others that they are willing to make available for the assessment. The next speaker was Dr. Anne Juepner who commended the efforts of fellow partner organisation, GIZ in accompanying the process and while reiterating the satisfaction of her organisation on the level of progress Cameroon has made in the National BES Assessment, promised to share the Cameroonian experience with other countries like Columbia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, involved in the process. She finally declared the willingness and readiness of her organisation to accompany the government in the process and then urged the national platform to bring on board more experts, notably IKI experts whose inputs can make the assessment more enriching.

Making the closing statement on behalf of the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, the SG Mrs Galega thanked participants for their massive attendance and extreme engagement in the workshop given their tight schedule and urged them to continue with such commitment. After inviting participants to a biodiversity lunch at the esplanade of MINEPDED as part of the celebration of the World Biodiversity day, she declared the Mini Dialogue closed.