### Cameroon

#### Context

**Political Context**

Cameroon’s economy was once considered one of the strongest in Africa, but in late 1990s Cameroon experienced a recession as world prices in oil, cocoa and coffee dropped. In the face of a declining economy, the government implemented adjustment policies in the form of currency devaluations, trade liberalization and the promotion of foreign investment, which triggered large areas of forest loss. The Government’s attempt to better organize the forestry sector and conserve relevant biodiversity areas through reforms of the 1994 Forest Law had an adverse effect as deforestation continues to occur at high rates across a large portion of the country.

**Socio-economic Context**

Following the mid-century economic boom, Cameroon’s population increased sharply and density reached 42 people/km². Cameroon is a linguistically and ethnically diverse country whose geography ranges from semi-desert in the north to rainforest in the south. Even though this diversity favors a variety of economic and agricultural activities, 70% of the population depends on agriculture and pastoral activities for their livelihoods.

**Deforestation Drivers**

Most of Cameroon’s forests are situated in the southern part of the country and much of Cameroon’s deforestation is occurring in the southwest, a biodiversity hotspot. Causes of deforestation in Cameroon are diverse, complex and have changed over time. Currently, the major drivers of deforestation in Cameroon are conversion to agricultural expansion and indirect general land use mismanagement. It is estimated that 85% of deforestation in Cameroon is due to small-scale farmers using extensive slash-and-burn techniques. Plantation agriculture, particularly cocoa and coffee, which covers extensive areas especially in the southern part of the country, plays a vital role in Cameroon’s economy. In the near future, increasing global demand for these cash crops may accelerate deforestation in Cameroon. Unsustainable logging is also a cause of forest degradation and deforestation. Due to weak logistical and human enforcement capacity and land mismanagement, significant and widespread irregularities are encountered in existing logging concessions and in the regulation enforcement system.

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#### Deforestation

Forest area (2010): 42%
- 1990-2000: -0.94 %y⁻¹
- 2000-2005: -1.02 %y⁻¹
- 2005-2010: -1.07 %y⁻¹

#### Agriculture

Agriculture as % of GDP (2007): 19%
Agricultural land (2009): 19.8%
Top 3 commodities, by footprint (2010):
- Maize: 750k ha
- Sorghum: 700k ha
- Cocoa Beans: 670k ha


*Rates at sub-national level are for indicative purposes only given use of relatively course MODIS data*

![Deforestation: Average Annual Rate](image)

National deforestation estimates in percent per year and agricultural statistics are from FAO (2010). Percent tree-cover change product for 2000 to 2005 (Hansen, et al 2009). Mapped sub-national estimates of the Deforestation Indicator in hectares are indicative only, given the resolution of the data source, and are from CI (2011), derived from the MODIS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-national Region</th>
<th>Hectares per Year (indicative)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanaga-Maritime</td>
<td>1,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niem</td>
<td>1,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Océan</td>
<td>1,206</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mouno</td>
<td>881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dja-et-Lobo</td>
<td>867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National deforestation estimates in percent per year and agricultural statistics are from FAO (2010). Percent tree-cover change product for 2000 to 2005 (Hansen, et al 2009). Mapped sub-national estimates of the Deforestation Indicator in hectares are indicative only, given the resolution of the data source, and are from CI (2011), derived from the MODIS.
References


2 FAO (2010) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010


4 The World Bank: Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.

5 The World Bank: Agricultural land (% of land area): FAO

6 The World Bank: Employment in agriculture (% of total employment): International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database


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