

## Opportunity study of agroforestry projects under shading of forest species (Congo Basin and Ivory Coast)

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In 2018, the FFEM financed a study of agroforestry projects with focus on the cocoa-timber agroforestry systems in the Congo Basin and West Africa. We focused our interviews and observations in Cameroun and Cote d'Ivoire: two countries with contrasting trajectories in the cocoa and timber sectors. 30 entities have been met (6 timber companies, 3 chocolate industry, 7 research center and forest authorities, 4 international cooperation agency, 5 NGOs, 2 certification bodies, 3 agroforestry fund) and 16 projects have been analyzed\*.

Major observations:

- A large range of association schemes are implemented on a trial stage at small-scale.
  - For the moment, the foresters are engaged in plantation projects with chocolate industry, rather to meet compensatory reforestation obligations and not a goal of profitability and long term sourcing modalities.
  - The cocoa/timber plantation system with a purpose of wood production and profitability is an innovative approach in these countries. There is a convergence of interest, even early signs of a movement bringing together chocolatiers and foresters around common issues: climate, sustainable access to resources and livelihoods.
  - For timber industry, the cocoa + timber model can meet the requirements of FSC/PAFC forest certification, regarding the needs of livelihood projects for neighboring populations.
  - The cocoa + timber + annual crops and fruit species model can also be used as a basis for ecological intensification, climate smart agriculture, also leading to organic certifications, income diversification and payment for ecosystem services.
  - The development of fair trade cocoa in West Africa can lever on production systems transformation from single cropping to agroforestry: thanks to the guaranteed minimum price, to the development reward and to the multi-year commitment of buyers/importers/chocolatiers, certified cooperatives develop significant support capacities for their member producers.
- The success for «cocoa/forest plantation» projects must suppose organizational, technical and economic agreement between the farmer (who plants cocoa and trees and ensures the maintenance of the agro-forestry system), the cocoa buyer and the wood buyer. As in any innovative strategy, obstacles must be overcome. In our case, there are conditions to create: access to quality seedlings, technical support for good maintenance of tree species, adapted financial products and adaptation of the existing legal framework. These elements together can lay the foundation for a strategy for early payment for future timber resources, based on a sustainable partnership between cocoa farmers and foresters.
- These findings have been shared with the “Cité du développement durable” (France): 20 institutions involved in sustainable development and international cooperation. Many of them work on cacao agroforestry from different angles (agronomic, adaptation to climate change, agro-ecological transition, fair-trade) and will join their effort.

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