

41. Multiple-use forest management in Central Africa: Perceptions, implementation and evolution

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Although multiple-use forest management (MUFM) is supported by forestry laws in the Congo Basin countries, this approach remains confused, misunderstood and little implemented. We conducted a survey with 62 people concerned or in charge of forest management in Cameroon, Gabon and DRC. Three conceptions of MUFM are expressed: (1) an intentional and formal management of the main forest goods and services; (2) an informal use of forest resources; (3) timber management with limited integration of other secondary goods, like NTFP or bushmeat. The first perception is supported by NGOs, research institutes and projects, the second by the communities' representatives, and the third by logging companies and forestry administration. Actual implementation of MUFM was reviewed in eight forest management initiatives – six logging concessions and two community forests. Timber production, biodiversity conservation, protection of sensitive areas and exploitation of NTFPs are the main uses integrated in MUFM. However their implementation faces various barriers: an inadequate legislation that prevents locally extracted resources from being traded when they come from logging concessions, precarious rights on forest resources for communities, and lack of economic profitability. In contrast, three approaches favor the adoption of MUFM, respectively forest certification, enforcement of traditional use rights in logging concessions, and the tentative REDD schemes.

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