

IUFRO Forest Environment DIV 8 Conference 2023

October 24th – 27th, Evora, Portugal

# Poor performance of community forests to sustainable livelihoods in Cameroon: long-term impact assessment and ways forward



Guillaume Lescuyer & Fabrice Kengne

# Community forest in Cameroon: An explanatory note

---

- The most accomplished form of social forestry in the forestry law :
  - Full delegation of management to a local community
  - Maximum size of 5000 ha where customary rights are confirmed
  - Not located in the permanent forest estate
- A CF is granted by the Ministry of Forest, once its Simple Management Plan (SMP) is validated:
  - Negotiated boundaries with the neighboring villages
  - Creation of a formal management committee
  - Multiple resources inventory and socio-economic study
  - Technical planification of timber exploitation
  - Investment plan for the community
- Number of CFs:
  - A few pilot experiences after 1996 (supported by international funders)
  - About 500 CF created in the 2000s
  - Almost 900 CF in 2023 (various stages), most are inactive
- Main objectives: timber logging to feed the domestic market
- Main drawback: technical complexity and financial cost of the SMP that require external support

# A Community Forest is not a customary territory

Community forest	(Informal) terroir
Max 5000 ha granted by the State for 25 years	No legal boundaries but legitimate “terroir”
Complex and costly procedure to request a CF	No cost
Managed by an official community entity	Regulated by families and lineages
Legal tenure on resources (but not land)	Customary (informal) ownership of land and resources
Products extracted from forest can be sold	Products only for self-consumption (according to the law)
According to a Simple Management Plan, validated by the State	According to customary rules, with no State control
Restriction to local uses	No restriction to local uses

# The case of Nkolenyeng

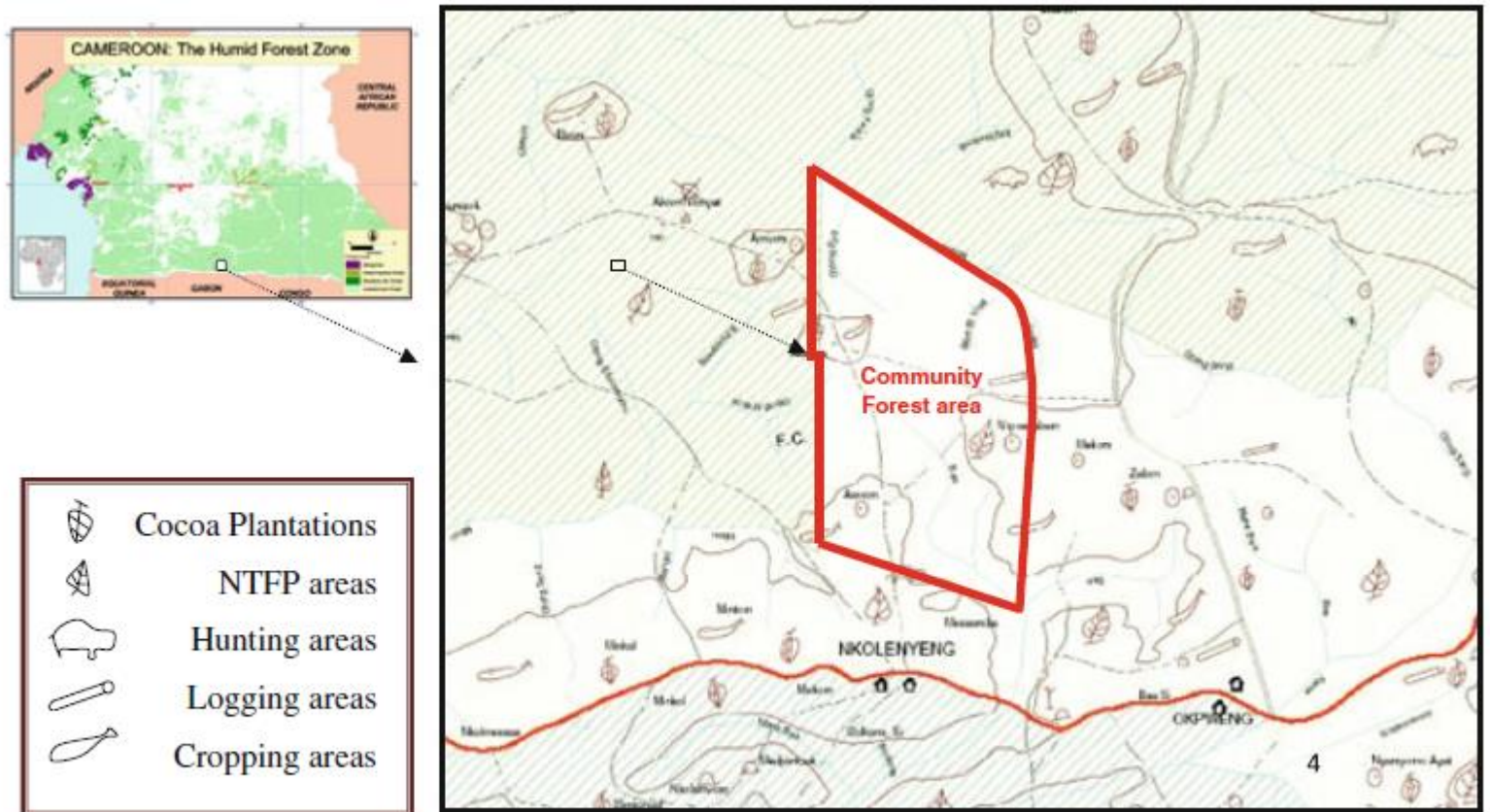


Fig. 1 Location of the Nkolenyeng community forest

(Source: Lescuyer et al., 2012)

# Problem statement

---

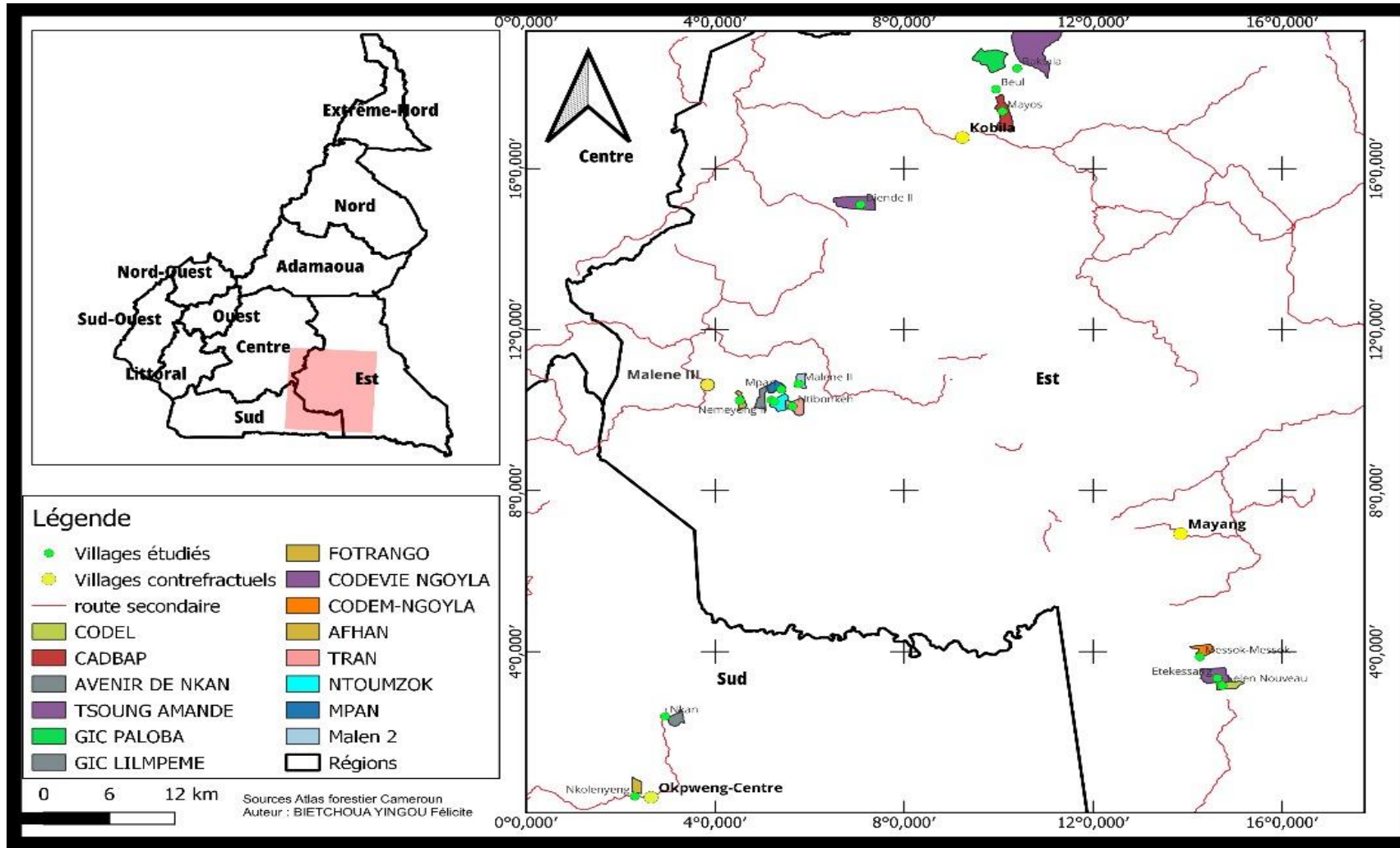
- An ex post assessment of CFs' impacts at the village scale on
  - Collective facilities: health, education, water, electricity, religion, leisure
  - Individual well being: housing, training, wage, equipment, farming, NTFP collection and small-scale logging
  - Forest cover



- Selection of 14 CF cases according to four criteria: duration, dominant use, geographical location, involvement of women
- A set of complementary survey methods:
  - Focus Group Discussion (14)
  - Diagnosis of the state of collective facilities (18)
  - Individual interviews with all available CF managers (52)
  - Individual interviews with at least 20% of households (274)
  - Assessment of forest cover evolution with the WRI & MINFOF Interactive Forest Atlas (18)
  - Restitution workshops (14)
- 4 clusters of CFs with a counter-factual village without a CF

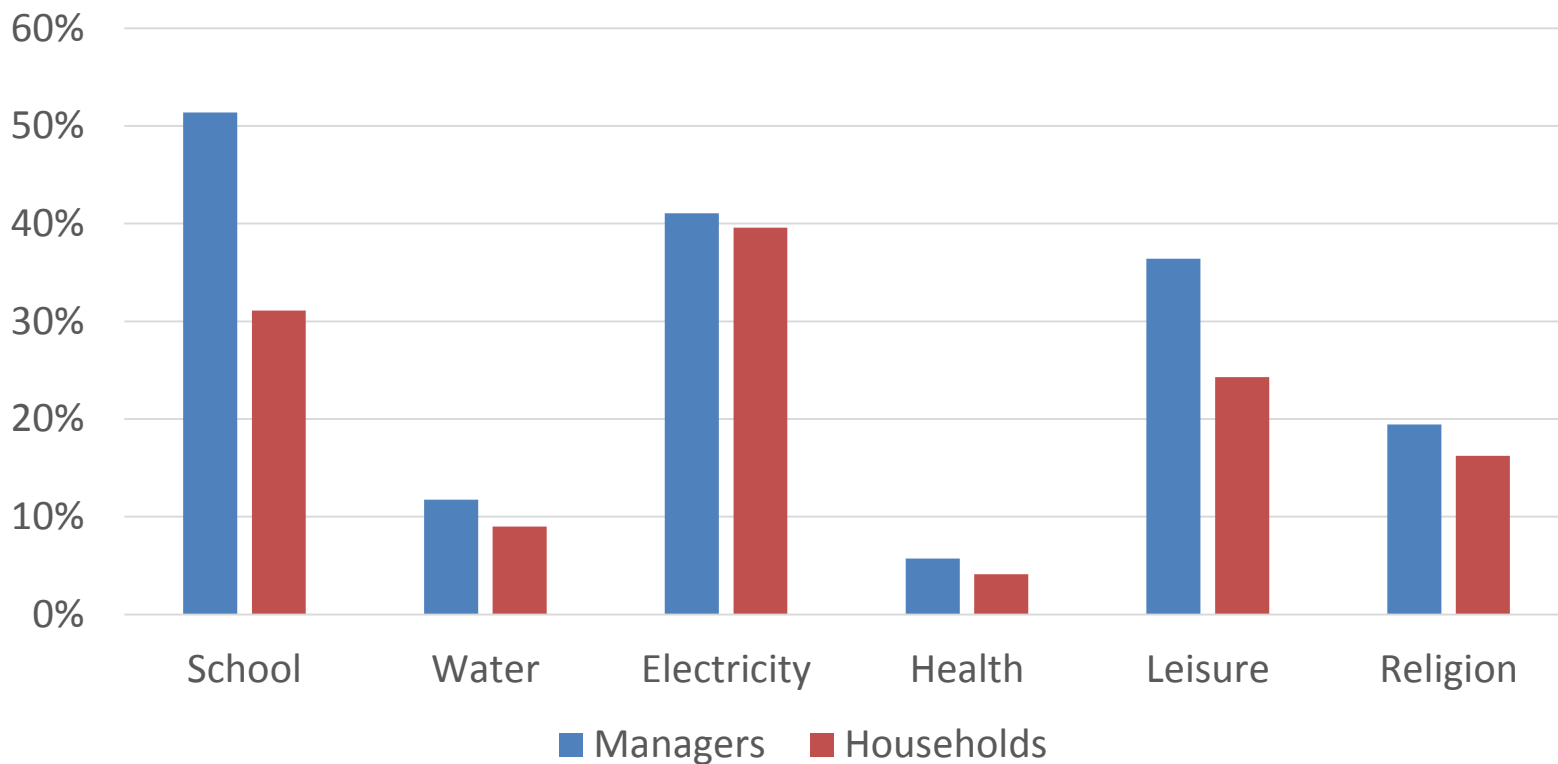


# Location of the case studies



# Result – Impact on village infrastructure

Stated impact of the CF on collective facilities



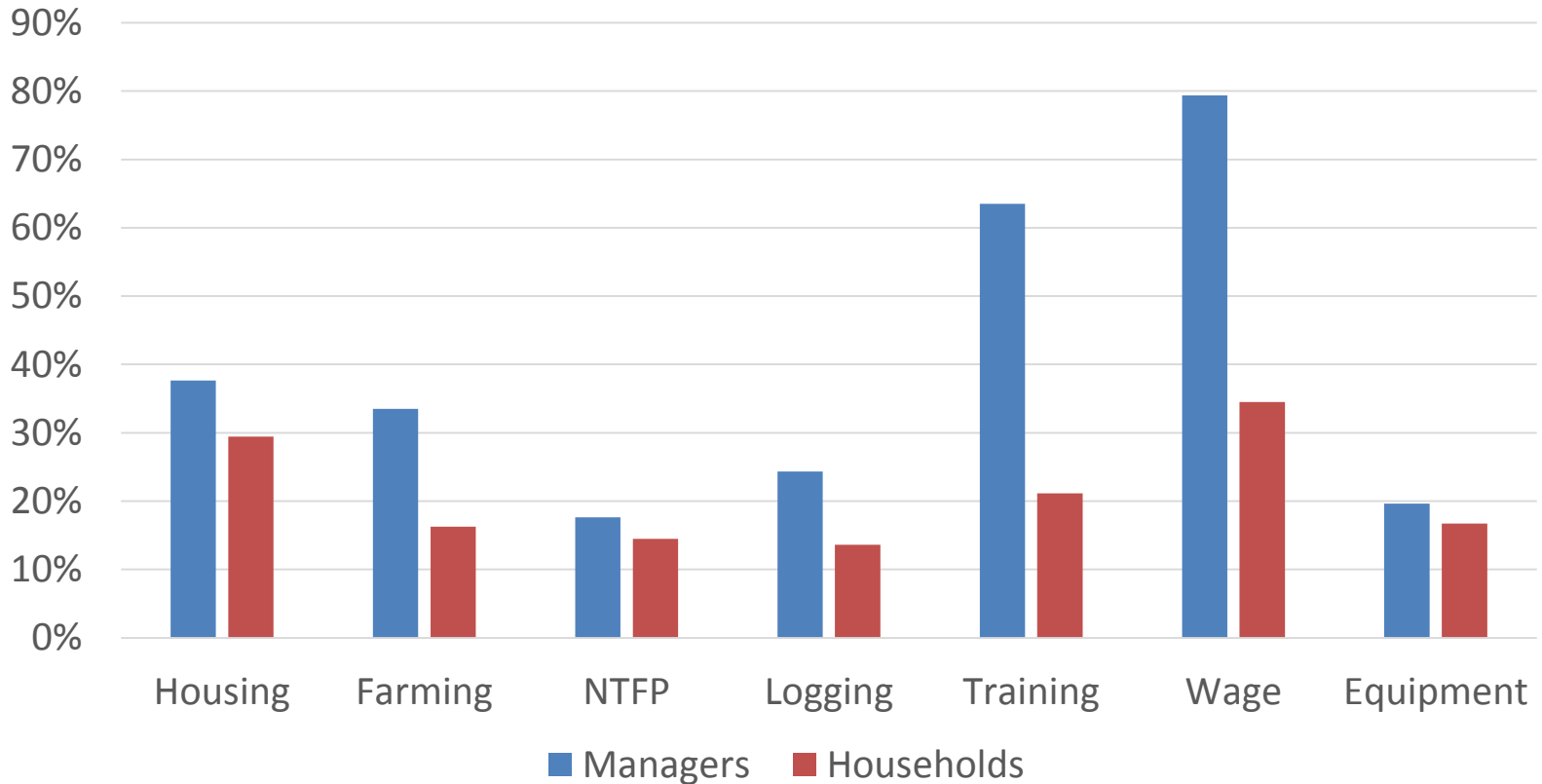


# Result – Short duration of individual impacts

Community Forest	CF duration (yr)	Impacts duration (yr)
AFHAN	20	4
Avenir de Nkan	19	2
CADBAP	21	6
CODEL	23	6
CODEM	23	2
CODEVIE	23	5
Coeur vaillant	17	2
FOTRANGO	20	4
MPAN	17	2
PALOBA	20	3
RENOVATION	17	3
TRAN	21	2
LILMPEME	20	4
Tsoug Amande	23	3
<b>Average</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>

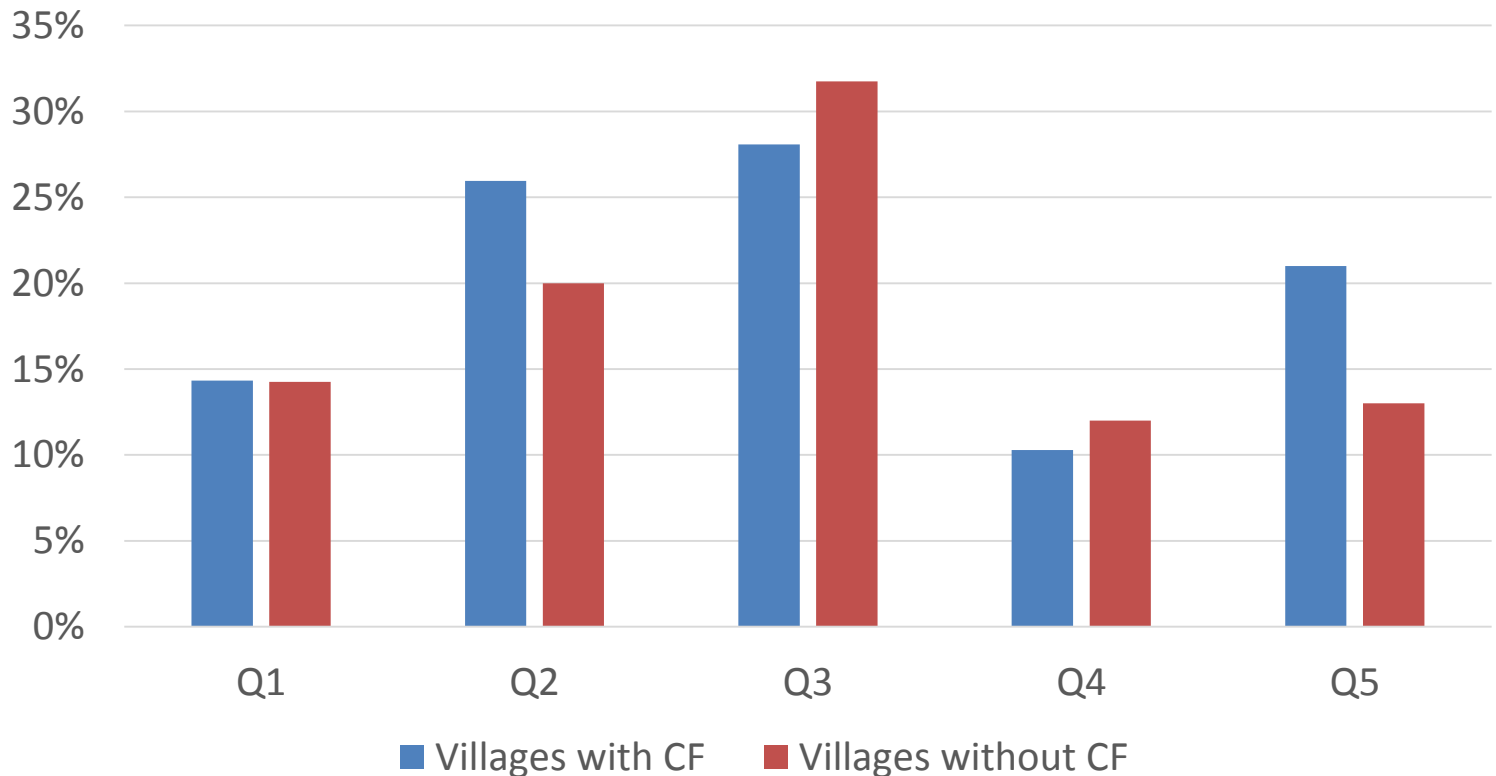
# Result – Impacts on households

Stated impacts of FC on individual wellbeing



# Counterfactual analysis on housing

Quality of housing (decreasing)



# Counterfactual analysis on collective facilities

State of collective facilities



# Limitations and additions

---

- A more detailed and sophisticated analysis needs to be carried out at council level to better specify the dynamics and understand the causalities
- Methods' relevance: (1) analyse several types of capital that are likely to be impacted by CF and (2) question several types of stakeholder.
- A first diagnosis to be completed by several studies:
  - Changes in forest cover in CF and counterfactual sites;
  - Effectiveness of the support provided by intermediary organisations to CF;
  - Replication of surveys in Gabon and the DRC.

# Thanks for your attention

---



[guillaume.lescuyer@cirad.fr](mailto:guillaume.lescuyer@cirad.fr)

[kengnefotsofabrice@yahoo.fr](mailto:kengnefotsofabrice@yahoo.fr)