



Theme 4 'Engagement with law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and the media
Increasing the role of media in natural resources governance: Where do we want to go and how? – Experiences and lessons and perspectives

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Presentation outline



❖ **Context**

❖ **Justification for greater involvement of the media**

❖ Approaches and achievements

❖ **Constraints and lessons learned**

❖ **Opportunities**

CONTEXT

In recent years, in its ambition to be elevated to the rank of emerging economy by 2035, Cameroon has committed to carrying out several projects to serve as the basis for a long-term development process, but such commitments seem to bring both economic opportunities and social and environmental challenges. **Several problems affecting the communities are arising from the organisations' activities. However, the media is not talking about it enough.**

- **Few journalists interested in environmental and sustainable development issues;**
- **Superficial research conducted or even publication of erroneous information;**
- **Journalists have little specialist knowledge of environmental and sustainable development issues for economic reasons linked to the precariousness of the profession, the editorial choices of employers, low technical capacities or even lack of own resources;**
- **Difficult access to environmental information and information about natural resources governance.**

Consequences:

- **Almost total absence of environmental issues in the national press, all formats**
- **Superficial analysis of available environmental information**
- **Loss of opportunities to influence and change practices in environmental governance and natural resources, and promote the environmental rights of the most vulnerable**

JUSTIFICATION FOR MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The role and importance of the media

- **Information for the public on current events, public policies and social facts. The media are channels for the dissemination and amplification of information;**
- **Education: In addition to keeping people informed, the media educates populations and citizens on social phenomena, values, the determination and construction of ideas and ways of thinking on political processes including environmental and natural resources;**
- **Monitoring: Government and other social and political actors; the media, just like the CSOs, are whistle blowers and integral to citizen monitoring of public action.**

The media participate in influencing and changing policies and societal behaviour, hence the name "fourth state".

Encourage the media to help deepen understanding and disseminate relevant, objective and credible messages presenting an important issue for the improvement of NR governance, the preservation of the environment and the rights of the communities dependent on NRs.

APPROACHES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

FODER

Implementation of initiatives aimed at increasing media interest on environmental issues

The Forest Media Awards (ForMA):

Activity to reward and encourage media communication efforts on forest governance in Cameroon initiated in 2015 by FODER in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Communication; extended in 2018 to the mining sector.

Reinforcement of the technical capacities of the media in investigating and reporting on environmental issues. Expertise provided to journalists on environmental and NR issues via interviews, information sharing, capacity building; **structuring of community radios through the Community radio network for the improvement of forest governance (RRACO-GF)**

Adaptation of media editorial approach, diversification of subjects and **increase in the number** of articles on **environmental issues; specialisation** of journalists; **access to media** and dissemination of information without direct costs; **increase in the audience** size of the media in question; contribution to changing political and practical decisions (RFA, social aspects, law enforcement, etc.)

CED

- Sharing of our publications and news on our activities on social media, website, journalist database.
- Organisation of workshops with the media
- Writing briefings on key issues
- Inclusion of journalists in IFM missions
- Capacity building sessions on themes related to IFM and illegal logging
- Support for investigative journalism

ROLL-OUT OF INVESTIGATIONS

- Search for competent journalists with an interest in sustainable development upstream (through articles in the media).
- Proposal of a work theme, in a given geographical space.
- Provision of a framework of information to be collected.
- However, no limitation of the scope of their search
- Financial and logistical support
- Production of reports and reports at the end of the work

IMPACT

- ✓ Self capacity building
- ✓ Reliability of information sources for journalists
- ✓ Promotion of journalists among their colleagues (awards received for certain reports)
- ✓ Attention of government agencies
- ✓ Invitations to our experts to moderate radio debates

FLAG

- Collaboration with several types of local media for information sharing.
- Productions of various articles
- Sharing in the media and on our platforms.
- Production and distribution of video and audio reports on the key themes of the project.

- ✓ Adaptation of the editorial approach of the media;
- ✓ Diversification of topics and increase in the number of articles on environmental issues;
- ✓ Specialisation of journalists.

CONSTRAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Constraints

- 'Locked' editorial lines;
- Lack of media interest in environmental issues ;
- Almost non-existence of the specialised press;
- Attacks on free press and politicisation of the issues;
- Availability of financial and logistical resources for carrying out the investigations;
- Mobility of journalists due to precarious working conditions;
- Widespread corruption reducing the efforts of the media and civil society.

Lessons learned

- Allocating substantial resources (human, financial, material) to communication has been decisive for media engagement strategies;
- Developing communication and influence strategies with the media increases the impacts of civil society advocacy actions and amplifies the voice of communities;
- Building networks and collaboration with credible media outlets helps increase support and leads to greater take up of capacity building by journalists.

OPPORTUNITIES

With the Covid 19 pandemic and the crisis in English-speaking areas, the search for new sources of wealth for economic growth is leading to increased pressure on the land and natural resources still available, to the detriment of the communities who depend on it and to biodiversity. Issues related to logging and natural resources governance are therefore spontaneously more present in the news.

- Already several requests for information from journalists;
- Exploitation of online media;
- Support for academic training for journalists on environmental issues;
- Continuation of support for the media to strengthen their role and importance in NR governance and sustainable development;
- Work in synergy by establishing a communication pool of CSO partners for the non-disparate sharing of information with the media: communicate with one voice by setting up a single communication strategy for common projects;
- Systematic organisation of training workshops for journalists at the start of each project: the objective being to familiarise them with the activities planned in the framework of their implementation in order to facilitate their understanding and, by extension, public perception;
- Identify the appropriate means and communication channels for effective information sharing.

