

ReSI-NoC. Strengthening agricultural innovation systems to promote economically profitable environmentally sustainable and socially equitable agro-sylvo-pastoral production systems in the Northern region of Cameroon

Objectives of the project

Globally, ReSI-NoC seeks to promote economically profitable, environmentally sustainable and socially equitable agro-sylvo-pastoral production systems in the Northern region of Cameroon. Specifically, the programme seeks to strengthen agro-sylvo-pastoral innovation systems in their processes of inclusive planning, negotiation, co-creation and implementation of technical, organisational and social innovations.



Background

In the North region of Cameroon, livestock, agriculture, and protected areas use the same 65,000 km² of land. There are 3 national parks and 28 hunting zones that occupy about 45% of the total area of the North region. Against this backdrop, the major challenges for the agricultural sector are to secure access to land while preserving a sustainable and balanced use of natural resources. Priority actions to support economic development without compromising biodiversity, should take into account the often conflicting interests of the different actors involved.

The following contexts and themes are considered for the target zone, i.e. the corridor between Garoua and the Adamawa plateau in the North Region of Cameroon:

- ✓ The highly populated zone south of Garoua, which is highly degraded and where the promotion of agro-ecological and climate-smart practices is necessary, as well as a better integration of agriculture and livestock.
- ✓ Areas bordering national parks and hunting zones where there are many tensions and conflicts over access to land and natural resources. Here, organisational innovations for co-management of protected areas are needed.
- ✓ The more recent cotton and food production areas (south-east of Benoue, between Bouba-Ndjida and Touboro), where there is a clear move towards clearing the forest/natural vegetation to establish new farms. Here, agricultural intensification (improving soil fertility) would help preserve the remaining savannah woodland while supporting cotton and food crop production.

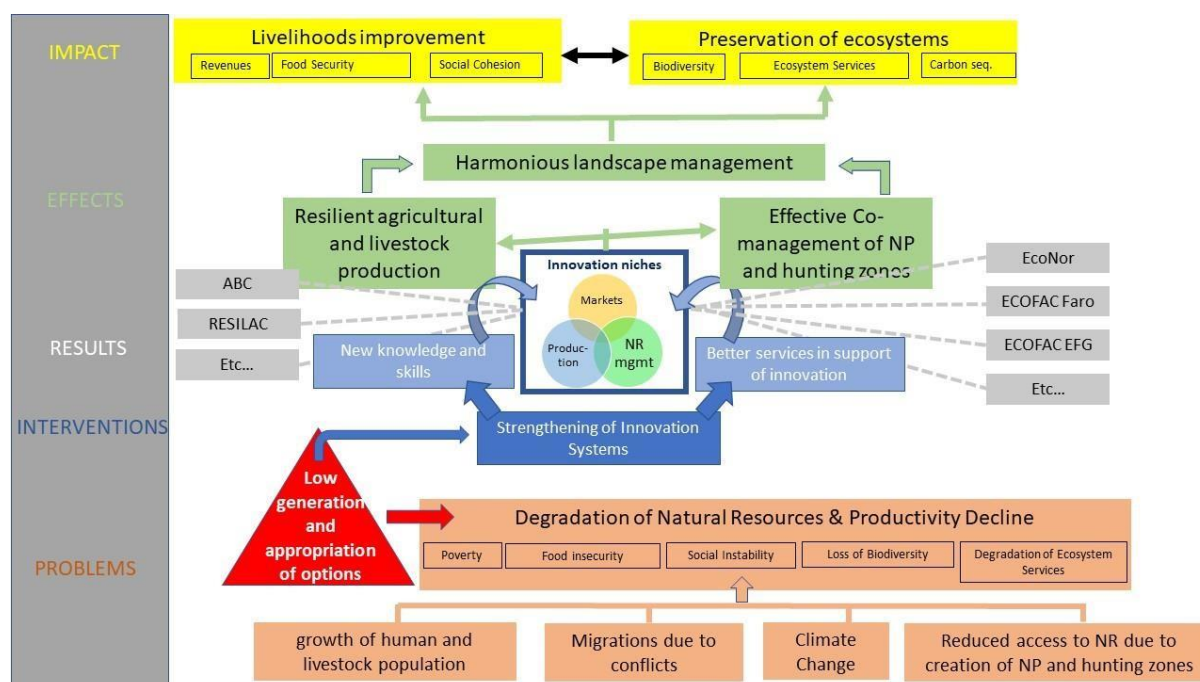
Several methods and tools for planning development interventions that allow different actors to converge at various levels (e.g. community, district, landscape, value chain) have been developed and tested in Cameroon. Although these tools are generally successful in diagnosing land uses, challenges, opportunities and support needs, they rarely allow for the participatory identification and implementation of solutions. Thus, the implementation of interventions – whether technical, organisational or social – requires participatory research approaches, allowing the design, testing and adaptation of innovations by a range of stakeholders. One of the approaches advocated are innovation platforms (Ips) that bring together different stakeholders. In the northern region, these actors include representatives of farmer's and herder's associations, the private sector, government, research institutions, development programmes, conservation organisations and civil society. IPs are operational entities where scientists, in collaboration with other actors, carry out research to find specific solutions adapted to the local context and the needs of the beneficiaries.

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The theory of change to achieve the objectives

The expected impact of this project is the improvement of livelihoods of the populations of the Northern region through harmonious landscape management allowing the integration of agriculture and livestock, and the management of natural ecosystems. The project takes advantage of existing projects and programmes in the region, those oriented towards the improvement of agricultural production, livestock or rural development in general on the one hand, and those focused on co-management of protected areas and hunting zones on the other hand.

Our hypothesis is that agricultural innovation systems in Cameroon are not able to facilitate the generation and appropriation of sustainable solutions to the realm of challenges in the North of Cameroon. Therefore, the project intends to strengthen 'capacities to innovate' of actors operating in the project area. While this work at landscape level is important, most interventions of the ReSi-NoC project take place in the 'innovation niches', which are areas for learning, experimentation and micro-transformation. Groups of actors come together in those innovation niches and become stakeholders in the learning process, which then creates an enabling environment for agricultural innovation. The actors that make up the agricultural innovation system at regional and national level (research, extension, private sector, civil society) will work with the innovation niches to generate new knowledge and skills in the domain of agro-sylvo-pastoral production, markets and management of natural resources that can be disseminated subsequently beyond the innovation niches. At the same time, this learning will result in improved services in support of innovation in the region.



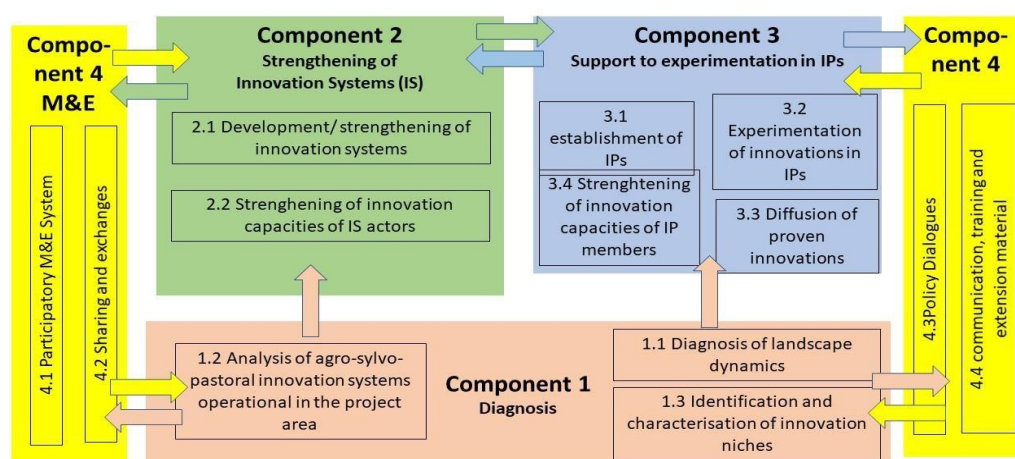
The implementation of the project follows three consecutive steps: i) diagnosis of population dynamics, livelihood activities, impact on natural resources, evolution of climate and impact on practices, as well as an in-depth institutional analysis of the existing agricultural innovation systems; ii) establishment of innovation platforms (or other similar devices) bringing together relevant actors at value chain and landscape levels ; iii) experimentation, adaptation and diffusion of technical, organisational and social innovations using a participatory approach.

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During the first phase of the project (year 1 and 2), 3 pilot sites are chosen per theme with a view of finetuning the approach and developing best-fit models. These models are then be applied/adapted at bigger scale in the second phase (year 3 and 4) associating all stakeholders and in collaboration with other ongoing projects and programmes.

Main activities

Activities are structured in 4 components, as detailed in the graph below.



Organization

The project will be implemented by a consortium composed of research centres working in the area on relevant themes (ICRAF, IRAD, Cirad, CIFOR) and one or two NGOs, with ICRAF as the lead. The field team is composed of an innovation facilitator who is the supervising field activities, a scientist from IRAD who ensures anchorage with the national innovation system, and support staff. In addition, a pool of national and international experts in the domains of innovation, participation and gender, agroecology, agroforestry, value chain analysis & entrepreneurship, and climate change provides technical assistance to the field team for the diagnosis, the strengthening of the innovation systems, the experimentation of innovations in the IPs, as well as for M&E, policy dialogues and communication.

A steering committee will be set up composed of representatives of major stakeholders: European Union, CIFOR-ICRAF, IRAD, CIRAD, civil society, Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOP), Ministry of Agriculture for Development (MINADER), Société pour le Développement du Coton (SODECOTON), one of the three national park conservators, and one representative of the hunting zone operators. To build synergies and efficiency with the other EU-funded project operating in the same area (EcoNor), the same steering committee will serve EcoNor.

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Implementing organization

World Agroforestry (ICRAF)

Co-applicants : Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD), Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (Cirad), Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Partners of the project

One or two local NGOs will be identified during the diagnostic phase to assist with implementation of project activities in the field.

Other main stakeholders

Collaboration for different purposes and of variable duration will be developed with other actors in the innovation systems, including Amélioration de la Compétitivité des Exploitations Familiales Agropastorales (ACEFA), SODECOTON, Programme National de Développement Participative (PNDP), universities and agricultural schools, farmer associations, NGOs and the private sector.

Region

Corridor between Garoua and the Adamawa plateau in the North Region of Cameroon.

Funding and co-funding

EU	€ 2,500,000
Total budget	€ 2,500,000

Duration

4 years (Oct 2020 – Sept 2024)

