

# THRIVE TO STAY

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## Perspectives for forest conservation

in a context of agro-industrial expansion and land-use conflicts in the South-West Region of Cameroon



**GREENPEACE**

David Combaz

July 2013



# INTRODUCTION

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense tropical forest. The path is narrow and made of brown earth, leading into the distance. The forest is filled with various types of trees and lush greenery, including large leaves and ferns. The lighting is natural, suggesting daylight filtering through the canopy.



# The Forest Network

1 global objective:  
Zero deforestation in 2020

3 priority forest basins

2 transversal  
projects

Amazon

**Congo**

Indonesia

**Forest  
solutions**

Global  
political

# Oil palm in the Congo Basin

**Priority target** shifted in June 2012, from timber to industrial **oil palm expansion**

- One of the main drivers of **tropical deforestation**
- Continuous increase over the last decades
- New wave of land deals in Africa, takes over South-East Asia

Investor's rationale	Benefits for African Governments
Land saturation in SEA	Creates employment
ONG Pressure in SEA	Increases State revenue
Moratorium in Indonesia	Outsources infrastructure construction
Abundant and cheap lands in Africa	Boost smallholder's production
Low-cost workforce in Africa	Reduces the production deficit

# The wrong project in the wrong place?

## Herakles Farms

- US company, newcomer in the marketplace
- Two daughter companies
  - **SGSOC** (Cameroon)
  - **SGSOG** (Ghana)
- All RSPO members

## SGSOC's project

- ~ 75,000 ha in SW Cameroon
- > 60,000 ha to be planted
- ~ 7,000 promised jobs
- 400,000 expected CPO t/y
- 40,000 expected KO t/y



**HERAKLES**  
F A R M S

## Important concerns

- Threatens ancient forests
- Protected Areas around, biodiversity hotspot
- Integrated development projects
- Over 20,000 inhabitants depend on forest lands

## Opposition movement

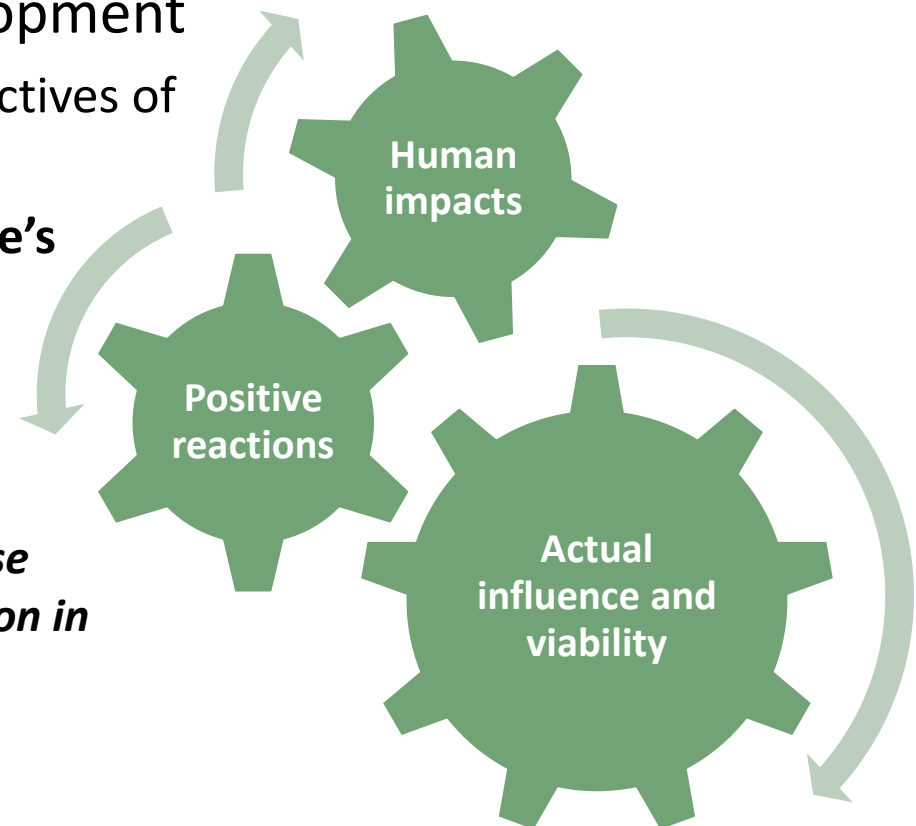
- Local NGOs
- International NGOs
- Scientific community
- Development institutions

# Research question

## Ultimate objective:

- Find **alternative solutions** to industrial oil palm expansion for rural development
  - Compatible with GP's general objectives of forest conservation
  - **Locally borne, answering to people's expressed needs**

*What are the perspective for forest conservation in a situation of land-use conflicts and industrial oil palm expansion in the SW Region of Cameroon?*



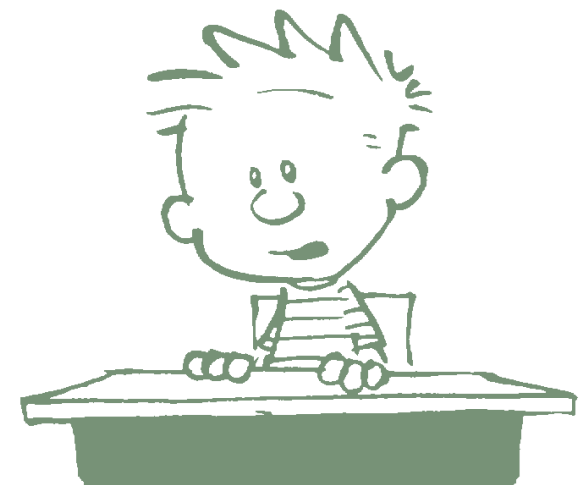


# METHODS



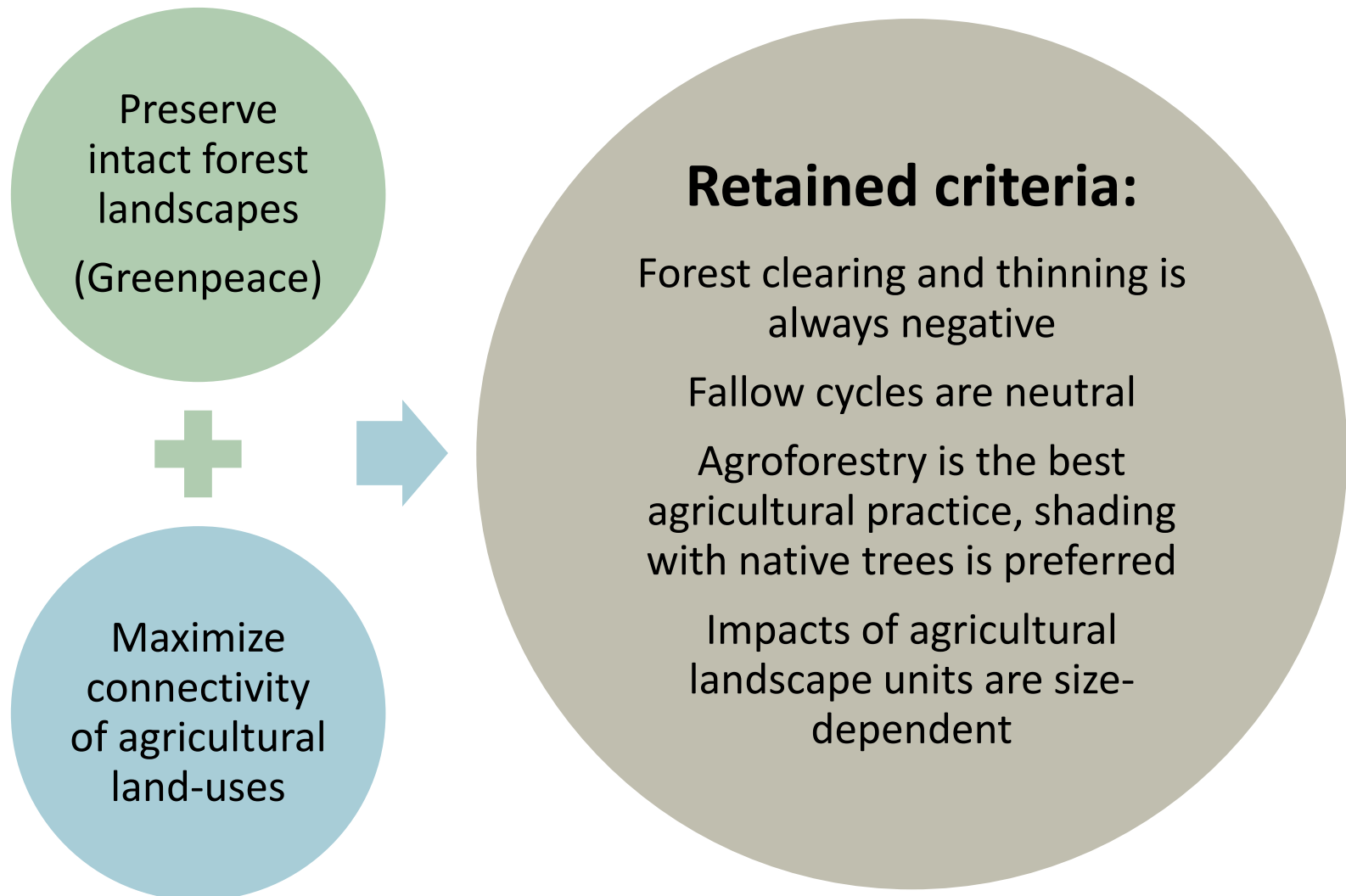
# Analysis framework: the SEMA

- An environmental problem is the depletion of subjectively defined 'desirable' properties of an ecosystem.
  - It results from an inappropriate 'environmental management'
  - 'Actual' environmental management results from strategic interactions performed by actors to improve their own situation
  - 'Environmental actors' take environmental responsibilities and act strategically to change the actual management (intentional management)
1. Normative framework
  2. Landscape model
  3. Actual management analysis
  4. Intentional management analysis





# Normative framework



# Study organization

## 1. Background knowledge acquisition (France)

- Bibliography
- Interviews with resource persons, Greenpeace and external actors

## 2. Field survey and data collection (Cameroon)

- Integration with partner organization (ACDIC)
- Interviews and discussions with national NGOs and experts (Yaoundé, Duala, Limbé)
- Undercover field surveys: farmers, local decision makers, cocoa retailers... (Mundemba, Nguti, Kumba...)

## 3. Data analysis and redaction (France)

- Debriefing with Greenpeace
- Redaction

# Methods

- 43 persons, groups and organizations sampled
  - 24 interviews
  - 7 collective interviews, incl. 2 traditional councils
  - 3 guided farms visits
  - 6 structures with regular meetings
  - 3 informal conversations
  - Field visits, seminars to better understand the context...

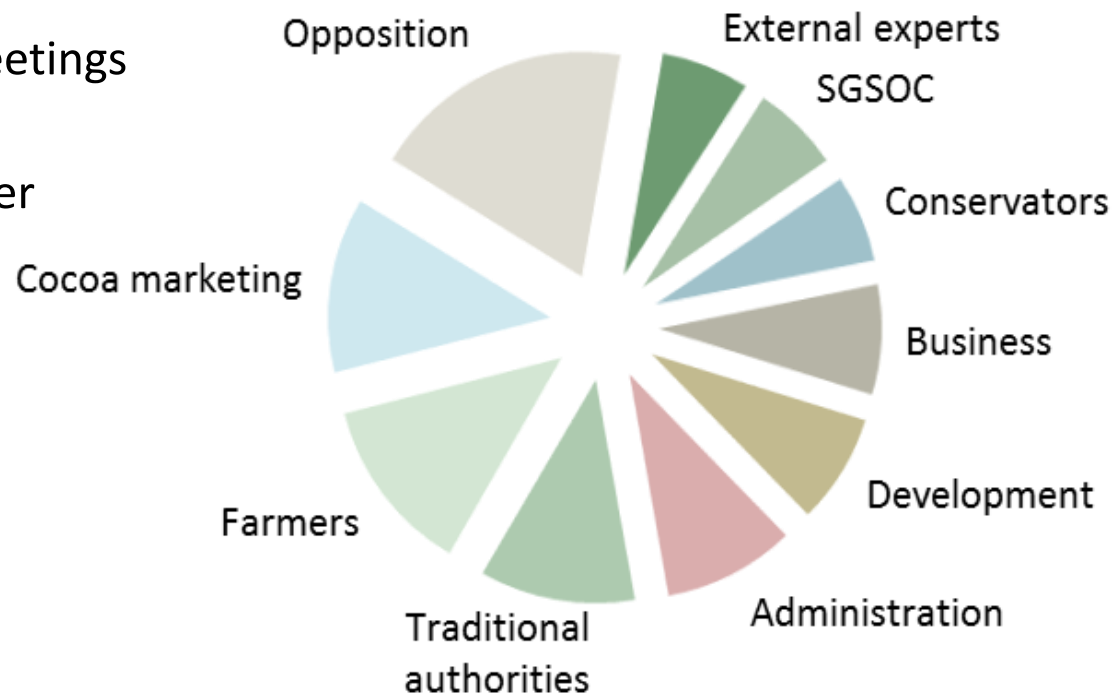
## *Criteria for village selection:*

- *Accessibility*
- *Major production*
- *Known position towards SGSOC*

## *For interviewees:*

- *Network exploration*
- *Serendipity*

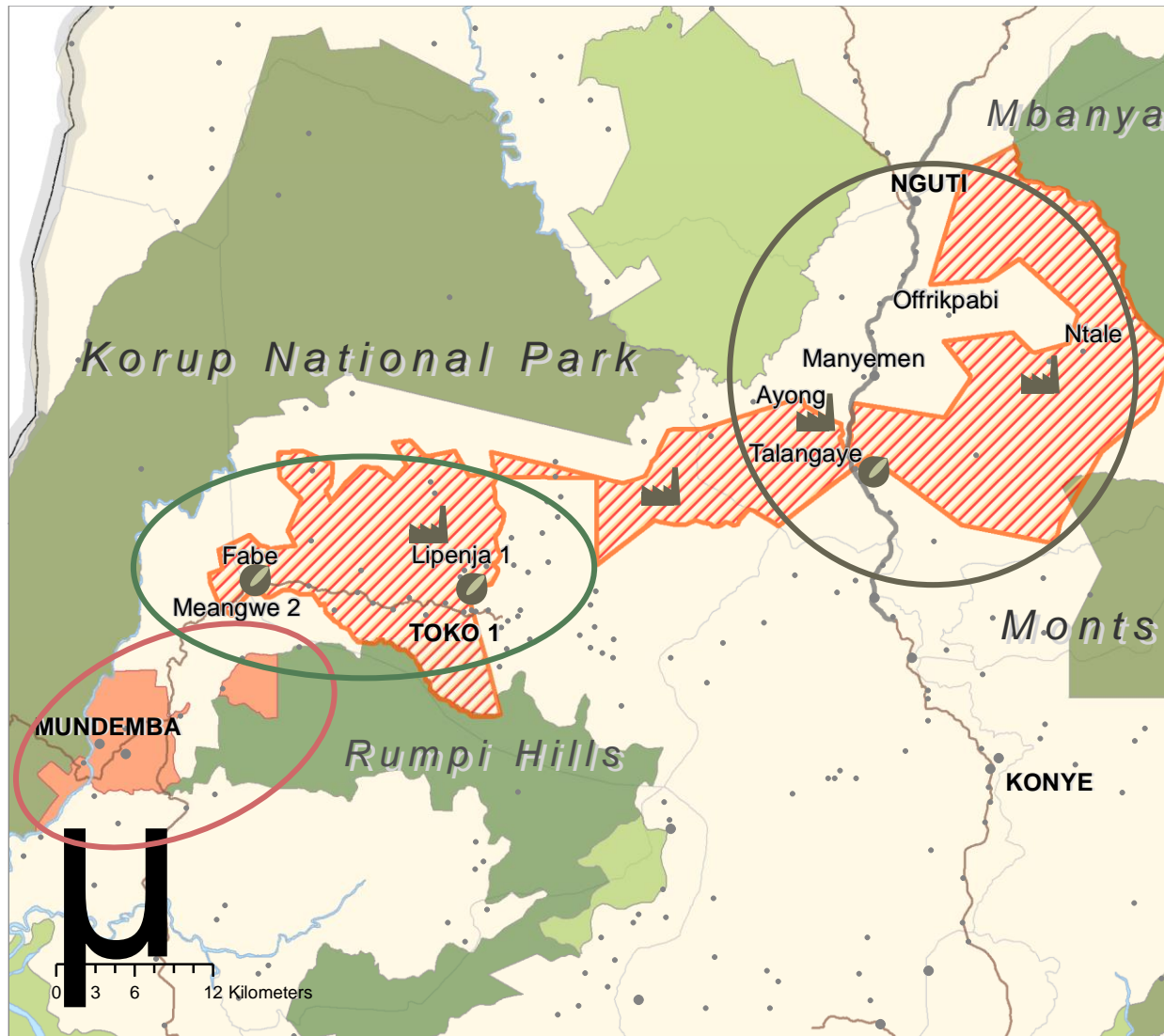
- For each respondent, understand:
  - Objectives and strategies
  - Interactions
  - Obstacles



*NB: overlapping categories*



# Sampled areas



## Legend

### Population

- 1 - 1000
- 1001 - 5000
- 5001 - 25000

— Untarred road

— Tarred road

SGSOC project

Agro-industries

National Park

Wildlife Reserve

Reserve

Forest Reserve

### SGSOC planned facilities

Palm oil mill

Nursery

David Combaz for Greenpeace France  
Data from CED, WWF and WRI

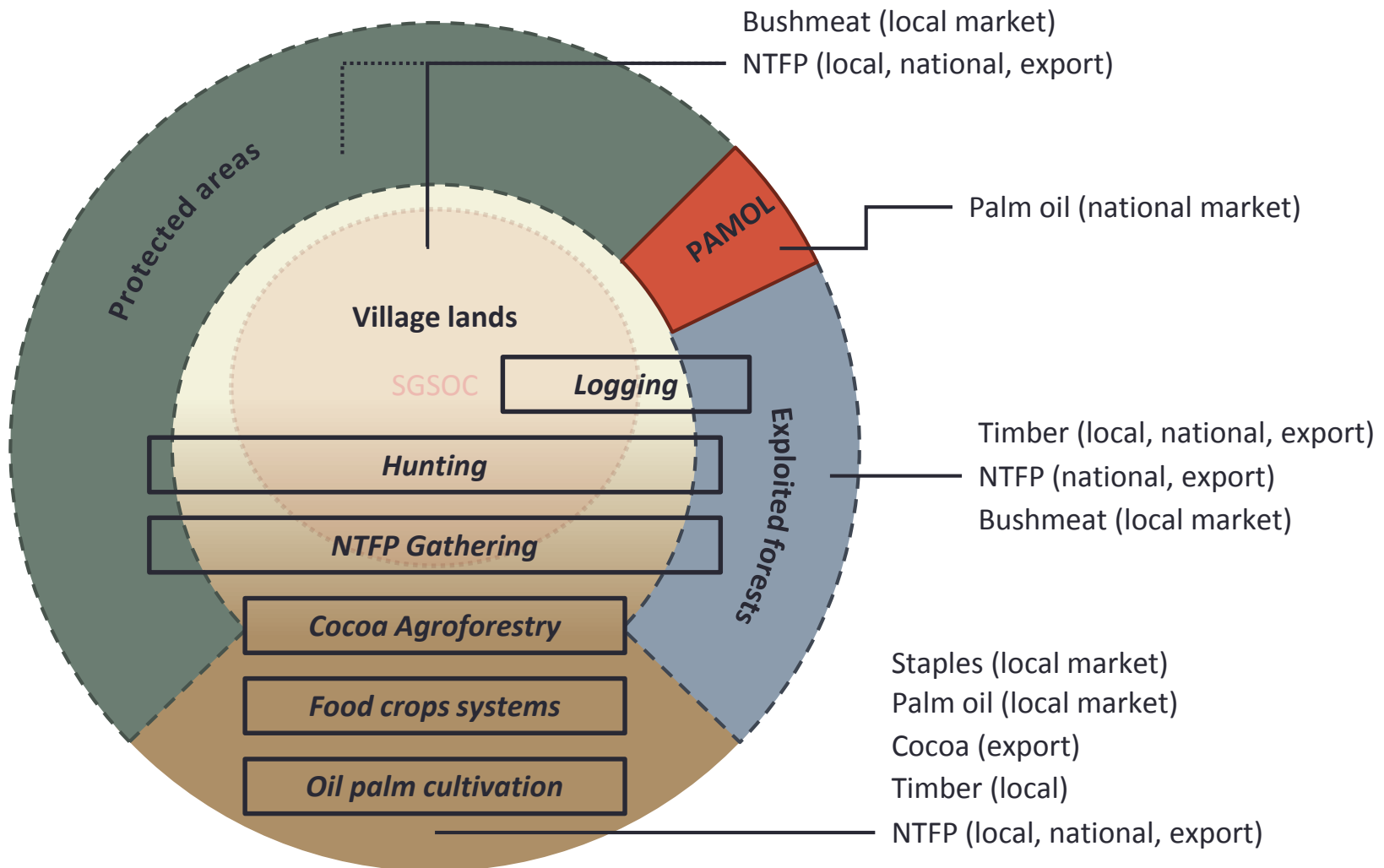
**GREENPEACE**



# RESULTS



# Landscape model





# Actual management analysis

- 2 Concrete action systems **conflicting for land appropriation**

	Industrial oil palm development	Familial systems
<b><i>Core economic unit</i></b>	Private capitalist company	Individual/ household/ Producer's groups
<b><i>Main purpose</i></b>	Profit making, reward shareholders	Household consumption, cash earning, savings
<b><i>Associated land-uses</i></b>	Oil palm monoculture	Oil palm, cocoa agroforests, NTFP, hunting, food crops
<b><i>Reference regulation system</i></b>	Legal framework, RSPO	Traditional authorities

# Familial systems (1)

## Background

- Main cultural groups in the study area:
  - **Oroko**: Ngolo, Bima, Batanga (Mundemba, Toko)
  - **Bassossi** (Nguti)
  - **Balong** (Nguti)
  - Korup, Mbo...
- Ancient structuration:
  - juju & secret societies
  - “big men” and clients -> *elites*
- Colonial (UK) & government relays:
  - Chiefs
  - Village traditional councils
    - King makers
    - Family heads
    - Juju representatives...

+

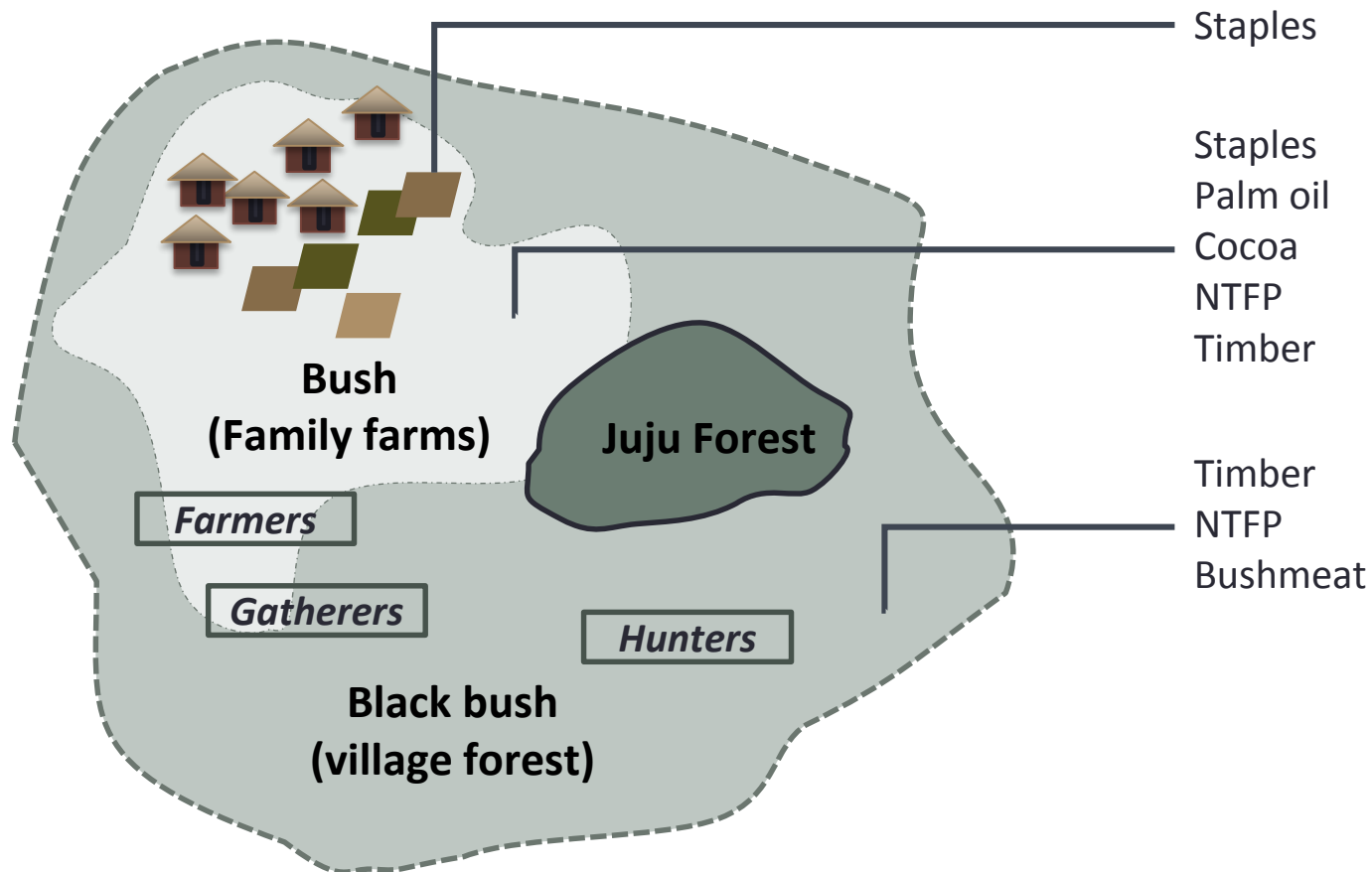
Savings groups  
Youth associations  
Common Initiative  
Groups

...

# Familial systems (2)

## Land statuses

- A shared land organization





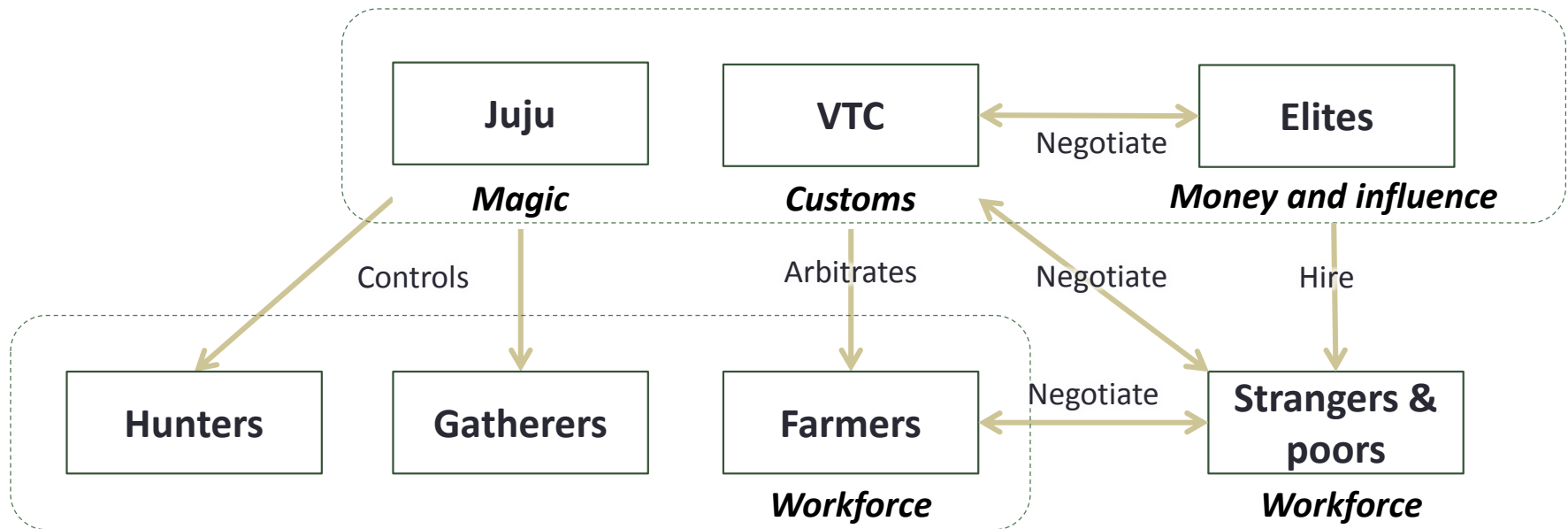
# Family systems (3)

## Access to the land

	Family farms	Village forest
<i>Land acquisition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inheritance</li> <li>• VTC attribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Axe right (submitted to VTC's decision)</li> </ul>
<i>Cultivation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own familial lands</li> <li>• Two-party agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<i>NTFP collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own familial lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common use rights</li> <li>• VTC allowances for strangers</li> </ul>
<i>Timber collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own familial lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted to VTC's decision</li> </ul>
<i>Hunting/trapping</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own familial lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common use rights</li> <li>• VTC allowances for strangers</li> </ul>

# Family systems (4)

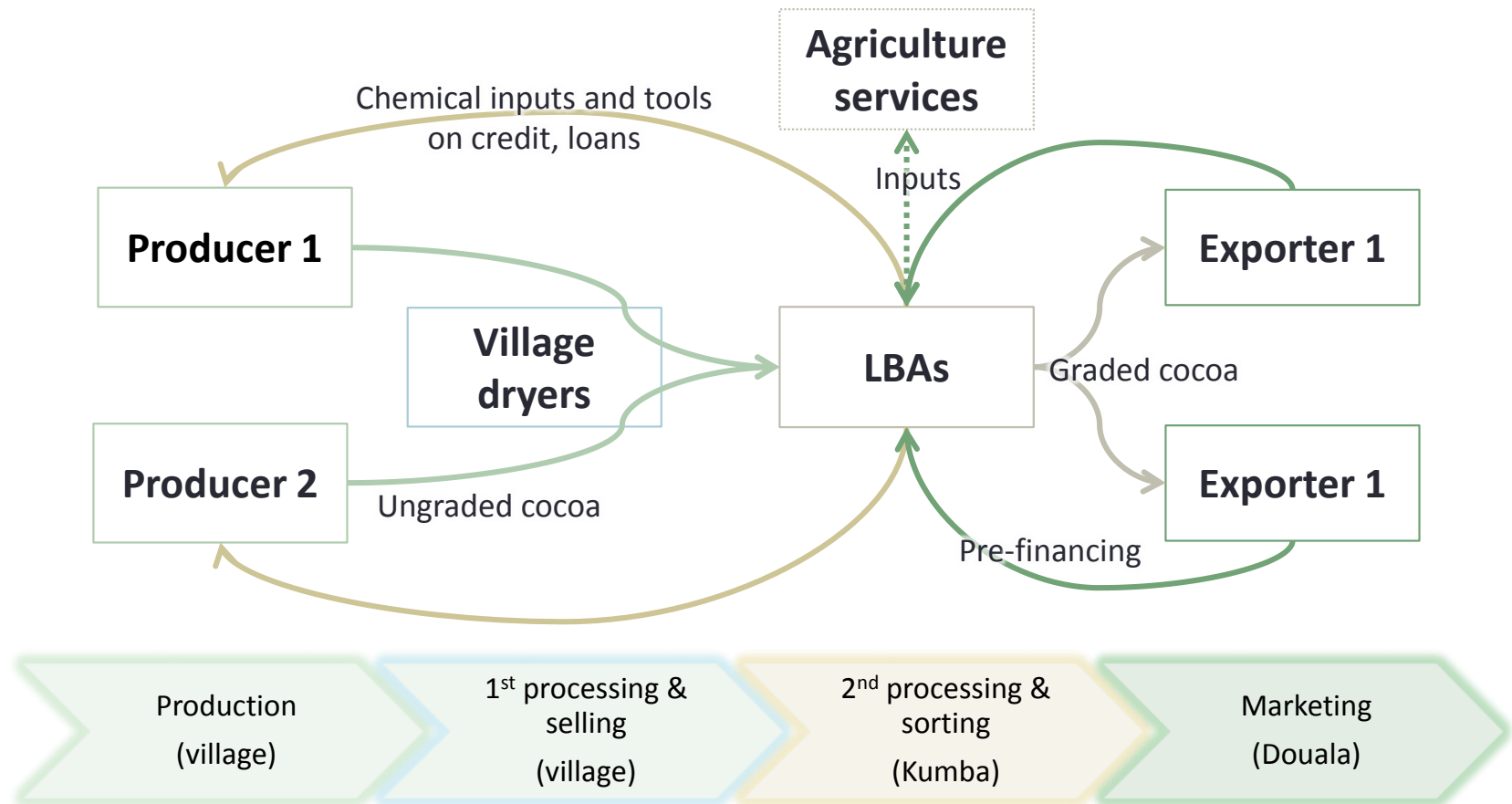
## Access to the land



# Family systems (5)

## Problems, consequences

- Marketing issues: the example of cocoa



# Family systems (6)

## Problems, consequences

- **LBAs are the only ones able to solve daily problems:**
  - Irregular incomes
  - Cost and availability of agricultural inputs
  - Access difficulties
- **Institutions lack to tackle collective issues:**
  - No MFI or funding structure
  - Little to no cooperative action
  - No State assistance
  - Little to no professional representation
- **These lacks disqualifies the production of high quality cocoa:**
  - Bad conservation and storage facilities
  - No premium paid by LBAs

## 2 observed strategies:

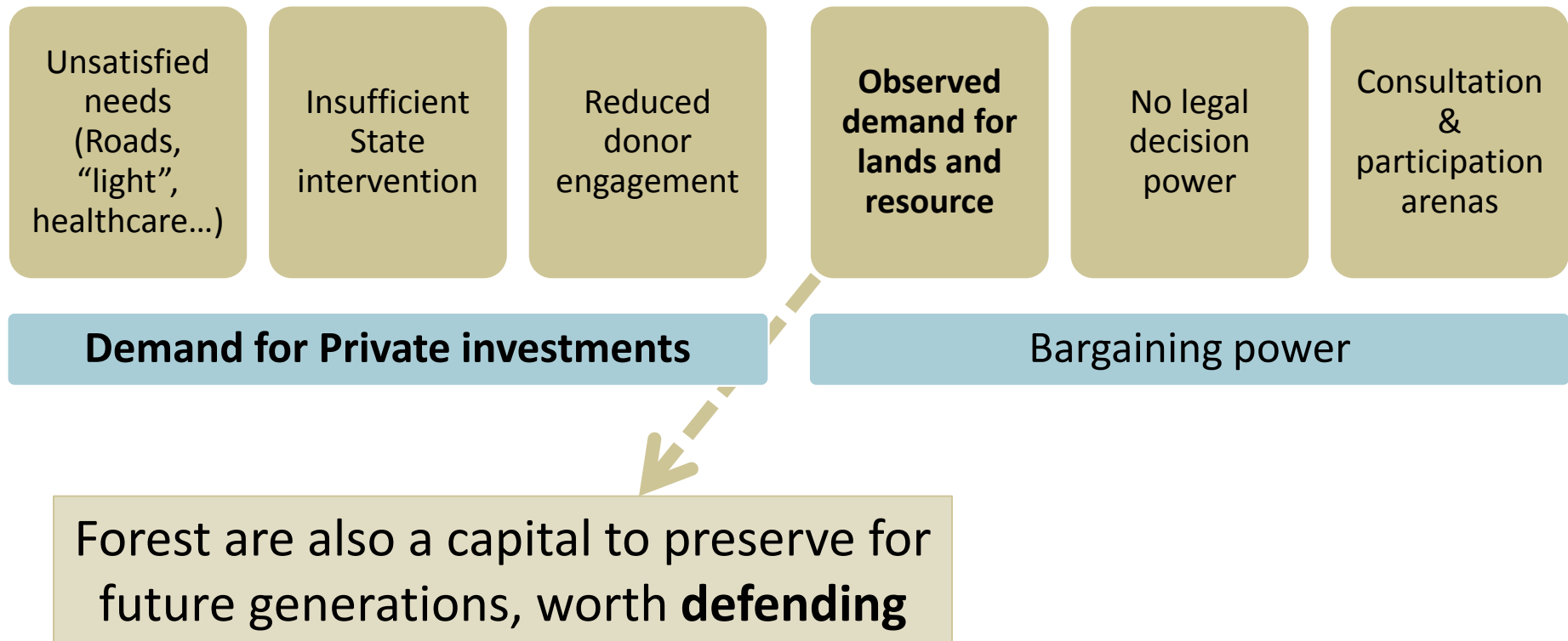
- Expand cocoa farms to increase production (Ayong)
- Diversify productions (Toko)

*Cocoa prices and market accessibility may be discriminant factors*

# Family systems (7)

## Problems, consequences

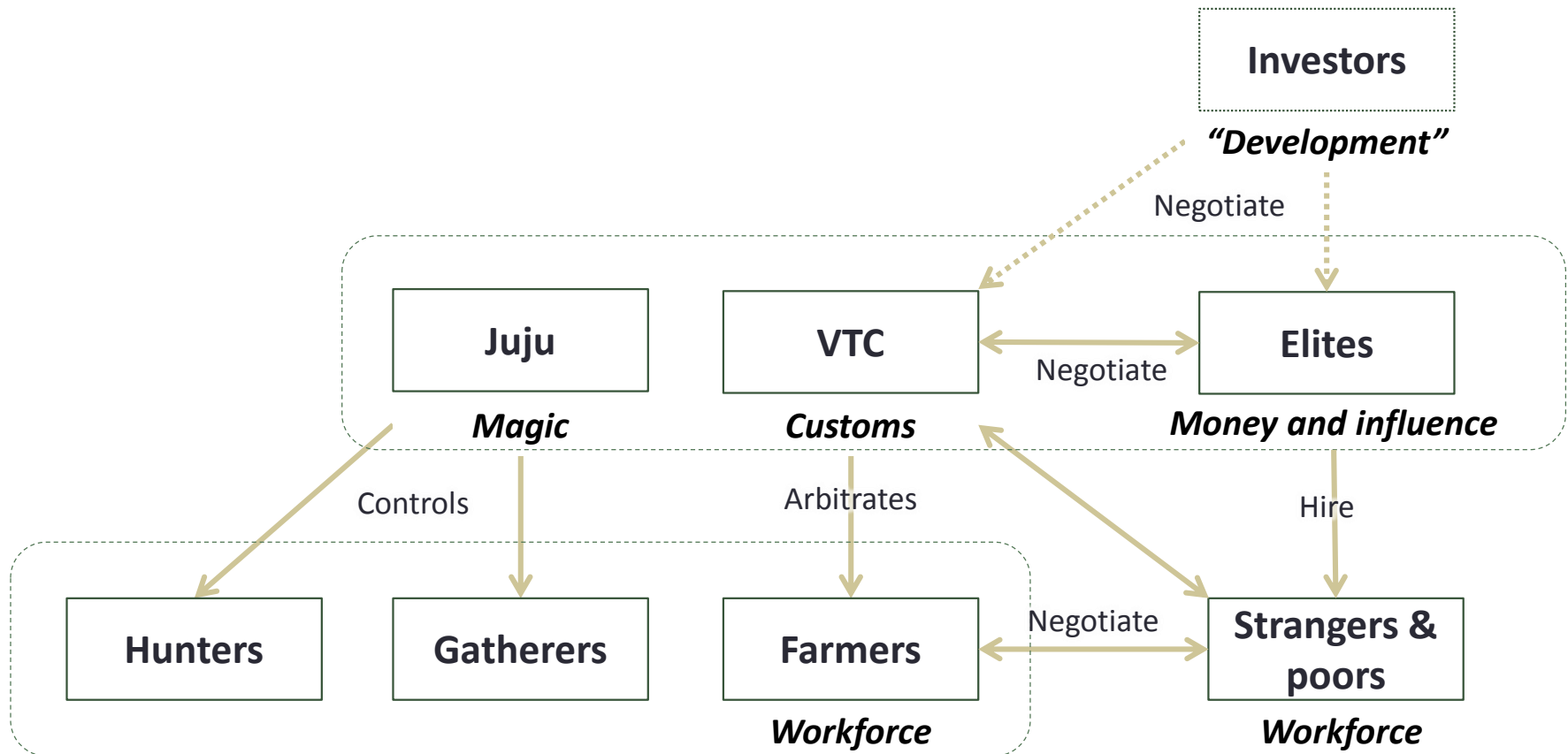
Forests as a bargaining chip for collective investments?





# Family systems (8)

## Access to the land - extended



# Industrial oil palm development (1)

## Background

- Cultural importance of oil palm, native from the Gulf of Guinea
- A 50,000 tons production deficit, in Cameroon
- Strong development policies in the past, resulting in a ramified value chain
  - Village plantations, traditional processing: 0.8 to 0.9 CPO t/ha
  - **Industrial and 'supervised' plantations: <3.5 CPO t/ha**
- Room for improvement:
  - Genetic material
  - Fertilization
  - Rejuvenation
- Political willingness to develop and favor private investments
- A history of social conflicts

# Industrial oil palm development (2)

## Obligations

### Legal framework

- Lease of national lands
  - No property transfer, only usufruct
  - > 50 ha, the President's signature is required
  - Land consultative board ensure community participation
- Environmental law
  - ESIA publication required before effective implantation
  - Any CSO can start a legal action in case of violation

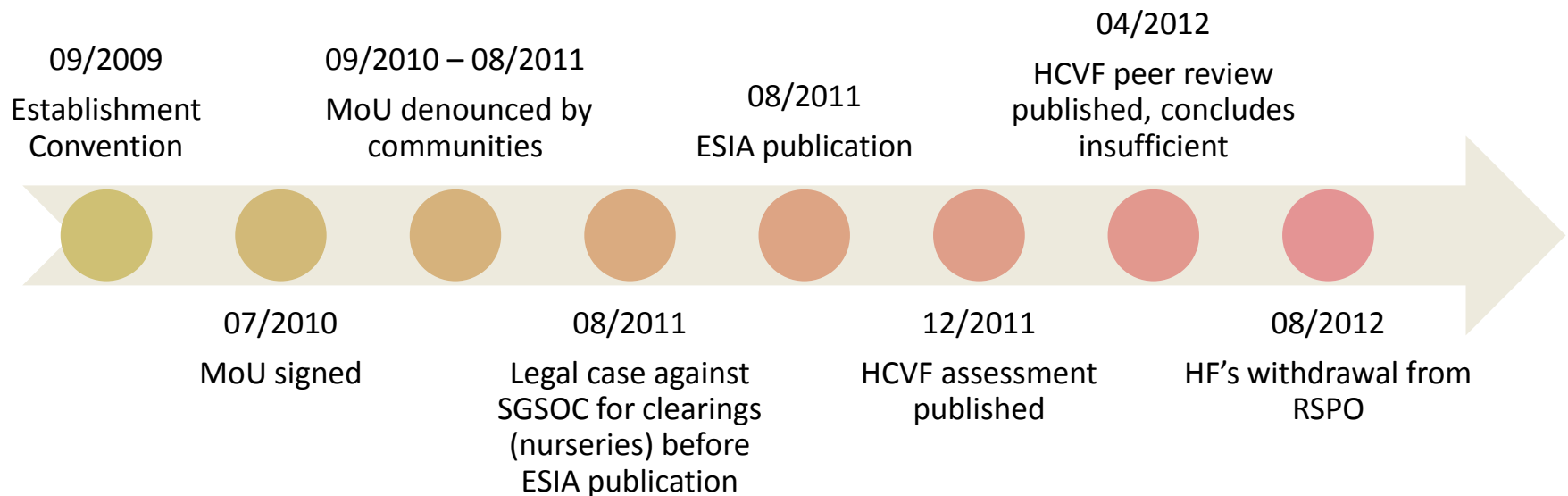
### RSPO P&Cs

- HC VF cartography and protection
- Preservation of ecosystem services and “primary forests”
- FPIC and compensation procedures



# Industrial oil palm development (3)

## SGSOC's actual situation

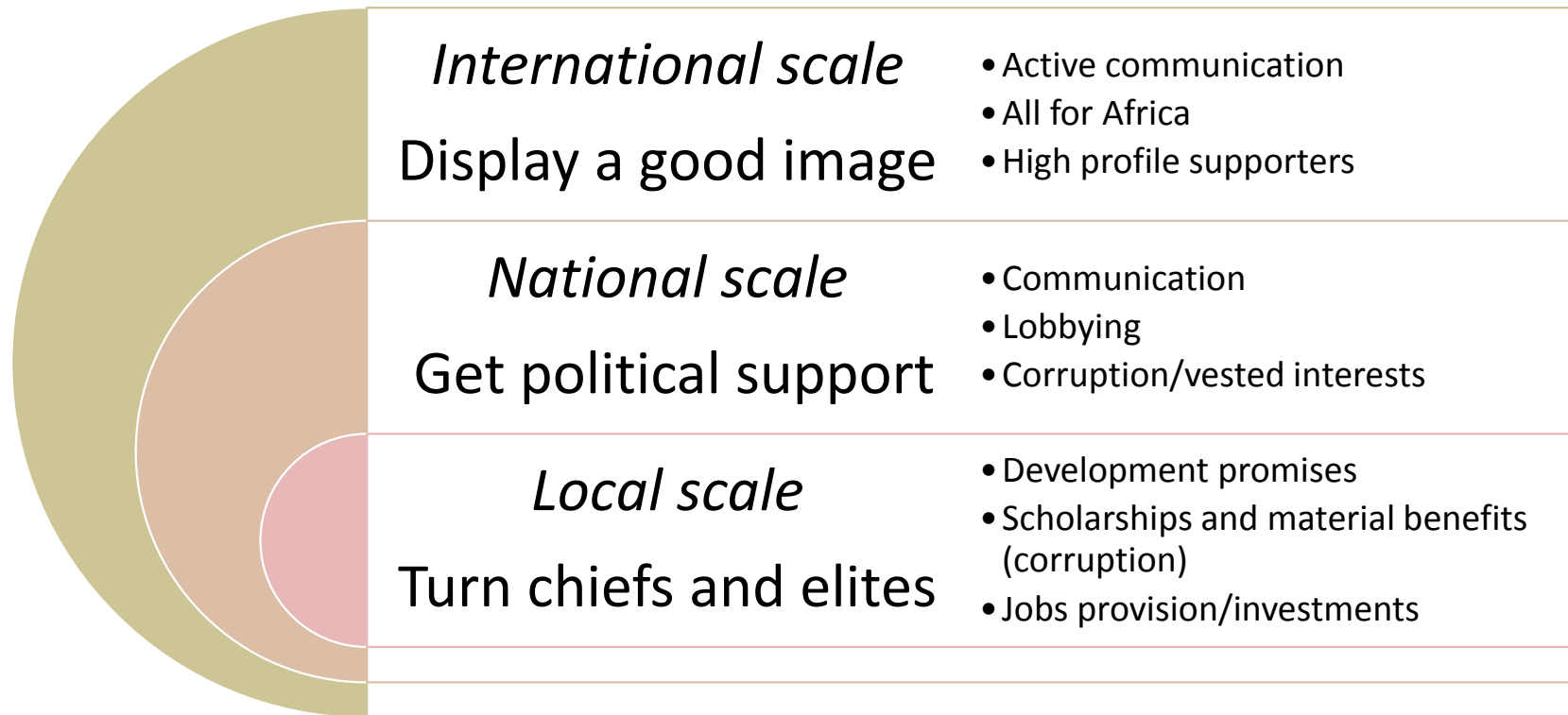


- No presidential signature
  - Sensible political context
  - Sensible area
- Sustainability not acknowledged externally
- Local acceptance not ensured

Three strategic axes for  
Herakles Farms

# Industrial oil palm development (4)

## SGSOC's resources and strategies



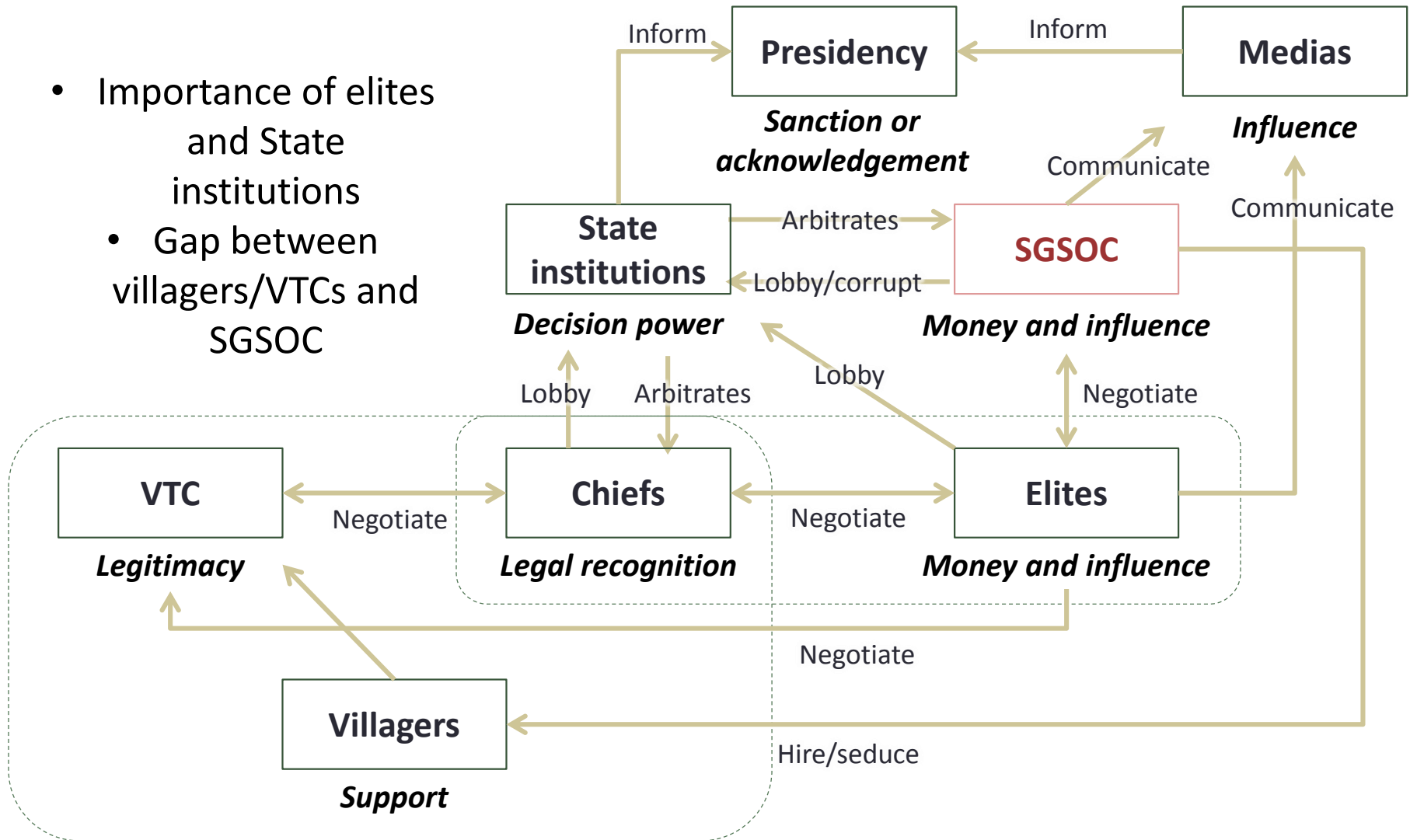
+ Opposition crackdown at all levels: intimidation, beatings...



# Industrial oil palm development (5)

## Access to the land

- Importance of elites and State institutions
- Gap between villagers/VTCs and SGSOC



# Actual management analysis

## Conclusion

- Two concurrent models in a same landscape
  - Different purposes: shareholders rewarding vs. household consumption
  - Diversified and extensive vs. intensive monoculture
  - Both impacting the environment, but one preferred in this study
  - Obey to different sets of rules, and call on different actors
  - Familial systems legally disadvantaged
- Convergences in an informal framework
  - Weak law enforcement or legal recognition
  - Land insecurity
  - Need for local support meets needs for investments
- Elites act as intermediaries

# Intentional management analysis

## Identify actors and initiatives

That **counter impacting processes**

That **meet needs** expressed locally

That result in **positive environmental outcomes**

### A contestation movement

- Specific expectations and visions
  - Strategic relays

### Development initiatives

- Economic solutions
- Environmental specifications

# The contestation movement (1)

## Two distinct local networks

### A strong opposition in Mundemba and Toko

- Spearhead: SEFE
  - Legal activism
  - Sensitization
  - Protest, NVDA
- Cultural Development Associations (Ngolo, Bima, Batanga)
  - A common position to oppose SGSOC

### A more diffuse activism in Nguti subdivision

- Nature Cameroon as a focal point
  - Think Tank animation
  - Sensitization
- A will to negotiate in Balong groups
- A strong Bassossi opposition

# The contestation movement (2)

## Visions for the future

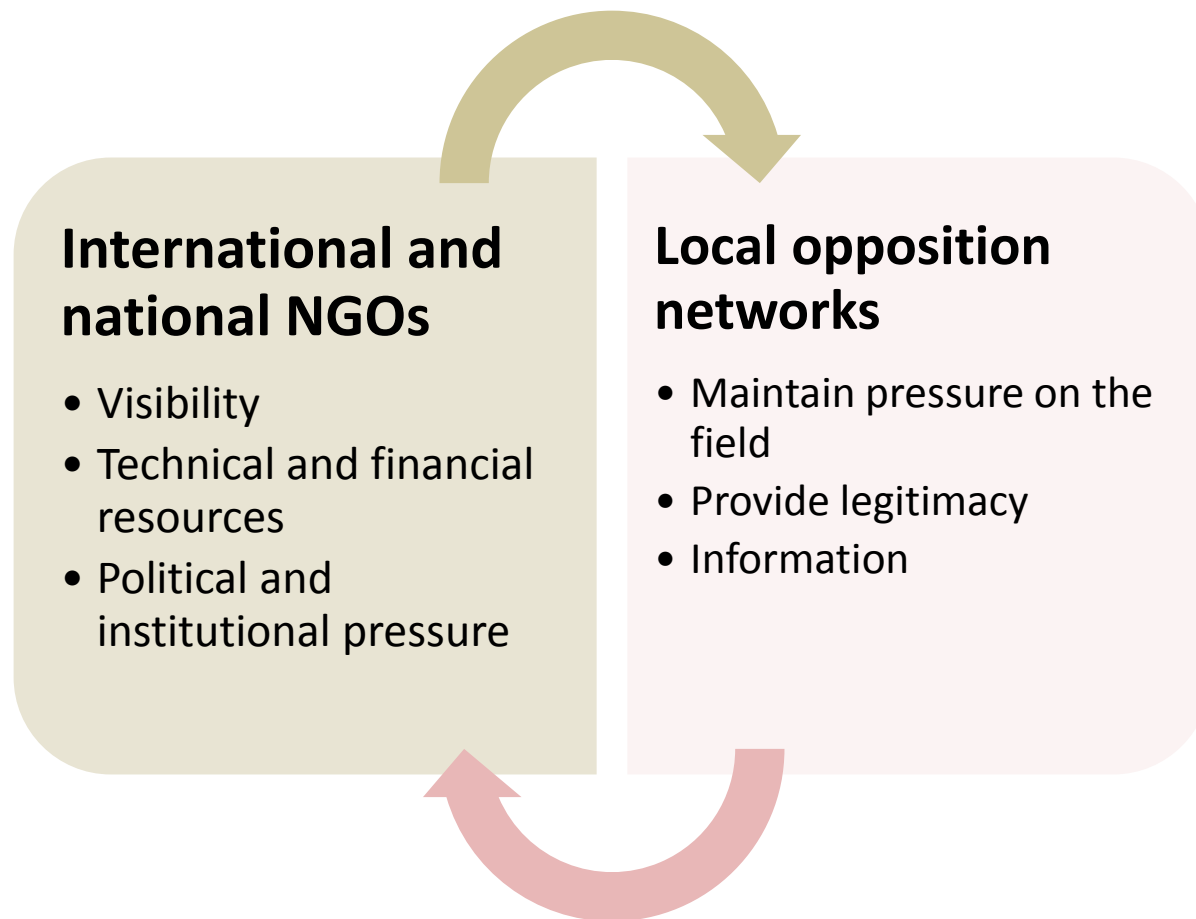
- A common position: **saving lands**
  - Widespread feeling of deprivation
  - Importance of “economic trees”
  - Keeping lands for the young
- Heterogeneous solutions:
  - Agriculture intensification (SEFE)
  - Community forestry/ecotourism (UBACUDA)
  - Agroforestry optimization (Nature Cameroon)
  - Smallholder palm oil development



# The contestation movement (3)

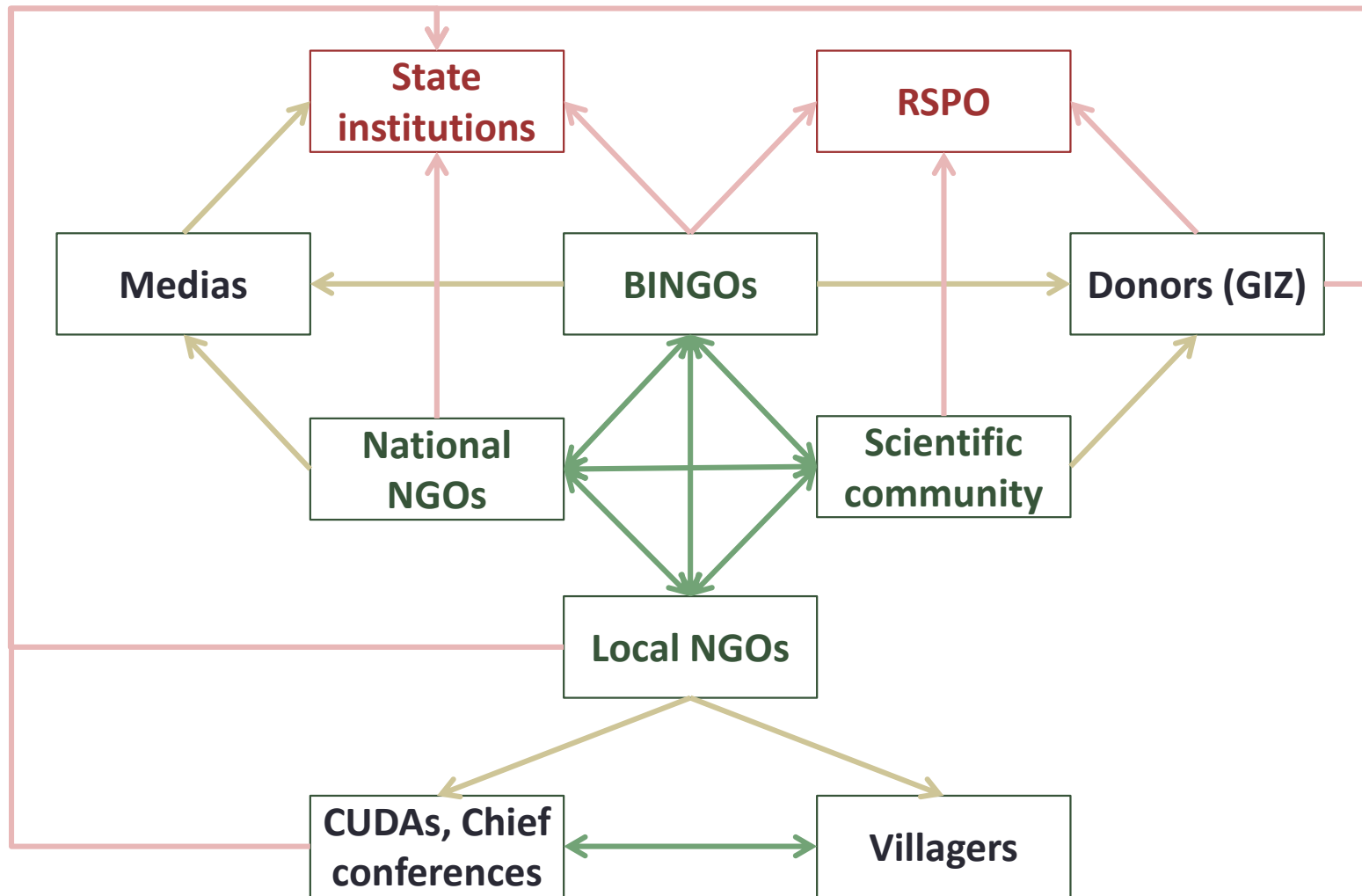
## Strategic relays

Reciprocal exchanges



# The contestation movement (4)

## Strategic relays



# The contestation movement (5)

## Summary

- A strong alliance system
  - Efficient information sharing in the core system
  - Multiple relays to reach decision makers
- A communication gap?
  - Little communication between Nguti and Mundemba/Toko subdivisions
- Unclear visions for future developments



Explore existing  
development initiatives

# Development initiatives (1)

## Overview

- Reduced donor engagement, after the end of the Korup project
- Remaining activities are mostly taken over by GIZ:
  - **SMNRP-SWR** with WWF and WCS on protected areas edges
    - Conservation/development projects
    - Oriented towards park acceptance
    - Two main axes:
      - Income generating activities for Community Based Organizations
      - Village development plans & land-use planning
  - Pro-PSFE with local councils (Mundemba, Nguti)
    - Institutional support for council forest creation
    - Includes NTFP and hunting besides timber collection
    - Conservation objectives
- AFD is also present with ACEFA
  - Support to CIG to finance devices acquisition (oil palm mills)

# Development initiatives (2)

## SMNRP-SWR



### Raises hopes

- VDP and PLUP could control agricultural extension
- Technical support and facilities for IGAs, incl. cocoa, NTFP, food crops, oil palm, timber...
- Little infrastructure development (motorcycle roads)
- Institutional legitimacy

### Limits remain:

- Limited geographic extent
- Doesn't tackle marketing issues
- Funds are processed through cooperatives

# Development initiatives (3)

## Pro-PSFE



### Raises hopes

- Allowed sparing Mundemba and Nguti councils forest projects
- Well inserted in the institutional context
- Provides long term planning and conservation management
- Could empower Councils for infrastructure development

### Limits remain:

- Structural limits of Cameroonian bureaucracy
- Centralized in Councils
- Technical financial and management lacks in councils administrations



# Development initiatives (4)

## ACEFA



### Raises hopes

- Might provide funding for improved processing hence a better quality production

### Limits remain:

- Doesn't address marketing issues
- Based on cooperative action
- Participative project selection process not likely to allow focusing on a target area

# Development initiatives (5)

## Private actors: Certispec



### Raises hopes

- Bypass LBAs
- Rewards quality
- Provide facilities
- Financed by the final buyer

### Limits remain:

- Cannot meet all investment and technical assistance needs
- No impact on LU planning
- Works with cooperatives

# Development initiatives (6)

## Summary

- Good technical solutions for sustainable production and land use management
- Well inserted in institutional networks
- But limited by:
  - Geographical extend/funding
  - Structural governance problems
  - Focus on cooperatives & CBOs
  - **No action on marketing issues**

# Intentional management analysis

## Conclusion

- A powerful contestation movement
  - Efficient strategic alliances
  - Efficient relays from the field to the international level
  - Victories...
- But little solutions to propose
  - No clearly expressed collective vision for future
  - Segmented development initiatives
  - Blind spots
    - Individual access to finance
    - Marketing issues



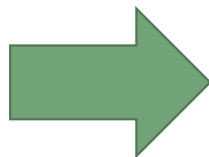
# DISCUSSION





# The state of play in December 2012

- Winning opposition at international scale
  - Greenpeace and allies have taken the Google battlefield
  - Herakles lost RSPO's support... and constraints
- Contestation is well implanted on the national stage
  - Efficient communication and advocacy network
  - But tense political context and vested interests
- Local activism could be a key
  - Maintain pressure on Yaoundé
  - Delegitimize “turned” elites



Enhance communication  
**Meet populations needs**  
Ensure environmental sustainability



# If it was only a matter of income...

- Familial systems are more profitable than salaried work in oil palm industries
  - But not mutually exclusive
  - **Important room for improvement** (marketing)
  - Strong doubts on the **long-term sustainability**
- But agro-industries are currently the only ones to propose collective investments

2 axes to look for solutions:

- Agroforestry sustainability and profitability
- Collective investments

# Enhancing cocoa profitability and sustainability

- Present actors might have a synergetic action, p. ex. on cocoa systems

What is possible?	How?	Action	Effect	External actors
<b>Increase quality</b>	Selection of pods Fermentation practices Drying methods	T.A. Inv. + T.A. Inv. + T.A	Raise price	SMNRP – IITA/ICRAF
<b>Increase quantity</b>	Better planting material Pest management	Inv. T.A.	Raise volume	SMNRP – IITA/ICRAF
<b>Save on chemicals</b>	ICPM	T.A.	Raise margin	SMNRP – IITA/ICRAF
<b>Let concurrence play</b>	Storage & conservation	Inv.	Raise price	Certispec, ACEFA
<b>Bypass LBAs</b>	Direct transport to Duala	Inv.	Raise margin	Certispec, ACEFA
<b>Get a premium</b>	Certification	Inv.	Raise price	Certispec

+ PLUP and VDP by SMNRP, local NGO action with VTCs...

# The question of collective investments

- Remains the main problem here
  - Normally the **prerogative of the State**, but dubious political will
  - Donor's influence has been proved limited
  - Might be the tipping point for local acceptance of agro-industries
- Hopes with council capacity building - ProPSFE project

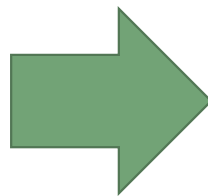
# CONCLUSION



# What can Greenpeace do?

- “Solutions” = familial systems?
  - Uncertain sustainability
  - Insufficient for development

-> **Not yet**
- Most needed actors are already present, improvement could be possible, but lack of coordination
- The opposition campaign has created a political window
- Rural development is out of GP’s mandate and competencies, but lobbying isn’t



Work with partners on concrete solutions  
Go on with advocacy to maintain political pressure

# What would it mean?

Taking a “social” position on African development issues...

- Coherent with current trends (this campaign, ocean campaigns in Senegal and Europe)
- Could help fostering GP's implantation in African countries

BUT

- Internal constraints (negotiations with Asian groups)
- Complex message elaboration:
  - Calling for road construction?
  - Role of elites?
  - ...



# THANK YOU.

