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LANDSCAPE PROFILE

Northern Maroua

Restoring Cameroon's Far North

With local communities in the lead, the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, the Ministry of the Environment, World Resources Institute (WRI), the GIZ Forest and Environment Project and Eco-Consult/DFS are working to improve this dry and degraded landscape.

Why restore the landscape?

- Farmers struggle to grow the food and cash crops that their families need to survive in the increasingly dry landscape North of Maroua. 80% of young people choose to migrate to the South for seasonal work, as their parents no longer have fertile land to offer them.
- Local people face many challenges: inconsistent rainfall, declining crop yields, rising temperatures, and land degradation. An increasing population and conflict-driven migration in the Lake Chad region are increasing pressure on the land.
- Few trees dot the landscape, chopped down for woodfuel and to clear way for more farmland and pasture. But every time a tree is cut down, less water is available, crop yields decline, and climate change accelerates.

What does success look like?

- **Water:**
 - » Growing trees along riverbanks holds the soil in place, keeping it from washing away during the rainy season.
 - » Growing trees along farms and on hills stops erosion by increasing the amount of water and nutrients in the soil.
 - » Restoring land can stop the spread of the desert and helps to regulate rainfall patterns, which climate change is disrupting in most of the Sahel.

- **Energy:**

- » Planting woodlots of fast-growing trees can lighten the demand on the tree supply, reducing deforestation and improving lives.
- » Encouraging farmers to selectively harvest branches and sticks from trees, instead of chopping them down, ensures that these critical resources will be preserved for decades.
- » When farmers adopt clean cookstoves, in support of the landscape's woodfuel strategy, demand for firewood can be cut by 40%.

- **Livelihoods:**

- » When land is restored, farmers not only protect the land under cultivation from degradation, they also increase their yields.
- » In the village of Mogazang, communities have established nurseries stocked with trees like neem, a valuable source of revenue for communities that produces an oil widely used in cosmetics and natural pesticides.
- » Restoring land can create an alternative to migration for young people and bring social stability to a region struggling with violence.

KEY STATS

- **8 million hectares:** The amount of arid land Cameroon plans to restore in the country's Grand North, equal to half of the region's land mass
- **84% of the 4 million** people in the Far North are farmers and herders
- **\$30 of potential benefits** for every \$1 invested in restoration globally

What have we accomplished together?

- Communities have told GIZ and WRI that they wanted to: control erosion and regulate water flows, reforest steep areas, start using improved cookstoves, and help farmers and herders more effectively share the land.
- By mapping how people use the land in Northern Maroua and selecting priority areas for restoration with local communities, WRI and GIZ are identifying where revitalizing the land could most benefit people.
- GIZ and WRI are bringing together local champions, traditional leaders, radio stations, and young people to communicate about the benefits of forest and landscape restoration and the latest techniques.

- A management committee for the landscape has been created to best connect community requests with local and international partners.

What comes next?

- **In the short term:** Local people will benefit from erosion control, bush fire management and greening activities in the landscape. The municipalities of Méri and Maroua 2 will benefit from a common watershed management plan. WRI and GIZ-EcoConsult will produce maps that guide restoration efforts.
- **In the medium term:** Farmers and herders throughout the landscapes will rehabilitate their land and access new sources of financing. Decisionmakers from the municipalities of Meri and Maroua 2 will help develop comprehensive policies and programs to accelerate restoration.
- **In the long term:** The project will support the Cameroonian government to fight land degradation, climate change, and poverty, while achieving their AFR100 and national targets.

