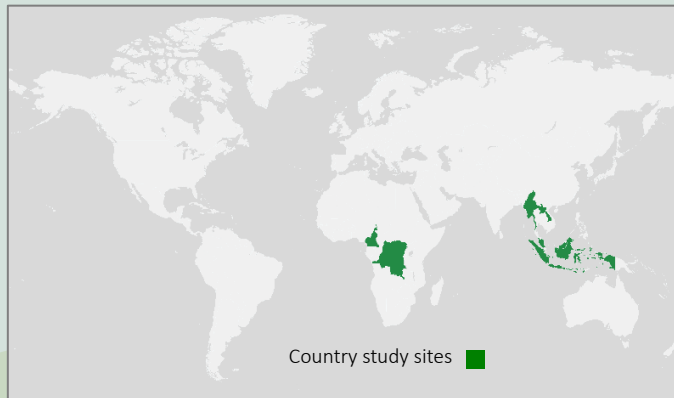




Country partners and project collaborators at the FairFrontiers annual meeting in RIHN, Kyoto, January 2023

For more information, visit our website at:  
<http://www.fairfrontiers.sakura.ne.jp/home/>



## FairFrontiers Team

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### Researchers

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### Research Associates

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## Research Collaborators

- CIFOR-ICRAF
- Stockholm University
- Hong Kong Baptist University
- University of Copenhagen
- Kyoto University
- University of Helsinki
- Kyoto University of Advanced Science
- University of Kinshasa
- University of Pretoria

## Partners in the study regions

### Cameroon

- Green Development Advocates

### DR Congo

- Center for Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Research for Sustainable Development in Southern and Central Africa (CERIDAC)
- Forgotten Parks Foundation
- University of Lubumbashi

### Indonesia

- Universitas Hasanuddin

### Lao PDR

- National University of Laos

### Malaysia

- Borneo Institute for Indigenous Studies
- PACOS Trust
- Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
- Universiti Malaya



# FairFrontiers

An inter- and transdisciplinary research project examining transformations in tropical forest-agriculture frontiers in Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Malaysia; with a focus on equity.



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**Humanity and Nature**  
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## Background and Research Questions

Throughout the tropics, forest-agriculture frontiers dominated by diverse swidden and smallholder farming mosaics are being converted to homogenous landscapes of commodity agriculture, or cleared for mining or infrastructure.

Despite being labelled as “development”, the benefits from these changing landscapes are often reaped by local elites and external investors in frontier transformations, reflecting the underlying histories, politics, institutions and power structures around forests and land-use.

FairFrontiers applies a comparative research design and inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to ask:

*Whose interests drive transformations of forest-agriculture frontiers, who benefits and who are made precarious?*

*How are wellbeing and ecosystem services changing in frontiers?*

*What are the factors enabling or hindering equitable and sustainable outcomes?*

*What are possible policy options?*

*Whose visions of sustainability is heard?*

## Frontier changes in Campo Ma’an, Cameroon

We conducted field surveys in the Campo Ma’an frontier of Southwest Cameroon where there have been drastic landscape changes from various large-scale agro-industrial concessions and a national park. Most of these projects emerged without consultation with nor compensation for local people who have been displaced or impacted (Greenpeace Africa & Green Development Advocates, 2021).

Field work was carried out by FairFrontiers partner GDA and Cameroonian graduate student interns from July 2022 - March 2023. The students used the portfolio of mixed methods developed by the project to capture both material and non-material wellbeing and ecosystem services.



*Student intern interviewing fishermen at a village*



*Participatory methods were used to document changes in land use and understand how this has impacted their lives*

In addition, a media-based discourse analysis highlighted the high level of polarisation between different actors on whether the new 60,000 ha oil palm plantation will bring economic development and local benefits, and a high level of scepticism on the legality of the process. Despite the debates, land continues to be cleared for the plantation. This case demonstrates how land use changes that forcefully creates trade-offs of ecosystem services can disproportionately affect certain communities.

Greenpeace Africa & Green Development Advocates. (2021). *Camvert: A recurring nightmare*. <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-africa-stateless/2021/12/170efdc4-english-version3.pdf>

Findings from this study demonstrate that restrictions to forest lands have major negative implications for the communities’ well-being. Forests were perceived to provide diverse bundles of ecosystem services and play an integral role for supporting their livelihoods. In particular, indigenous groups perceive forests as part of their identity and culture, where they practice hunting and gathering as well as important spiritual ceremonies. The loss of access to forests has altered the people’s relationship with the forest, and the loss of large contiguous forest areas combined with restrictions of hunting by the National Park have led to persistent human-wildlife conflicts.



*Palm oil fruits from large-scale plantations in Campo Ma’an being transported for processing*