

This study is part of the project "Consolidation of peace in the north-eastern border area of Côte d'Ivoire through participatory and planned management of natural resources" (GPRN) financed by the United Nations Secretariat Peacebuilding Fund and jointly implemented by IOM, FAO and UNEP.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is mixed (qualitative and quantitative) and was based on three useful research tools

- Exploratory interviews with 35 key informants;
- Focus group facilitation with 156 participants;
- Administration of individual questionnaires to 65 people (62% men and 38% women)



## OBJECTIVE

The GPRN project aims to reduce community conflicts related to competition between different groups - including indigenous and migrant communities - for the exploitation and control of land and natural resources in the north-east of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the Bounkani and Gontougo regions.

In order to achieve Result 1 "Inter-community tensions around the management and sharing of natural resources have decreased in the target communities" a baseline study was conducted in the six (6) target localities (Panzarani, Niendege, Louomidouo, Tagadi, Debango, Songori), with the aim of collecting data on inter-community tensions around the management and sharing of natural resources and on conflict management mechanisms in order to establish a baseline that will allow monitoring of project indicators and measure changes brought about by the project activities.



## INTERCOMMUNITY TENSIONS

Most interviewees (94%) said that they were **aware of conflicts related to natural resources**. The majority of conflicts relate to **access to fertile land (54%)**, **lack of grazing land (22%)** and **water scarcity (14%)**.

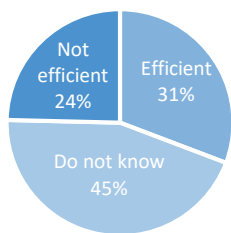
The focus groups revealed the existence of tensions between herders and farmers on the one hand and between communities on the other. Of the respondents, 66% said that such violence occurs every year, with a peak during the dry season between December and March. Discussions showed that the most common forms of violence are fighting, threats, trapping and poisoning of livestock. The consultations also revealed that **land conflicts over land ownership are the root cause of conflicts between herders and farmers**. The Lobi, because of the proximity of the Fulani to the Koulango land chiefs, but also because of their acephalous society, prefer to take justice into their own hands in case of conflict.

The poor management of agricultural areas, the occupation of transhumance corridors, and the watering of livestock in the water consumed by the population have been identified as the main sources of tension between herders and farmers. Despite the fact that these conflicts have become commonplace due to their recurrence, they give rise to **general concern** among all the actors concerned, who are unanimous in their view that the tensions **affect social cohesion**. Another conflict over natural resources is that between mining companies and local communities, who complain that they do not benefit from the economic spin-offs of mineral exploitation in the area, especially in *Songori*.

As for the **perception of the level of trust of the communities towards the local authorities regarding the management of conflicts related to natural resources**, there is a general **dissatisfaction** due to the corruption of the authorities, the laxity of the committees, the personal interests, the biases and the costly regulations. The communities accuse the political and administrative actors of a lack of will to find sustainable solutions to this problem because of hidden economic and political interests.

## STRUCTURES FOR PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

It is notable that only *Niendegue* has a participatory natural resource management structure. Moreover, the land management committees regulate cultivation and collection periods, but are little known.



The structures for resolving conflicts over natural resources are **village committees for amicable settlement** set up by sub-prefectural decree. All the villages have amicable settlement committees, but only 48% of the people surveyed were aware of the existence of these structures, which were considered effective by only 45% of respondents. For their part, the out-of-court settlement committees explain their lack of effectiveness by a lack of operational and financial resources

Although all committees claim to be representative of all communities, the discussions highlighted the lack of involvement and inclusiveness. **Women are not represented in any of the amicable resolution committees.** The reasons given were customs, lack of legitimacy and competence (depending on the committee) and lack of interest by the women themselves.

Concerning the **collaboration of the border authorities of the three countries** (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Ghana) on common security issues related to the management of natural resources in the border area, all the actors interviewed indicated the **lack of open collaboration and common strategies**. They also deplore the uncontrolled and uncontrolled flows of cross-border transhumant herders, which take the form of natural borders instead of the planned entry points.

In general, the administrative authorities and technical services are unanimous in recognising the lack of knowledge of the regulatory frameworks related to land tenure and transhumance by most of the actors concerned. As far as gold panning is concerned, there is a regulatory framework that communities circumvent because of the high price of permits and the slowness of obtaining them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote dialogue within communities and with local authorities on natural resource management issues;
- Strengthen existing mechanisms for managing natural resource-related conflicts by revitalising the functioning of committees;
- Develop a culture of record keeping, report writing and minutes;
- Strengthen the capacities of traditional authorities on the regulatory frameworks of land tenure and transhumance.
- Support peaceful interactions between host communities and migrants/transhumant;
- Initiate periodic meetings between farmers and herders, especially before the dry season, to establish rules;
- Encourage community leadership in the villages on issues of continuity and sustainability, using women's and youth associations as the anchor for initiatives to promote female leadership;
- Put in place formal arrangements based on the legal land tenure framework, to materialise and enforce oral/tacit agreements between land chiefs and farmers, involving the prefectural authorities as witnesses to these agreements;
- Strengthen/establish a bilateral coordination framework between the countries in terms of transhumance, by initiating periodic meetings between the border authorities and the local authorities of the 3 countries;
- Set up data collection tools.