Nitidae's approach and learnings for landscape projects in South-Eastern Côte d'Ivoire

nitidæ
filières & territoires

Nitidae in a nutshell

KEY FEATURES

- **12 administrators and 100 employees**
- **3 areas of expertise**
  - Forest and REDD +
  - Agriculture and markets
  - Bioenergy and waste
- **3 initiatives**
  - **N'kalô**: Information and advice service on agricultural markets.
  - **Nitidæ Lab'** : our scientific expertise (GIS, Remote sensing, Impact measurement)
  - **Agrovalor platform**: to develop adapted energy solutions
- **Thirty ongoing projects**
- **4 Representations in Africa**

  Burkina Faso / Ivory Coast

  Madagascar / Mozambique

A multi-sectoral mode of intervention at the landscape level …

Most of the Nitidæ's projects cover a set of complementary activities at the scale of a coherent territory from an administrative, economic and environmental point of view.

… All along the value chain...

By acting within value chains, Nitidæ seeks to diagnose sustainable productive potentials in relation to the possibilities of value addition on local and global markets.

A partnership approach and co-construction methods

Nitidæ acts systematically in partnership with actors from the North and the South, from the private and public sectors. Nitidæ notably mobilizes the private, productive (agri-food companies) or financial sector, which often has a strong impact on the dynamism of territories and must be part of sustainable development solutions.

Priority given to measuring the impact of our actions

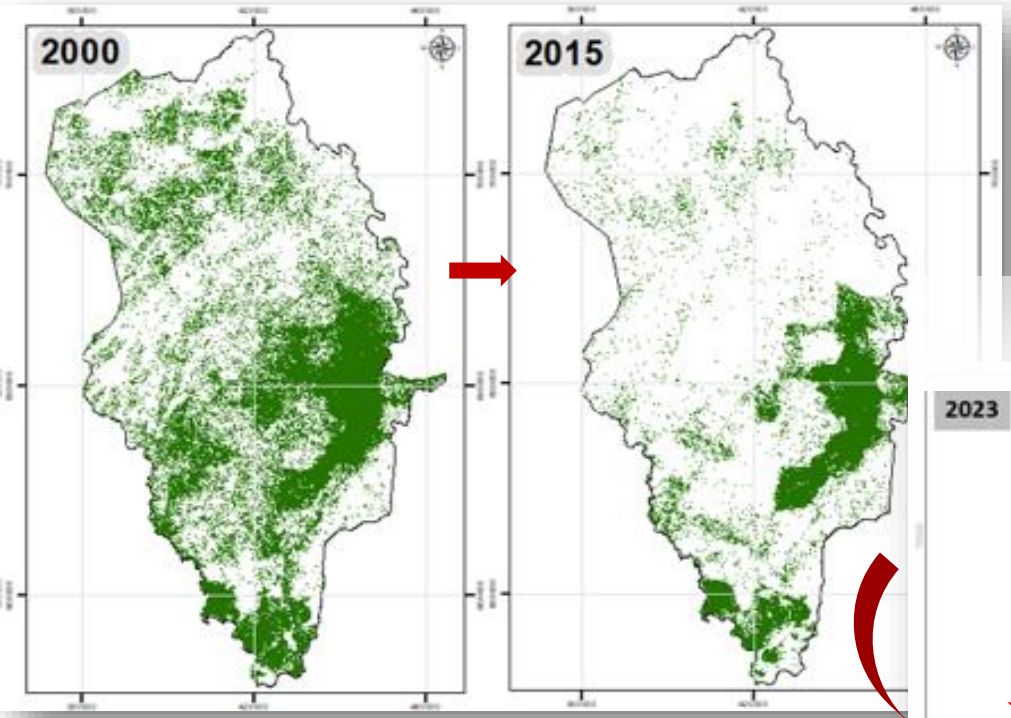
Nitidæ believes that accountability for its actions is an essential part of its mission. The impacts of all Nitidæ's actions must be measured and the results reported in a transparent manner.

An Exemple of a Landscape Project in Côte d'Ivoire

Projet REDD+ de la Mé

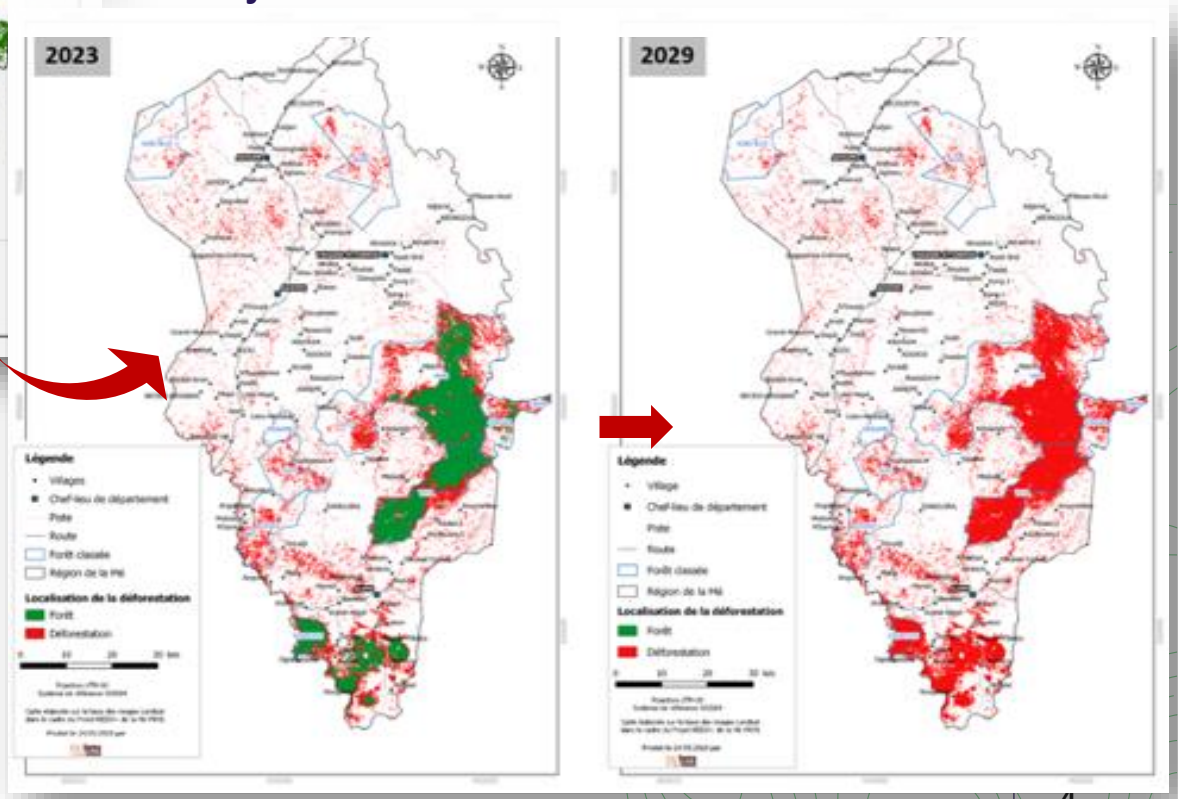
The Mé Region: a threatened forest territory

Historical deforestation



The Mé region has seen an important deforestation in the past 20 years as shown on our 2000 to 2015 comparison (like every southern region of Côte d'Ivoire)

Projected deforestation in 2023 and 2030



Main Goal of the project :

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation while improving the living conditions of people living near forests.

Proposition of activities based on deforestation factors

Direct Deforestation Factors

- **Agricultural extension (62%)**
  - Cocoa (38%)
  - Hevea (23%)
  - Palme (11%)
  - Cashew (7%)
  - staple crops, etc. (21%)
- **Forest exploitation (18%)**
  - Timber (64%)
  - Energy (36%)
- **Infrastructure extension (10%)**
- **Mining (8%)**
- **Bushfire (8%)**

« Work outside to protect inside » ➔ Conservation through development

A combination of actions between sectorial and territorial approach in accordance with the national REDD + strategy

Tackling several factors at the same time to have significant impacts on a targeted landscape

Component 1 : Territorial development

Territorial planning

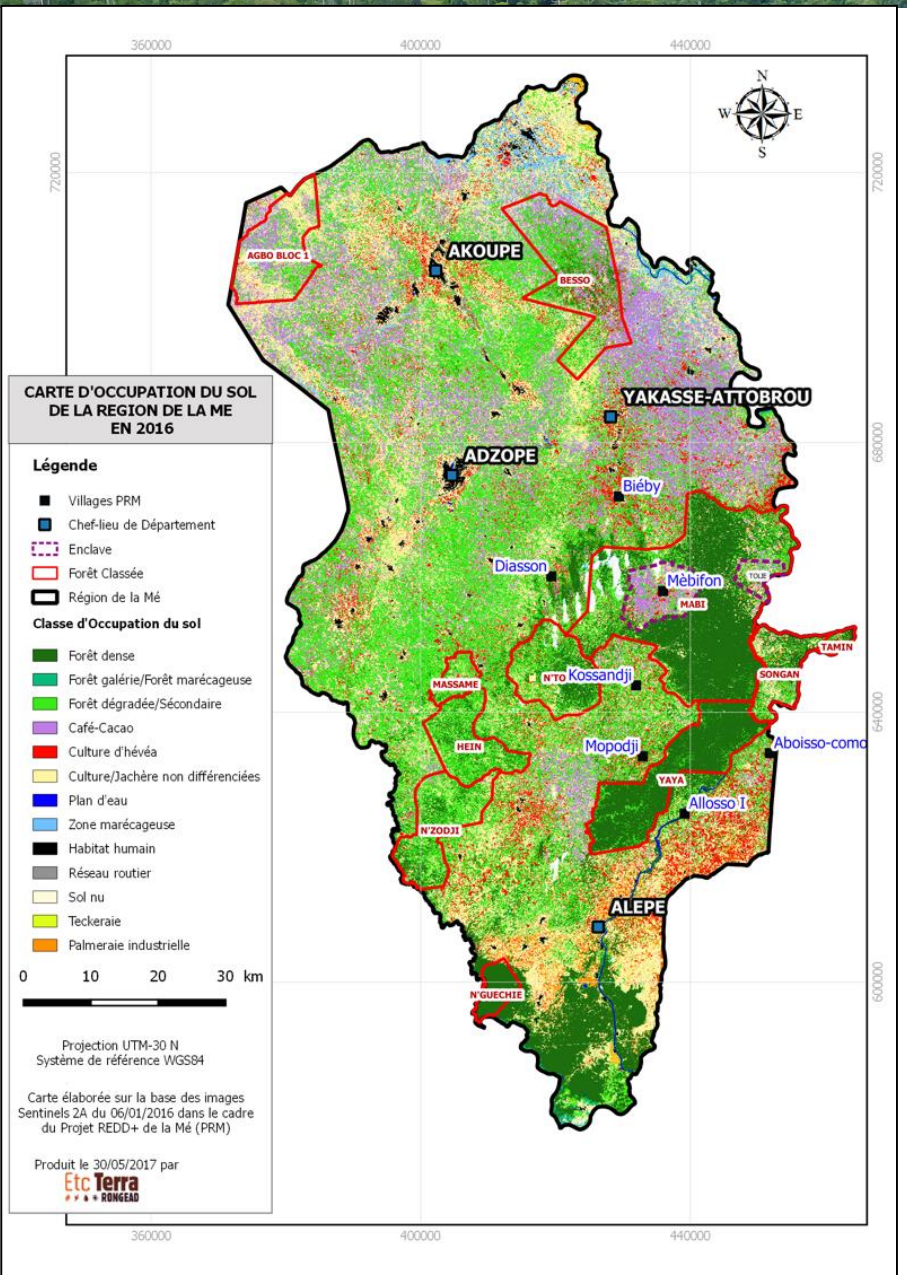
Securing land rights

Component 2 : Sectorial development

- **Zero Deforestation Agriculture**
- **Sustainable forest management and reforestation**
- **Sustainable energy and efficiency**

Component 3 :
Impact measurement and support for the national REDD+ process

Understanding land uses' dynamics to build relevant actions for sustainable agricultural development (Constraints / Opportunities)



Classic succession in the former cocoa belt

Dense forest : 120 000 ha

Cocoa 100 000 ha (mainly full sun)

Rubber : 55 000 ha

Old cocoa fields / fallows :245 000 ha

- **Identify relevant leverages for your goal**:
  1. Protect what remains to be protected (**conservation**)
  2. Integrate trees in monospecific plantations (**sustainability and diversification**)
  3. **Rehabilitate** abandoned or unproductive land
- Work at **farm scale** (not plot scale) and meet real needs and expectations from farmers (Cash crops + Food crops)
- **Rebound effect** : expect, understand, avoid

Territorial development for an enabling environment : community scale

Spread information throughout the community - Awareness-raising in all peripheral villages of Mabi-Yaya :

- Challenges linked to deforestation and climate change
- Resource management and territorial planning
- Opportunities offered by the new forestry legislation and land legislation

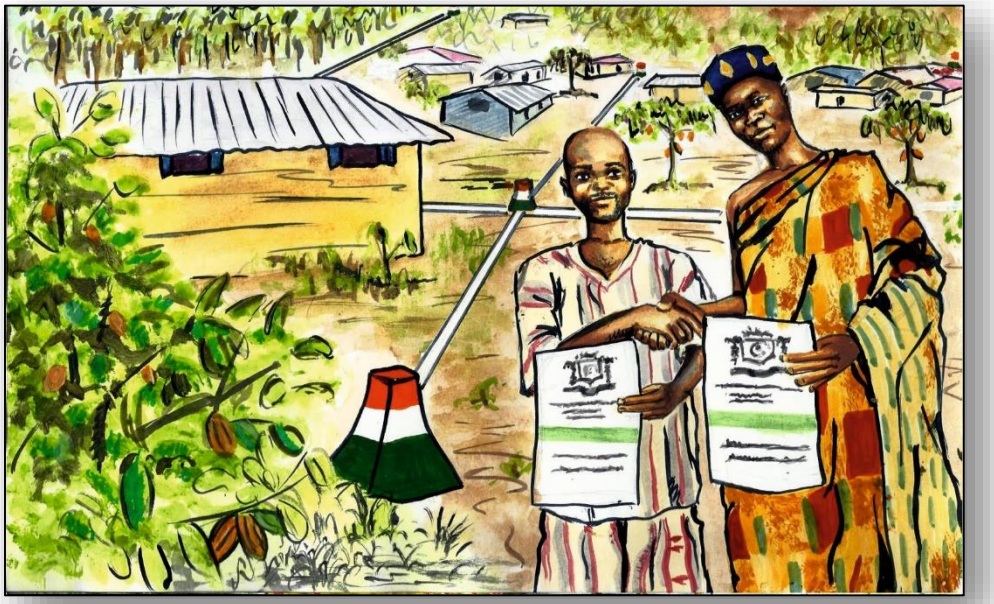
Building a common vision : by the community for the community (participatory elaboration)

- Elaboration of **Local Development Plans** (LDP) for the peripheral villages (their own territorial planning tool)
- Build trust, integrate fundamental community issues, outside (your own) agricultural interests
  ➔ **Health / Education / Infrastructure / etc…**
- Tackle environmental issues in the participatory process
- Financing of projects chosen by the villages from their own **Local Development Plans**

Territorial development for an enabling environment : land securisation

Delimitation of Village Territories:

Official recognition of village lands by the authorities. A necessary step for a good management of the resources available to the communities ➔ clarifies boundaries and possible uses of the land (are we legal?)



Issuance of land certificates (offering many opportunities) :

- **For Forested areas** : Alternative to traditional land securing by cultivating the plot (deforestation) ➔ “la terre à qui la travaille”
- **For forested areas & Agroforestry plantations :** secures **the ownership of the tree** to the farmer (avoids logging from private operator thanks to new forestry code) ➔ opportunity for tree valorization
- **For conventional fields** : facilitates **owner / operator contracts** to secure non-owner farmers’ rights

Examples of agricultural support for Zero Deforestation Agriculture

All agricultural supports undertaken after an extensive agrarian diagnosis for each village

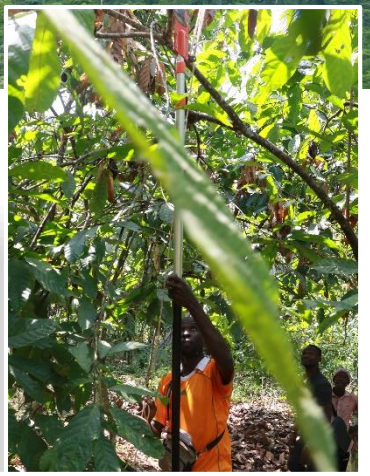
To increase the added value per hectare and the sustainability of the systems:

- Development of quality cocoa farming for niche markets (organic, Fairtrade, old varieties, fine flavor, agroforestry)
- Renewal and **rehabilitation of old cocoa plantations**
- Optimization and dissemination of sustainable agroforestry systems (dissemination of peasant and scientific knowledge)

To secure and diversify incomes:

- Diffusion of innovative associations between perennial crops and new agroforestry systems or between perennial and food crops
- Valorization as timber and wood energy now permitted by the new Forest Code (to be confirmed / currently a pilot in La Mé)
- Develop Market for non timber forest products (Cola, fruits, etc.)

Increase productivity with technical assistance for both food crops and cash crops (support farmers on their entire farm)



Develop forestry activities, and restore wood ressources

Capacity building and development of forestry in rural areas (small forest owners) ➔ develop the poorly managed wood resource in the territory with good forestry practices

Different reforestation methods :

- financed and operated directly by the project ... ⊘
- by sharing the costs and activities with the planters ... ⊘
- via the development of **innovative models with the wood industry** : reforestation operations undertaken by wood industry operators (for gmelina, cedrela, teak), with commitment to minimum purchase prices in return for land certification provided by the project

➔ **Securing investment** of the private operator, **securing income** by futures contracts.

Bioenergy and energy efficiency development

Support the performance of a maximum of operators in the Mé region on the subject of energy efficiency and bio-energies

- Equipment and capacity building of charcoal burners: via training dedicated to improved carbonization methods ➔ relying on a network of charcoal burners already able to train their peers
- Support the development of bio-energy projects with local operators/processors/associations : bio-char (from cocoa pods), bio-gaz (from cassava wastes)
- Diffusion of equipment with high energy performance in agricultural transformation : fish smokehouses and improved cook stove for attiéké processors, etc.

2 Important messages concerning Cocoa Sustainability

Deforestation issues and agroforestry are two very distinct subjects

- **Agroforestry cocoa can be grown from deforestation** ➔ Promoting agroforestry does not prove, in any way, zero deforestation commitments.
- Deforestation issues have to be tackled through **effective traceability systems and conservation actions** for remaining primary forests (which are priceless biodiversity hotspots)**.**
- Cocoa from **deforestation needs be better defined**: what is the reference year for deforestation ? All cocoa is basically grown from deforestation practices, so what should be considered acceptable as non-deforestation? Clearing occurring 50 / 30 / 15 / 5 years ago?
- **Degraded Classified Forests will probably never return to their original state**. The fundamental issue is here to find the most sustainable way of producing cocoa in a landscape that was meant to be a forest.

Keep a flexible and rational approach on agroforestry

- **Agroforestry practices have greatly declined** in the Ivorian cocoa sector **because of** :
  - **a legal framework** that made trees too risky to be maintained in the fields (no ownership rights, and unfair practices from the wood industry)
  - **decades of technical advice** dedicated to growing in full sun (without any questioning of the sustainability of the systems).

  ➔ But **agroforestry** practices are still **very present in farmers' knowledge**. Most/lot of them may be willing to go back these practices if they could.
- **Standardized agroforestry systems** will not suit all cocoa farmers. Evaluation of agroforestry practices should give space for a **diversity of models.**
- **Relevant indicators** should be used to **characterize agroforestry systems :**
  - the **basal area** for instance
  - (a number of tree per hectare is not a relevant indicator)

Thank you

Any Questions ?