

ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

CAMEROON · SINCE 1999

2025

Annual Impact Report

OUR MISSION

Saving rainforests, conserving species and Impacting lives.

INSIDE

Contents

01 Welcome from the CEO 1

02 Message from the Board Chair 3

03 About ERuDeF 4

04 Highlights 2025 7

05 Outstanding Achievements, 1999–2025 8

06 Conservation Management 9

07 Landscape Restoration Programmes 11

08 Lebialem Highlands 14

09 Mount Bamboutos 19

10 Eastern Cameroon 23

11 ERuDeF Women 26

12 Living with Mangroves — Tiko-Limbe Estuary 28

13 Science & Research 31

14 ERuDeF Media 32

18 Support Us 33



WELCOME ON-BOARD

Welcome On-board

Louis Nkembi· Chief Executive Officer

> *"We remain grateful to the government of Cameroon, all our local, national and global Partners who make ERuDeF continue to grow. We invite all our partners to continue to Stand by us. We equally welcome the new ones."*
>
> — Louis Nkembi, Chief Executive Officer

The year 2025 constitutes the base year for the establishment of the ERuDeF 2050 strategy.

As we reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the communities, partners, government institutions and Supporters who continue to walk this conservation journey with us. For over twenty-six years, the Environment And Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF) has worked alongside local communities to demonstrate that Protecting nature and improving livelihoods are not competing goals — they are mutually reinforcing.

This year marked an important milestone for our organization. While launching the ERuDeF 2050 Strategy, we Reaffirmed our long-term commitment to building resilient ecosystems, empowering communities and Expanding locally led conservation across Africa. From the forests of Eastern Cameroon and the highlands of Lebialem and Mount Bamboutos to emerging programmes in the Congo Basin, the Gulf of Guinea Islands, East Africa and Madagascar, our vision remains the same: healthy ecosystems sustained by empowered communities.

Across our landscapes, communities continued to lead conservation action. Farmers restored degraded Watersheds, community members protected wildlife corridors, women strengthened nature-based enterprises, Young people championed environmental education, and traditional leaders safeguarded the cultural values that Have long sustained biodiversity. These collective efforts remind us that the future of conservation depends not Only on science and policy but on the knowledge, leadership and stewardship of local people.

During 2025, ERuDeF strengthened biodiversity conservation, restored degraded ecosystems, improved Community livelihoods and expanded partnerships with government institutions, research organizations, donors

and local authorities. Together, these efforts protected globally important species, enhanced climate resilience and created new opportunities for sustainable development across the landscapes where we work.

One lesson has become increasingly clear: lasting conservation is achieve when communities own the process. Whether protecting great ape habitats in Eastern Cameroon, restoring watersheds in Mount Bamboutos or Strengthening community stewardship of coastal ecosystems in the Tiko–Limbe Estuary, our role is to support Local leadership, strengthen institutions and create the conditions for people and nature to thrive together.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to scaling practical, community-led solutions that integrate traditional Knowledge, scientific innovation and strong partnerships. We are grateful to the Government of Cameroon, our Donors, technical partners, community leaders, women, youth, volunteers and dedicated staff whose Commitment continues to make this work possible.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire ERuDeF family, I sincerely thank everyone who has Contributed to our journey. We invite you to continue partnering with us as we build a future where Africa's Extraordinary biodiversity and the communities who depend on it flourish together.

Louis Nkembi

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ERuDeF

A FURTHER NOTE FROM THE CEO

Consolidating a Silver Jubilee year

We begin 2025 by extending our thanks to everyone who Made our Silver Jubilee a success. Celebrated in December 2024, the occasion brought together stakeholders from near And far. It was a moment of long-term reflection to define Our next 25 years: taking stock of what happened over the Past 25 years, what went wrong, what should be modelled, And how we consolidate the lessons of the past into the Future.

Throughout the year we developed and consolidated our Existing programmes: the Lebialem Highlands, Mount Bamboutos, the Cameroon Freshwater programme, the Ekom-Nkam Waterfall, the Gulf of Guinea Islands Biodiversity work, ERuDeF University, the Eastern Cameroon Biodiversity initiatives, the Baka People's identity Programme, the Guinea Forest of West Africa (Ghana), the Albertine Rift Valley (Rwanda) and the Lake Chad Basin.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Building towards Our 2050 vision

The year 2025 is the base year for our 2050 strategic Vision, which seeks to bring ERuDeF into the top Leadership of African conservation. Over our last 25 Years, and especially the last ten, ERuDeF has faced Immense challenges. Our resilience, built into a strong Structural set-up, has kept the organisation whole.

In 2025, ERuDeF continued to consolidate its programmes across Cameroon and the continent. We helped establish affiliates in Ghana and Rwanda. Working in synergy with local, national and Regional organisations, we helped set up the Cross River Gorilla Alliance across the Nigeria–Cameroon border region, Complementing the work of international organisations and the Governments of both countries. In Eastern Cameroon we are Consolidating efforts to design corridors for wildlife migrating From the northern Congo Basin into the central Congo Basin, and We continue working with MINFOF to extend the Deng Deng Technical Operational Unit to include Mbam Djerem National Park.

We continue to develop conservation leadership through the ERuDeF University in Buea, and we have consolidated our global Leadership governance structure.

I sincerely thank our partners and donors, and the Governments of Cameroon, Ghana and Rwanda, for permitting us to work in these Countries. Enjoy, and be part of our future tomorrow.

Eric Akemnda
BOARD CHAIR, ERuDeF

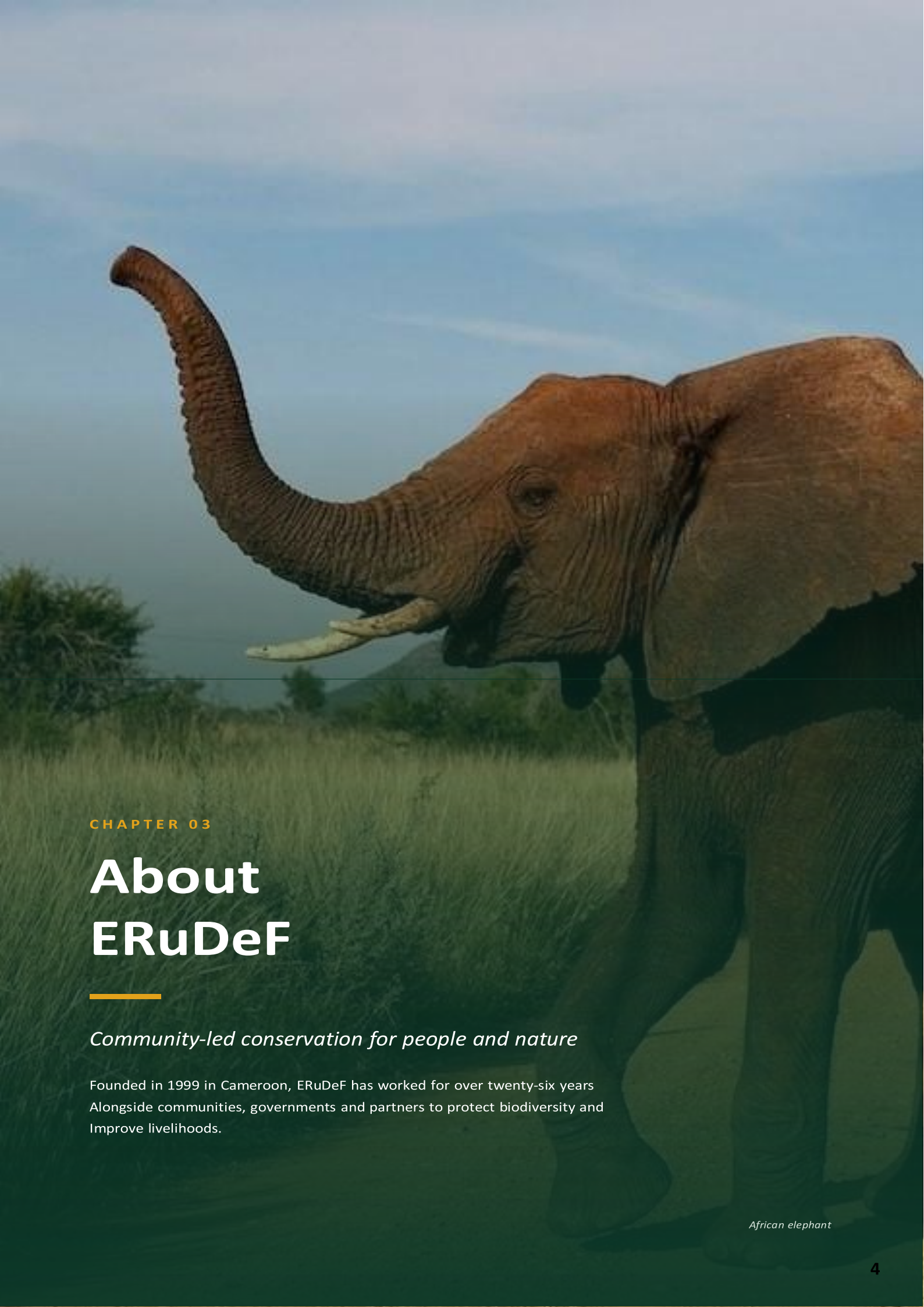
2025 MILESTONES

Ghana & Rwanda
Affiliates established in two new Countries

Cross-River Gorilla Alliance
Set up across the Nigeria–Cameroon Border region

Deng Deng TOU
Working with MINFOF to extend the unit to Include Mbam Djerem National Park

ERuDeF University
Conservation leadership developed in Buea



CHAPTER 03

About ERuDeF

Community-led conservation for people and nature

Founded in 1999 in Cameroon, ERuDeF has worked for over twenty-six years Alongside communities, governments and partners to protect biodiversity and Improve livelihoods.

African elephant

ABOUT ERUDEF

Community-Led Conservation For People and Nature

The Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF) is a leading African Conservation and sustainable development Organization founded in 1999 in Cameroon.

For more than twenty-six years, ERuDeF has worked alongside local communities, governments, research institutions and international partners to protect biodiversity, restore degraded ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of the people who depend on nature.

ERuDeF was founded on a simple belief: lasting conservation is achieved when communities become the custodians of their natural heritage. This philosophy continues to guide every programme we implement — from protecting great apes in tropical forests and restoring degraded mountain watersheds to strengthening community stewardship of freshwater and coastal ecosystems.

Today, ERuDeF implements integrated conservation programmes across Cameroon while expanding its regional footprint throughout Africa. Our work combines scientific research, traditional ecological knowledge, ecosystem restoration, sustainable livelihoods, environmental education, policy engagement and innovative conservation finance to build resilient landscapes where both people and nature thrive.

Our flagship programmes span some of Africa's most important biodiversity landscapes, including the Lebialem Highlands, Mount Bamboutos, Eastern Cameroon, the Freshwater Programme in Central Africa, the Lake Chad Basin, the Guinea Forests of West Africa, the Gulf of Guinea Islands, the Albertine Rift Landscape in East Africa, and emerging initiatives in the Congo Basin and Madagascar. Across these landscapes, ERuDeF conserves globally threatened species, restores critical ecosystems and supports communities in developing sustainable, nature-positive livelihoods.

Beyond field conservation, ERuDeF invests in people and institutions that will shape Africa's environmental future. Through the ERuDeF University Institute of Applied Biodiversity Sciences (EUIABS), we train the



Cross-River gorilla



Bannerman's Turaco



Goliath frog

next generation of conservation professionals. Through ERuDeF Women, we strengthen women's leadership, economic empowerment and resilience. Through ERuDeF Media, we promote environmental awareness, conservation journalism and public engagement. Our research programme generates the scientific evidence that informs conservation planning, protected area management and national biodiversity policies.

Since 1999, ERuDeF has implemented more than 94 conservation and development projects, secured or supported the management of over 605,906 hectares of critical wildlife habitat, directed 87.4% of organizational revenue to field programmes, and positively impacted the lives of more than 10 million people across Africa. Our work has contributed to the conservation of iconic species including the Cross River Gorilla, Western Lowland Gorilla, Nigeria–Cameroon Chimpanzee, African Forest Elephant, pangolins, Goliath Frog, and numerous threatened bird, amphibian and plant species.

As ERuDeF enters a new phase of growth under its ERuDeF 2050 Strategy, we remain committed to scaling community-led conservation models that integrate indigenous knowledge, scientific innovation, climate resilience and sustainable development. We believe that protecting Africa's extraordinary biodiversity is inseparable from empowering the Communities who have safeguarded these landscapes for generations.

Lasting conservation is achieved when communities own the process.
— LOUIS NKEMBI, CEO

SINCE 1999

94+
conservation & development projects

605,906+
hectares of critical habitat secured or supported

87.4%
of revenue directed to field programmes

10M+
people positively impacted across Africa

ERUDEF AT A GLANCE

ERuDeF Highlights by 2025

PROTECTING SPECIES

100+
Gorillas saved

1000+
Chimpanzees protected

400+
Elephants saved

200+
Pangolins saved

RESTORING LANDSCAPES

121,000+
Trees planted

100 Ha
Restored land mapped

1 New
Community forest Creation launched

152+
People in tree planting

BUILDING LIVELIHOODS

5M FCFA
Honey revenue (Lebialem)

110+
Piglets donated

160+
Beehives donated

27.5M CFA
Piglet revenue Generated

1999 — 2025

Outstanding Achievements

605,906+ Ha
Secured for wildlife

94+
Projects implemented

87.4%
Of global revenue directed into field programmes

10 Million+
People benefiting across Africa

2,500+
Women benefiting from ERuDeF's projects

650,000+
Youths benefiting from ERuDeF's projects

45,000+
Internally displaced people receiving humanitarian Assistance

121,000+
Trees planted in 2025 alone (cumulative: 12.9M+)

212 Schools
Supported, reaching 17,100 students

400+
Students trained at ERuDeF University Institute

SPECIES BENEFITING FROM OUR PROJECTS

37+	Cross River Gorillas	2,000+	Central Chimpanzees
1,000+	Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzees	100+	Pangolins
400+	African Elephants	100+	Tortoise
100+	species of Amphibians	100+	Bongos
600+	Western Lowland Gorillas	13,000+	Threatened Trees

Hundreds of threatened birds, flora and fauna species in ecosystems being protected.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Looking at the Big Picture

ERuDeF's conservation work in 2025 centered on three critical landscapes: the Lebialem Highlands in Southwest Cameroon, the Eastern Cameroon Landscape, and Mount Bamboutos — alongside the Freshwater programme, ERuDeF Media, ERuDeF Women, the Gulf of Guinea Islands, ERuDeF University, East Africa and West Africa. Together, these landscapes shelter some of Africa's most endangered great ape populations and represent irreplaceable ecological corridors.



Chimpanzee in the Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

FLAGSHIP SPECIES

The Cross River Gorilla and the Nigeria–Cameroon Chimpanzee and other great apes are the flagship species of ERuDeF's conservation work. The Cross River Gorilla, for example, is among the world's most critically endangered primates, with fewer than 300 individuals remaining in the wild.



Cross River gorilla feeding signs observed during biomonitoring surveys



Preuss monkey in its natural forest habitat



African Grey Parrot — one of many endangered species

OTHER IMPORTANT SPECIES

Beyond great apes, ERuDeF's conservation landscape supports a rich array of wildlife including the Preuss monkey, African Grey Parrot, hornbill species, and pangolins — all of which benefit from habitat protection and anti-poaching patrols.

< 300

Cross River gorillas remain in the wild — among the world's most critically endangered primates, and a flagship of ERuDeF's work.

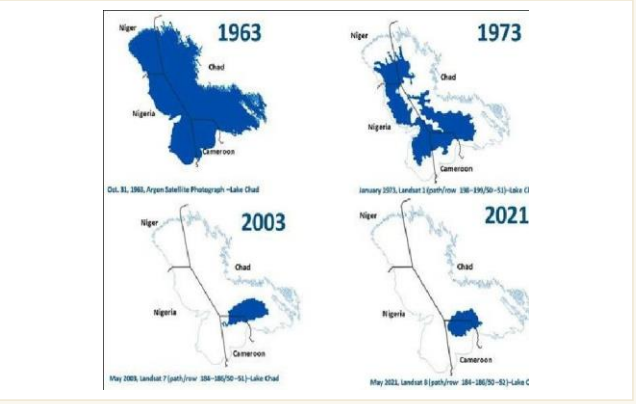
LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAMMES

Wetlands, Volcanic Line and Watershed Restoration

ERuDeF's landscape work reaches beyond the highland and forest landscapes profiled in this report. Three further landscapes — the Lake Chad Basin, the mangroves of Southwestern Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea Islands — support exceptional biodiversity, climate resilience and the livelihoods of millions across Central and West Africa. They are under pressure from climate change, habitat degradation, deforestation, pollution, unsustainable resource use and weak governance. Our Wetland Landscape Conservation Programme aims to restore these ecosystems, strengthen community resilience, promote sustainable livelihoods and improve conservation governance.

Wetland Landscapes

The Lake Chad Basin is one of Africa's most important transboundary wetlands, supporting more than 40 million people. Climate change, drought and unsustainable water extraction have severely shrunk the lake and degraded its ecosystem, reducing fisheries and the services communities rely on. ERuDeF's strategy prioritises shoreline rehabilitation, native vegetation recovery and community-managed conservation zones. By 2050 it aims to restore 15,000 ha of wetland, benefit 50,000 households, raise fish productivity by 30% and cut ecosystem degradation by 40%.



Declining extent of Lake Chad, 1963–2021 (adapted from USGS EarthShots). Source: MDPI



Mangrove shoreline degradation on the Gulf of Guinea coast. Source: ERuDeF

Southwestern Cameroon's mangroves are critical coastal ecosystems, but they face deforestation, erosion and unsustainable exploitation, while coastal communities remain highly dependent on them. ERuDeF promotes restoration through science, community participation and sustainable livelihoods. The target to 2050 is to restore 20,000 ha of mangroves, reduce degradation by 50%, improve fisheries by 35% and benefit 30,000 households.

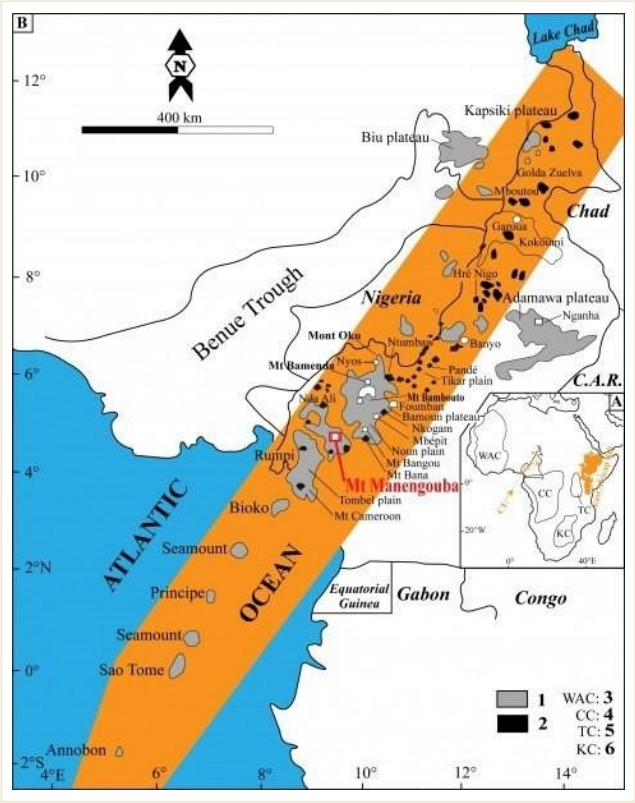
The Gulf of Guinea Islandshost globally important endemic biodiversity, threatened by habitat loss, climate change and illegal wildlife activity. Working with governments and partners through collaborative conservation planning, ERuDeF aims to protect 100,000 ha of priority island habitat, reduce illegal wildlife activity by 60% and strengthen conservation in 100 communities by 2050.

CAMEROON VOLCANIC LINE

Integrated Landscape Restoration

Presented by Amawa Mariyatu

The Cameroon Volcanic Line faces growing pressure from deforestation, agricultural expansion, illegal logging, mining, infrastructure development, bushfires, overgrazing, rapid urbanisation and climate change. These pressures have fragmented habitats, eroded soils, triggered landslides and flooding, and reduced ecological connectivity. Conservation and restoration have already strengthened biodiversity protection, restored degraded forest, improved watershed management and increased community participation, but further investment is needed to expand restoration, strengthen climate resilience, reduce disaster risk and secure long-term outcomes.



The Cameroon Volcanic Line and its ecological corridors



Fig 1: Landslides along the Cameroon Volcanic Line caused by land degradation

> *The long-term vision is a resilient, sustainably managed Volcanic Line in which every landscape and ecological corridor is restored, interconnected and effectively conserved.*

The programme envisions healthy forests, protected watersheds, reduced disaster risk, climate-resilient ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods, built through collaboration among government, communities, conservation organisations, researchers, development partners and donors.

NKAM WATERSHED

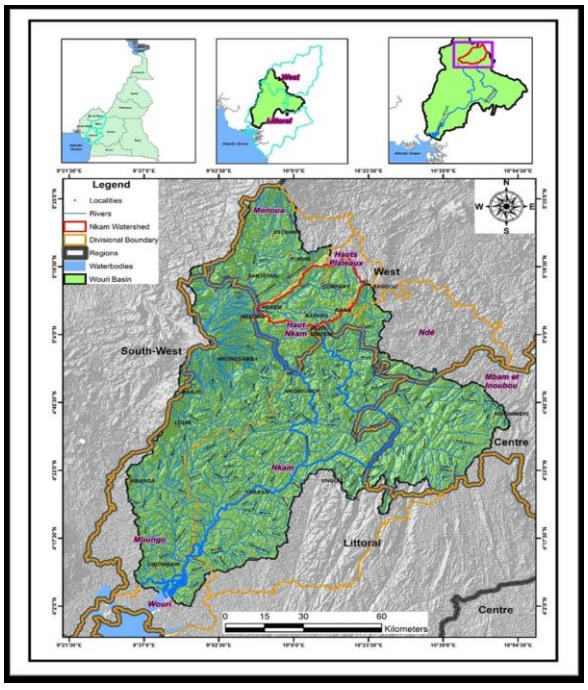
Community-Based Riparian Restoration

Presented by Muwha Shiri Charity

The Nkam watershed spans the coastal lowlands and Western Highlands of Cameroon and drains into the Wouri Estuary. It supplies drinking water, irrigation for smallholder farms, fisheries and aquatic habitat, and sustains rural communities who depend on it. Agricultural expansion, deforestation, settlement growth, soil erosion, sedimentation and unsustainable land use are degrading it. The proposed project responds by restoring degraded riparian and forest ecosystems and strengthening community participation and resilience.

Priority areas — degraded riparian zones, forest fragments and erosion-prone slopes — will be identified through remote sensing, GIS mapping, field observation and community knowledge. Protecting native vegetation along riverbanks will stabilise soils, keep sediment out of rivers and reduce rainfall impact on bare ground. Regeneration, tree planting, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture will help forest patches recover, improve habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species, and improve infiltration, reduce runoff and flooding, and keep water flowing in dry spells.

The approach is community-based: local people help set priorities, plan, implement and monitor the work, which builds ownership and the likelihood that restoration continues after the project. Farmers will be trained in sustainable agriculture and agroforestry, which combine food production with fruit, soil improvement and extra income. The expected long-term outcome is a more stable, productive and resilient Nkam watershed, with sustainably managed resources and secure livelihoods.



Map of the Nkam watershed



Community-led restoration: local farmers are central to planting and caring for the watershed



CHAPTER 08

Lebialem Highlands

Southwest Cameroon — Critical Biodiversity Landscape

One of the continent's most biodiverse yet threatened ecosystems, where ERuDeF manages six key conservation sites.

Cross River gorilla

SOUTHWEST CAMEROON — CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY LANDSCAPE

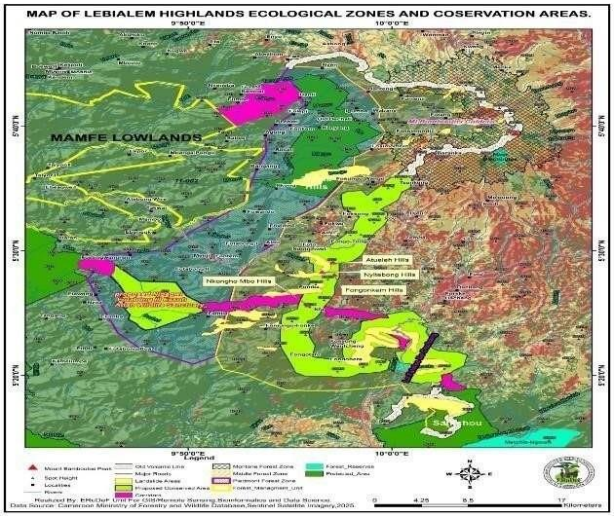
Lebialem Highlands

> *Regular patrols and wildlife monitoring strengthened the protection of Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzees and Cross River gorillas throughout 2025.*
>
> — ERuDeF CONSERVATION TEAM

The Lebialem Highlands, located in the Southwest Region of Cameroon, form one of the continent's most biodiverse yet threatened ecosystems. ERuDeF manages six key conservation sites across this landscape, listed below.

OUR COMMUNITY CONSERVATION MODEL

The Lebialem Highlands model integrates scientific research, household economic and financial stability, cottage industry development, social marketing, conservation finance, development of an endowment fund and community trust fund, community-based protection, corridor and habitat restoration, biodiversity-friendly enterprise development, policy advocacy and protected area management.



Conservation zones across the Lebialem landscape

SIX KEY CONSERVATION SITES

1	Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary (THWS)
2	Proposed Njoagwi Fotabong III – Essoh Attah Wildlife Sanctuary
3	Tofala–Mone Wildlife Corridor (30,000 ha)
4	Santchou Wildlife Reserve
5	Lebialem Ecotone Zone
6	Mount Bamboutos

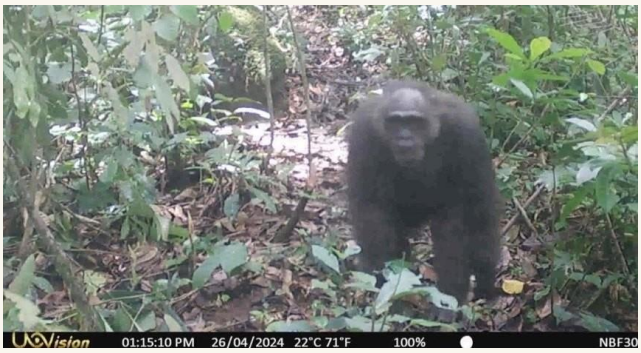
RESEARCH — LEBIALEM HIGHLANDS

Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary (THWS)

In 2025, ERuDeF consolidated gains achieved during the recovery phase of 2024 and advanced toward full implementation of long-term conservation actions in the Lebialem Highlands.

Annual biomonitoring teams assessed the status of Cross River gorillas and Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzees. A total of 80+ chimpanzees were recorded in the THWS in 2025. Signs of Cross River gorillas were widely observed within the sanctuary.

Local community monitors were trained to support long-term stewardship. Boundary visibility and a reduced rate of encroachment were achieved through the installation of 30 signposts.



CRG caught on camera

80+
chimpanzees recorded in the THWS, 2025

30
signposts installed to mark the boundary



Setting camera traps to assess chimpanzee and gorilla status in the THWS

LEBIALEM HIGHLANDS

Socio-economic Development and Livelihoods

Socio-economic development in the Lebialem Highlands has been implemented through the introduction of apiculture, livestock and poultry farming. This initiative has been supported by ERuDeF with funding from the Arcus Foundation since 2022.

Apiculture — Bee Farmers' Cooperative

5,000
long-term beehive goal

100
additional beehives donated in 2025

2,000 L
honey expected to be produced

Additional 100 beehives were donated to the Lebialem Bee Farmers' Cooperative in 2025. About 2,000 litres of honey is expected to be produced and sold, yielding approximately 5,000,000 CFA francs and supporting 100+ hunters and farmers.



Members of the Lebialem Bee Farmers' Cooperative with newly donated beehives



Beehive installation



Cooperative members at a beehive site

LEBIALEM HIGHLANDS · LIVELIHOODS

Livestock — Piglet Programme

In 2025, 110 piglets were donated to hunters and farmers in the Lebialem Highlands, which will generate approximately 27,500,000 CFA francs annually.

110
piglets donated in 2025

27.5M
CFA expected annually



Piglets donated to hunters and farmers — part of ERuDeF's livestock programme

Poultry Farming

An additional 100 chicks were donated to the Tofala Women Cooperative. ERuDeF anticipates donating 10,000 chicks to farmers in the Lebialem Highlands, with an expected annual yield of 750,000 CFA francs.

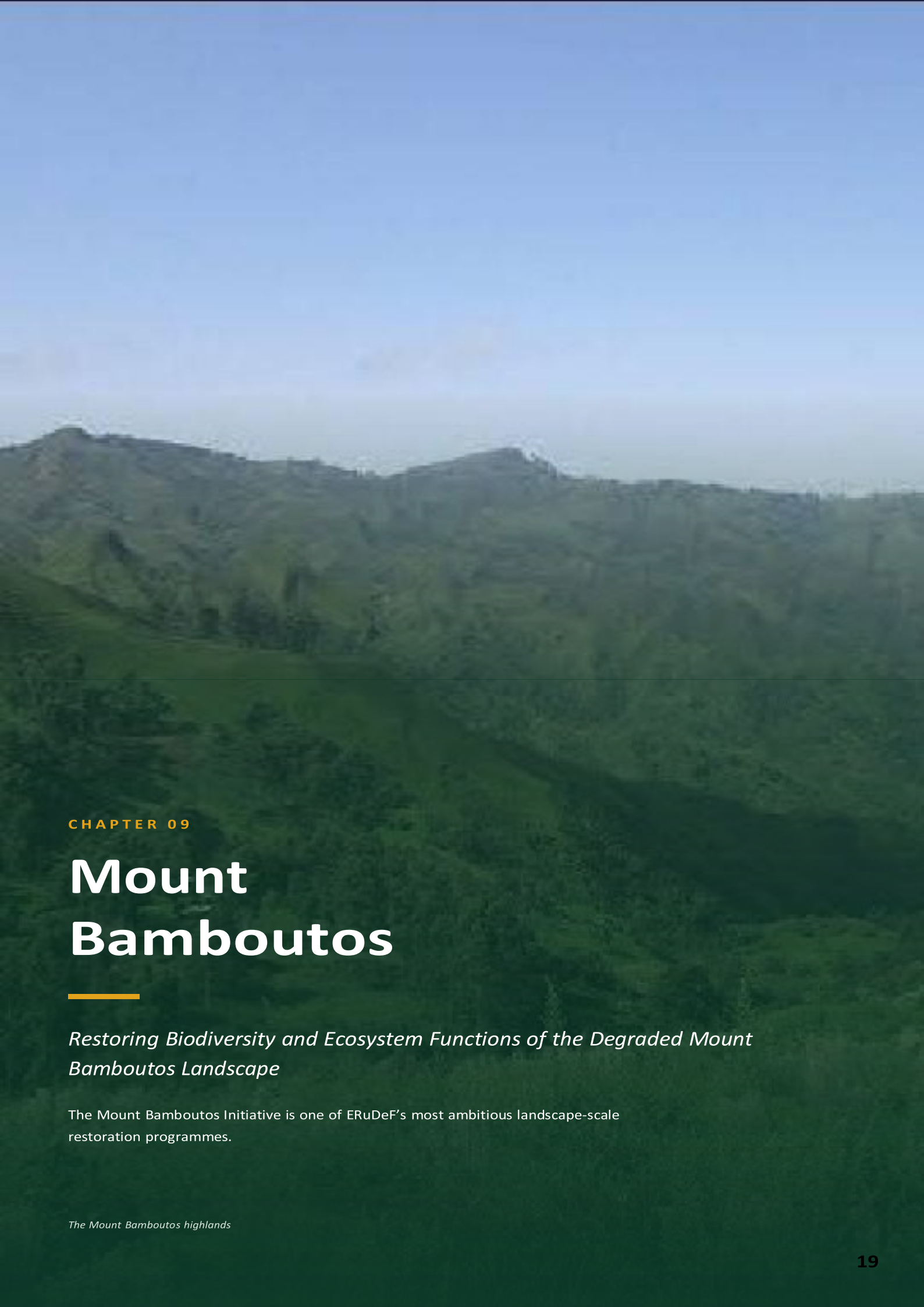
100
chicks donated

10,000
chicks planned

750K
CFA expected yield



Chicks distributed to the Tofala Women Cooperative as part of ERuDeF's poultry programme



CHAPTER 09

Mount Bamboutos

Restoring Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functions of the Degraded Mount Bamboutos Landscape

The Mount Bamboutos Initiative is one of ERuDeF's most ambitious landscape-scale restoration programmes.

The Mount Bamboutos highlands

MOUNT BAMBOUTOS INITIATIVE (MBI)

Restoring a Volcanic Highland

The Mount Bamboutos Initiative (MBI) is one of ERuDeF's most ambitious landscape-scale restoration programmes.

The Mount Bamboutos landscape covers nearly 350 km² of highland terrain shaped by volcanic activity along the Cameroon Volcanic Line, stretching over 50 km and rising to more than 2,700 m. Administratively, the landscape crosses three regions — West, North West and South West — bringing together four divisions, eight subdivisions and over twenty villages.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT 2025

10,053 Trees planted (MBI 2025)	**5,995** Native trees	**4,098** Fruit / agroforestry trees
23 Nurseries established	**100 ha** Restored land mapped	**37+** Farmers trained

121,000+ *cumulative trees planted across the landscape*

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To restore the biodiversity of Mt Bamboutos.
- To introduce and establish land use and effective governance systems for the Mt Bamboutos ecosystem.
- To ensure food security and economic resilience for over 30,000 households while integrating women and gender considerations.
- To restore over 35,000 ha of the degraded landscape through the planting of 15 million trees.
- To use applied research results to support the development of the Mt Bamboutos ecosystem.
- To establish a long-term sustainable funding mechanism for Mt Bamboutos.

MOUNT BAMBOUTOS

Restoration Activities

In 2025, ERuDeF delivered strong biodiversity conservation results through a combination of nursery development, large-scale tree planting, farmer capacity building, and rigorous monitoring across the Mount Bamboutos landscape.

TREE NURSERIES

A total of 23 nurseries — 7 community-based and 16 individual — were established and maintained across the landscape. ERuDeF supported the planting of 10,053 trees including 5,995 native trees and 4,098 fruit trees, and 111,000 agroforestry species, making a cumulative total of 121,000 trees across 100 hectares of mapped restored areas.



Community nursery attendant tending seedlings



Training session for farmers on seed collection and seedling management

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

ERuDeF trained 100 farmers (including women and youths) in 7 communities on tree grafting techniques, nursery setup and maintenance processes, as well as field transplanting.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Restoration activities focused on priority tributaries of the Menoua watershed (TR7, TR8 and TR9), where ecosystem degradation directly affects water availability and downstream livelihoods.



Field restoration activities, Mount Bamboutos

MOUNT BAMBOUTOS

Sustainable Agriculture & Agroforestry

Avocado (*Persea americana*) emerged as a high-impact livelihood species. Over 500 trees producing a bag per tree, with a cost per bag ranging from 45,000 to 60,000 FCFA, generate an annual income of between 9,000,000 and 12,000,000 CFA (US$15,000–20,000).

9–12M CFA

annual income from avocado (US$15,000–20,000)



Successful farmer in Bafou Village — agroforestry transformed his livelihood

SUCCESS STORIES

"Thanks to this project, I have been able to apply the skills I learned to develop agroforestry systems, where I nurse, graft, and plant agroforestry trees alongside food crops such as maize, potatoes, and beans. Each tree is capable of producing a bag of avocados annually, which I sell at prices ranging from 35,000 to 60,000 FCFA ($58 to $100 USD) depending on the avocado variety."

— MASSA JEAN WAT, 43 — FARMER IN BAFOU VILLAGE



Women and ERuDeF team working together on agroforestry in the Mount Bamboutos landscape

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN MONITORING

ERuDeF mapped about 100 hectares of restored land using GPS-based tree-by-tree geo-referencing and drone-captured polygon mapping, combining field data collection with digital tools for transparent, verifiable results.



Polygon mapping and drone surveys used to delineate approximately 100 hectares of restored land



CHAPTER 10

Eastern Cameroon

Deng Deng – Belabo Council Forest Conservation Corridor

Conservation corridors for western lowland gorillas, Central chimpanzees and African forest elephants.

African forest elephants

DENG DENG – BELABO COUNCIL FOREST

Conservation Corridor

The Eastern Cameroon programme seeks to create and manage conservation corridors for western lowland gorillas, Central chimpanzees and African forest elephants. In 2025, 4 community rangers were trained in the Deng Deng Technical Operation Unit, encompassing the Kepol Community Forest and surrounding villages. This corridor shelters over 700 western lowland gorillas and approximately 3,000 Central chimpanzees in the Deng Deng National Park.

KEPOL COMMUNITY FOREST

The Kepol Community Forest covers over 2,500 hectares of tropical forest and is a critical component of the Deng Deng–Belabo Council Forest Gorilla Corridor. ERuDeF's 2025 intervention was designed to address the root cause of community pressure: the absence of viable livelihood alternatives.

ERuDeF's plan is to install 400 beehives (80 per village) in the five communities associated with the Kepol Community Forest. In November 2025, ERuDeF handed over 60 beehives to members of the Kepol Cooperative farmers from five villages.



Cooperative members installing a beehive



ERuDeF staff and Kepol Cooperative members at the beehive handover ceremony, November 2025

WILDLIFE INVENTORY

35 Western lowland gorillas (avg.)	**36** Central chimpanzees (avg.)	**5,000 ha** secured in the corridor	**Very low** human pressure (1 sign/km)

VOICES FROM THE KEPOL COMMUNITY



Chimpanzee in the forest — over 3,000 Central chimpanzees depend on the Deng Deng–Belabo corridor

> *As a woman in this community, opportunities are limited. But the cooperative includes many women, and we are equal partners in this project. Beekeeping is something I can do while caring for my family. When women succeed, whole communities prosper. I am grateful to ERuDeF for believing in us.*
>
> — WOMAN MEMBER, KEPOL COOPERATIVE, EASTERN CAMEROON

Belabo–Messamena–Mindourou Conservation Corridor

One of ERuDeF's areas of intervention in the East Region is the Belabo–Messamena–Mindourou Conservation Corridor. It is part of the larger Deng Deng–Dja Biosphere corridor in Eastern Cameroon and stands as the largest conservation corridor in Cameroon, with an estimated 620,000 hectares, home to western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees and elephants. This corridor is experiencing rapid fragmentation and degradation due to human pressure from agriculture and other resource exploitation activities. To address these issues, ERuDeF launched the Eastern Cameroon Biodiversity Initiative, under which the Sokamalam community forest was launched.

Sokamalam Community Forest Project Launch

DATE	18 December 2025
LOCATION	Abong Mbang Municipality, Haut-Nyong Division, Eastern Cameroon
LEAD	ERuDeF
CO-ORGANISER	African Conservation Foundation (ACF)
FUNDER	Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics
GOVERNMENT	MINFOF, Government of Cameroon
COMMUNITIES	Sokamalam, Mpemzok 1, Mpemzok 2, Miang, Oboul II

The launch workshop brought together regional and divisional representatives of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), the Divisional Officer, the Mayor of Abong Mbang, and local authorities from the communities of Sokamalam, Mpemzok 1, Mpemzok 2, Miang and Oboul II.



Stakeholders gathered at the Sokamalam Community Forest Project launch workshop, 18 December 2025



ERuDeF CEO interview following the launch of the Sokamalam

2025 — A PROGRESSIVE YEAR

ERuDeF Women

2025 was a progressive year for ERuDeF Women. It witnessed achievements envisaged by ERuDeF Women for its beneficiaries, both at the level of Women and Gender as well as the Humanitarian programmes.

WOMEN AND GENDER DIVISION

The ERuDeF Women Division sensitized over 200 women from the Lebialem Highlands on the restoration and sustainable management of the Lewoh Lebialem ecosystem. Fifty women were trained on sustainable diversified farming systems and identification of tree species to be planted. With support from ERuDeF, 20 IDP women were economically empowered.

ERuDeF Women continued with sensitization and monitoring on economic support to IDP women in Buea on sustainable living. Monitoring of 10 previously supported IDP women's micro-businesses indicated a rise in monthly income from 10,000 to 50,000 FCFA. Beneficiaries testified that the support has given them stability and the ability to take care of their daily needs of feeding, clothing and provision of school fees for their children, amongst others.

200+
women sensitized in the Lebialem Highlands

50
women trained in diversified farming

20
IDP women economically empowered

50,000 F
monthly income, up from 10,000 F

HUMANITARIAN DIVISION — EDUCATION

The Humanitarian Division reached out to some 30 internally displaced and underprivileged students of G.H.S. Buea Town, South West Cameroon. The project, supported by Dr Bertrand Akufang and Dr Lekeaka Defang, provided academic tuition of 35,000 FCFA each to 30 students to support their education. This led to increased class performance.



Academic support at G.H.S. Buea Town — the Principal, ERuDeF Women lead and students (beneficiaries)



Visit to Glory Orphanage, Buea

FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS SUPPORT

With support received from Aminateh Ethel and friends from the USA, food and other items were given to 40 orphans at Glory Orphanage in Buea, Fako Division, Cameroon. Additionally, a scholarship package was handed to the Director of the institution to facilitate payment of fees and registration in end-of-course and official examinations. Joy was visible in the orphans, who were mostly IDPs. ERuDeF Women were pleased to have put smiles on their faces and restored hope.

25TH ANNIVERSARY ARTS COMPETITION

As part of activities to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ERuDeF, an arts competition was launched for high school students. Two students emerged as winners: Njumba Marie Evon, Upper Sixth at GHS Buea Town, took the first prize, and Fombod Marie Noel, Upper Sixth Arts at GHS Great Soppo, received the second prize. The Environmental Award (a financial token) facilitated their studies, as both laureates passed the GCE Advanced Level examination and enrolled in universities for further studies.



CHAPTER 12

Living with Mangroves

Tiko–Limbe Estuary — Building a Community-Led Coastal Resilience Model

One of Cameroon's most valuable coastal ecosystems, sustained by the communities who live with it.

ERuDeF Chief of Operations participating in mangrove planting activities



ERuDeF staff and community members during a field visit to a mangrove restoration site.

1 The Landscape

Stretching along Cameroon's Atlantic coastline, the Tiko–Limbe Estuary is one of the country's most valuable coastal ecosystems. Its mangrove forests provide nursery grounds for fish and crustaceans, protect shorelines from erosion, store blue carbon and sustain the livelihoods of thousands of people across seven island communities. Recognising the importance of this landscape, ERuDeF launched the Living with Mangroves initiative to demonstrate that biodiversity conservation, community wellbeing and climate resilience can advance together through community leadership.

2 Communities Lead Conservation

Traditional leaders, women fish processors, youth groups, teachers and local authorities actively participate in planning, awareness creation and stewardship of the estuary. Community meetings, radio programmes and environmental education have strengthened public understanding of the ecological and economic value of mangroves while encouraging local ownership of conservation actions.



Community sensitization on the importance of mangrove conservation.



Students participate in World Wetlands Day activities.

3 Livelihoods and Green Innovation

Living with Mangroves combines conservation with practical livelihood solutions. Renewable energy, improved fish-smoking technologies and solar-powered cold storage help reduce dependence on mangrove fuelwood, improve fish preservation and strengthen women's economic opportunities.



Community handover of a solar-powered cold storage facility.



Improved fish-smoking oven reducing pressure on mangrove wood.



Solar lighting improving quality of life in island communities.

2025 FOCUS · PROGRESS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Strengthened partnerships with island communities
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	School outreach and community awareness expanded
GREEN LIVELIHOODS	Solar energy, cold storage and improved smoke ovens maintained
ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP	Mangrove monitoring and restoration planning continued

4 Looking Ahead

Building on the foundation established since 2022, ERuDeF is preparing to scale Living with Mangroves into a Community-Led Coastal Resilience Model. Future priorities include expanding mangrove restoration, strengthening women-led fisheries enterprises, promoting environmental education, integrating traditional ecological knowledge into coastal governance and supporting resilient blue economy opportunities.



Young mangrove seedlings demonstrating ecosystem recovery.

KEY RESEARCH AREAS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Science & Research

2007
Action plan for the Cross River gorilla (Nigeria–Cameroon)

2010
Action plan for the Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzee

3 areas
Deng Deng NP, Mount Cameroon NP and Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

Science and research form a core pillar of the work of the Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF), providing the evidence needed for effective conservation and sustainable resource management in Cameroon. One of its major research areas is great ape conservation, where ERuDeF played a key role in developing the Nigeria–Cameroon action plans for the conservation of the Cross River gorilla (2007) and the Nigeria–Cameroon chimpanzee (2010). In the Lebialem Highlands, the organization engages community rangers as citizen scientists to collect ecological data and support evidence-based conservation decisions. ERuDeF has also introduced innovative technologies such as camera trap monitoring systems to enable real-time conservation interventions. ERuDeF conducts biodiversity inventories and ecological surveys across important conservation landscapes.

Surveys in Mount Muanenguba supported efforts to establish the proposed Mount Muanenguba Herpetological Sanctuary, home to important amphibian species including the Goliath frog. Additional amphibian surveys around Mount Nlonako and bird studies in the Lebialem Highlands further strengthened knowledge of endemic species and habitat conservation needs.

In land use and land cover research, ERuDeF has contributed significantly to understanding environmental change in critical ecosystems. Research in the Mount Bamboutos landscape using satellite imagery and household surveys revealed major declines in forest and grassland cover, alongside increases in farmland, plantations and settlements. Agriculture, grazing and expanding human settlements were identified as the major drivers of ecosystem degradation.

ERuDeF is also active in Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS), supporting sustainable management of valuable biodiversity resources and contributing to national ABS policy development. Research on priority non-timber forest products such as *Irvingia wombolu* and *Monodora myristica* has generated important data on species populations, regeneration and socio-economic value, informing both conservation and community benefit-sharing.

The organization's research has directly supported protected area creation and management, contributing to management plans for Deng Deng National Park and Mount Cameroon National Park, as well as the establishment of the Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, a critical habitat for endangered great apes. It has also supported the improvement of ecological corridors and the creation and management of community forests.

Beyond field research, ERuDeF promotes capacity building and scientific training through the ERuDeF University Institute of Applied Biodiversity Sciences, where postgraduate research strengthens conservation science and develops local expertise. Through partnerships with academic institutions, government agencies, international organizations and local communities, ERuDeF ensures that scientific findings translate into practical conservation action. As ERuDeF marks 25 years of conservation work, science and research remain central to its mission of protecting rainforests, conserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods.

Science and research remain central to our mission of protecting rainforests, conserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods.

AFRICA'S CONSERVATION STORY, TOLD BY AFRICANS

ERuDeF Media

01 Who We Are

ERuDeF Media is the leading conservation media program in Africa — a pan-African platform built to tell the continent's environmental and conservation story from an African perspective. As the communications and storytelling arm of the Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF), it exists to amplify conservation, climate and rural-development stories from Cameroon and across the continent, ensuring that the work happening on the ground reaches the audiences, partners and decision-makers positioned to act on it.

02 What We've Built

ERuDeF Media has grown into a multi-platform network anchored by The Green Times News, our flagship digital news outlet delivering environmental journalism and conservation updates with a distinctly African lens, andAfrica Wild TV, a video platform dedicated to wildlife, biodiversity and nature storytelling that brings Africa's conservation frontlines to a global audience. Alongside these, the program continues to expand into additional platforms and formats.

03 Impact & Results

ERuDeF Media has helped reshape how conservation stories are told in Africa — centering local communities, journalists and conservationists as the narrators of their own environmental story rather than subjects of outside coverage. Through The Green Times News and Africa Wild TV, the program has given visibility to conservation efforts, rural livelihoods and biodiversity protection work that would otherwise go untold, strengthening public awareness, supporting advocacy and building trust between conservation practitioners and the communities and partners they work with.

04 Moving Forward

ERuDeF Media is focused on deepening its role as Africa's leading conservation media program, growing the reach and influence of The Green Times News and Africa Wild TV, expanding into new storytelling formats, strengthening local journalism capacity across the continent, and building stronger partnerships with international broadcasters, conservation funders and African media houses — all in service of ensuring that Africa's conservation story continues to be told by Africans, for the world.

DONATE / SUPPORT US

Your Support Means A Lot to Us

WHAT YOUR SUPPORT CAN DO

USD 1	Plant one tree in a restoration site
USD 50	Provide one piglet as an alternative livelihood
USD 150	Purchase a camera trap for conservation
USD 500	Support one beehive installation in a village
USD 1,000	Buy a professional camera for field work

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

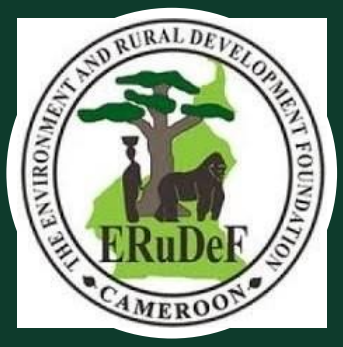
USD 100	Sponsor a child in primary school
USD 500	Sponsor a child in secondary school
USD 1,000	Sponsor a child in the university

HOW TO SUPPORT US

WEBSITE **www.erudef.org**

EMAIL **louisnkembi23@gmail.com**

FOLLOW US **@ERuDeF on all social media platforms**



ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Saving rainforests, conserving species and impacting lives.

www.erudef.org

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT