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Paix-Travail-Patrie



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN
Peace-Work-Fatherland



ADOPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NEW LAND TITLE CERTIFICATES: THE CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION OF CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS (ARDFC) AND THE CERTIFICATE OF PEACEFUL POSSESSION OF LAND (AJPTER)

TRAINING MANUAL



In cooperation with



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Abbreviations and acronyms

AJPTER	Certificate of Peaceful Enjoyment of Land
ARDFC	Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights
CICC	Cocoa and Coffee Interprofessional Council
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
MINDCAF	Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure
NCCB	National Cocoa and Coffee Board
PARF-Café	Support Project for the Revival of the Coffee Sector
SAFE	Sustainable Agriculture for Forest Ecosystems
LT	Land Titles
ProPFR	Promotion of a Responsible Land Policy (Project)
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation



NOTE

Designed to build the capacity of small-scale cocoa and coffee producers.

To check that the training has had an impact on each participant's knowledge, please begin with this short assessment, which will be repeated at the end of the training.

Assessment questions (at the start and end of the training)

- What papers or documents, of which you are aware, enable you to demonstrate that you have rights to a land? (The number and quality of the documents the participant is aware of at the start and end of the training will indicate whether their knowledge of land rights has improved)
- What new things have you learnt about land rights following this training?

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

Aim of the Manual

To enable coffee and cocoa producers to understand the importance of land certificates (AJPTER and ARDFC), in order to improve their understanding of land rights and to secure their farms.

To provide trainers (community leaders, local CSOs and leaders of farmers' organizations) with:

- A step-by-step guide
- Facilitation techniques suitable for adults
- Practical tools that can be used straight away
- Answers to frequently asked questions

Target group for the training

- The rural population in general
- Coffee and cocoa producers

Andragogic approach (principles to be observed)

As this document is intended for the training of producers, it is worth noting that many, if not all, are adults or have experience that can be drawn upon. It is therefore worth highlighting a few key points regarding adults and andragogic methods.

Adults :

- Learn best through experience
- Prefer concrete and practical approaches
- Contribute their own knowledge
- Ask questions related to their own circumstances

Andragogic methodology:

- Building on participants' experience
- Use real-life case studies
- Encourage discussion
- Focus on problem-solving

Methods used:

- Brainstorming
- Group work
- Case studies
- Role-play
- Explanatory diagrams

Golden rule: "Don't just explain — get them to practice"

The manual has two key sections: one focuses on understanding and the fundamentals, whilst the other focuses on practical application and mastery.



PART 1: UNDERSTANDING AND BASICS

This first part aims to provide theoretical information on the certificates covered by the capacity-building programme. It comprises three modules: context and land-related issues; fundamental concepts; and analysis of the certificates.

MODULE 1 : CONTEXT AND LAND ISSUES

Objective: To help participants understand current land issues and the need for certificates.

This module is divided into four consecutive stages.

Stage 1: Icebreaker

Generally, people arrive at a capacity-building or training session with the idea that they know nothing, that the trainers are experts, and that the topics to be covered are complex. This may well be true, given our two initial assessment questions. This can leave them feeling perplexed and create a mental block – an ‘ice’ that needs to be broken right from the start. A question about a simple reality that applies to all participants can help us very easily. This helps them realize that they have something to contribute during the workshop, training session or capacity-building session.

Questions:

Question 1: ‘How did you come to own the land you occupy in the village?’

Question 2: “Who has ever experienced a land-related problem?”

Tips :

- Ask just one question at a time (ask a question, listen to the answers before moving on to the next one)
- Allow everyone to speak and express themselves freely, without any formalities
- By listening carefully to what is said, note down on a board the land disputes that emerge from each experience or contribution
- If comments become highly emotional, gently and respectfully steer the discussion back on track
- If certain participants dominate the discussion, carefully redistribute speaking time to ensure as many people as possible have a say

Step 2: Collective analysis of the answers given by participants

Highlight:

- Land insecurity
- Lack of formalization
- Recurring conflicts

Step 3: Input from the trainer

Explain : Why the State intervenes, and the objectives of the certificates. The Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) and the Certificate of Peaceful Enjoyment of Land (AJPTER) aim, respectively, to:

- Promote the land rights of customary communities or family communities and their members;
- Improve the protection of land users’ rights of occupation and use;
- Safeguard the living space of customary communities;
- Prevent land disputes.

Step 4: Exercise

Mapping the area:

- Draw your village or neighbourhood

Take a sheet of A4 paper or use the floor space. Depending on the circumstances, participants may work on collective drawings – for example, in neighbourhood groups or with their families – to better represent their spaces or parts of their spaces.

Scenario 1: There isn't enough space (e.g. you're in a classroom, meeting room, etc.)

On a sheet of A4 paper, each person draws the features of their neighbourhood or the location of their farm, indicating or sketching the presence of neighbours. Features such as trees, fields, houses and roads should be included.

Scenario 2: There is enough space (for example, a stadium, playground, school playground, palace, community centre, etc.)

On the ground, have the participants work in groups. They carry out the same exercise as in Scenario 1. By working in groups, they experience the need to consider others' views before placing an element on the representation of the village on the map. This allows potential sources of conflict to be identified early on, such as differences of opinion regarding boundaries, plot ownership, the actual location of an element, etc.

For either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2, ask participants to identify one or two areas, or one or two plots of land, where there is a conflict or a problem relating to land.

Ask participants to list the consequences of these conflicts within their communities or elsewhere. Here are some common, major consequences:

- Tensions and violence
- Destruction of crops and economic losses
- Division and loss of social cohesion
- Lengthy and costly legal proceedings

MODULE 2 : FONDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Objective : To clarify key concepts.

Step 1 : Open-ended questions

For each question, write down the answers without correcting them straight away.

- “What is a customary right?”
- “What is peaceful enjoyment?”
- “What is the national domain?”
- “What is a land title?”

Step 2 : Summarizing the answers

Use the answers gathered from participants to clarify the concepts, so as to help them identify the most correct answer.

1. Customary rights

- Based on tradition
- Passed down through families
- Social recognition

2. Peaceful enjoyment

- Sustained occupation
- Occupation, use or exploitation without conflict, without problems, without dispute

3. National Domain

- Land within the national territory that is neither part of the public domain nor the private domain.
- Much of the land in our communities has no land title. It forms part of the **national domain**

4. Land Title

This is a document securing all rights to a piece of land; it is the land title certificate

- A definitive right allowing land transactions (sale, letting, etc.)
- Maximum security



Key message

“The certificate provides security, but does not replace the land title”

MODULE 3 : ANALYSIS OF CERTIFICATES

Step 1 : Group Work

Hand out extracts from the circular (Appendix 9)

Step 2 : Missions

Each group should read the section of the circular letter intended for them carefully and ensure that every group member has understood it. One member of each group will present the group's thoughts on three points:

- i- Key points to note
 - ii- Points that are unclear,
 - iii- A few questions.
- Group 1: Nature of the certificates and intended objectives (pages 1 & 2)
 - Group 2: Roles of the certificates (the ARDFC and the AJPTER) and eligibility criteria (pages 2 & 3)
 - Group 3: Preparatory work for the issuing of the ARDFC and the AJPTER (page 3)
 - Group 4: Procedures for issuing the Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) and the Certificate of Peaceful Enjoyment of Land (AJPTER) (page 3)
 - Group 5: Contents of the application file and stages of procedures a & b (pages 3 & 4)
 - Group 6: Contents of the application file and stages of procedure c (page 4)
 - Group 7: Contents of the application and steps in procedure d (page 4)

Step 3 : Presentation

Each group presents the results of its works

Step 4 : Discussion following each group's presentation

(Questions and answers from participants)

Step 5 : Summary of the trainer



PART 2: PRACTICE AND MASTERY

While the first part aimed to provide theoretical information on the certificates covered by the capacity-building programme, the second part is designed to be practical, ensuring a thorough understanding of the procedures. It comprises three modules: the stages of the certificate issuance procedure, case studies and role-play.

MODULE 4: THE STAGES OF THE PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING CERTIFICATES RECOGNISING CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS OR PEACEFUL POSSESSION OF LAND

Instruction: The trainer will focus on four key stages in the issuing of certificates, without necessarily going through the steps in detail. Four key elements summarizing the stages of issuing certificates will therefore be presented to the farmers: the site visit, verification, issuance and archiving (retention) of documents. The overall aim is to demonstrate how the entire process is participatory and inclusive, and results in a document accepted by all stakeholders.

Whether it is the Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) or the Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER), the procedure for issuing them is the same. Before discussing this, let us look at the criteria that must be met when applying for these certificates.

Conditions for obtaining the Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) and the Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER)

For each certificate (ARDFC and AJPTER), there is a set of conditions, followed by the supporting documents required to obtain them.

The Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC)

Requirements

To obtain the ARDFC, the following criteria must be met:

- i- Be of Cameroonian origin;
- ii- Be a member of the customary community;
- iii- The plot of land must not already be legally allocated to a third party (land title, concession) or be subject to allocation by the State.

Documents to be provided

The application file for an ARDFC comprises the following documents:

- i- An application for recognition of customary land rights over the plot, addressed to the village chief with territorial jurisdiction;
- ii- A photocopy of the national identity card or birth certificate;
- iii- The minutes of the family council meeting, if the plot is a subdivision of land belonging to the extended family holding customary rights over the area.

The Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER)

Conditions

To obtain the AJPTER, the following criteria must be met:

- i- Have a written agreement between the holder of customary rights over the plot and the applicant;
- ii- Must have added value to the land.

Documents to be provided

The application dossier for a Certificate of Peaceful Use of Land (AJPTER) must include the following documents:

- i- a written application addressed to the village chief;
- ii- photocopies of the national identity cards or birth certificates of both parties;
- iii-the minutes of the agreement between the customary landowner and the person who has added value to the land.

STEPS FOR ISSUING ARDFCs AND AJPTERS

1. Informing and sensitizing the community;

Before any field visit to issue land certificates, it is important to inform and sensitize community members.

Why is it important to inform and sensitize the community?

Providing information enables everyone to know in advance: the objectives of the operation; its importance; the various steps to be followed; and what each family needs to prepare.

With this information, families can: gather the necessary documents; choose their representatives; organize family meetings; and report any land disputes to the village chief.

Information can be disseminated through posters in public places (markets, churches, mosques, community centres, etc.); announcements at markets, funerals or traditional festivals; neighbourhood and block leaders, or other community leaders.

Sensitization helps communities to better understand land issues and the importance of land certificates.

During sensitization sessions, the following should be explained: what the ARDFC and AJPTER are and their purpose; the steps involved in obtaining a land certificate; the conditions to be met; the documents to be included in the application; and the role of each party (chief, community leaders, focal points, applicants, etc.).

How should sensitization be organized?

It is recommended to organize a large community meeting with the village chief; local leaders; heads of households or their representatives; and other members of the community. Women leaders, young people and teachers can also help to convey the information to the whole community.

Potential difficulties and solutions

- i- **Low turnout.** Ensure that all families are represented.
- ii- **Language barriers.** Arrange for a translator in the local language.
- iii- **Mistrust or lack of interest.** Explain that the procedure is recognized by the authorities and governed by current regulations.

Expected results

When the community is well sensitized and aware of the issue, neighbours and other stakeholders are more likely to take part in field visits, which helps ensure the smooth running of the distribution of land title certificate.

2. Promulgating the process to mobilize all neighbouring landowners

When issuing **ARDFC** and **AJPTER** certificates, the presence of neighbours who share the plot's boundaries is very important. These neighbours often know the history of the land and can confirm the boundaries of the field or plantation. Their participation helps to avoid misunderstandings and reduce the risk of future conflicts.

It is also important that the whole community is informed and involved in the process: men, women, young people, herders, farmers, older people and vulnerable individuals. Everyone must have the opportunity to express themselves and be heard. In this way, no one is left out.

When local people are well informed and involved in field operations, they gain a better understanding of the objectives of the certificates and their importance for securing land rights. This helps to prevent rumours, misinformation and tensions between families or neighbours.

By working together in a spirit of transparency and dialogue, the community builds trust amongst its members, facilitates the work of teams on the ground and contributes to the success of the process. The ARDFC and AJPTER certificates issued thereby gain greater credibility, and the rights of cocoa and coffee producers are better protected, both for themselves and for their heirs.



Key message

“Land recognized by its neighbours, its community and the authorities is better protected. Everyone’s participation today helps prevent future conflicts.”

3. Obtaining information and submitting an application for an ARDFC or AJPTER to the third-level traditional chiefdom with territorial jurisdiction

The procedure begins when a person wishes to have their rights to a piece of land recognized or to have it confirmed that they are peacefully cultivating a cocoa or coffee plantation or another agricultural plot

The producer goes to the chiefdom to collect the appropriate form to their situation:

- **The application for a Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC)**, for a person who holds customary rights over a piece of land (Appendix 4);
- **The application for a Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER)**, for a person who peacefully occupies or cultivates a plot of land (Appendix 5);

In this application, the producer must provide, in particular: their identity; the location of the plot; the names of the immediate neighbours; and an estimate of the plot’s area.

The form is then signed by the applicant or their representative and submitted to the chiefdom for review.

To facilitate the processing of the application, it is strongly recommended that a copy of an identity document or birth certificate be attached; which will be kept in the file.

Why is this step important?

The application marks the start of the process. It enables :

- The applicant to be clearly identified ;
- To locate the plot of land in question ;
- Identified the neighbours who may be involved in establishing the boundaries ;
- To organize site visits transparently.



Key message to producers

“If you wish to protect your cocoa or coffee plantation for yourself and your children, the first step is to register your plot with the chiefdom by completing the ARDFC or AJPTER application form.”

4. Appointment of members of the commission to verify ownership of customary land rights or the peaceful occupation/peaceful use of the plot

Once the ARDFC or AJPTER application has been submitted to the chiefdom, a **verification committee** is set up to examine the information provided and carry out a site visit.

The role of this committee is to ensure that the information provided is accurate and that the plot in question is not subject to any dispute.

Why is this committee important?

It helps to :

- Verify that the applicant does indeed hold customary rights to the plot (for the ARDFC) ;
- Confirm that the land is being occupied or used peacefully (for the AJPTER) ;
- Correctly identified the owners, occupants or users ;
- Hear from all those concerned, particularly immediate neighbours ;
- Prevent false declarations and disputes.

What does the committee do in the field ?

During the site visit, the commission:

- **Verifies the rights to or use of the land**
It ensures that the applicant is recognized by the community as the customary owner or user of the plot.
- **Checks that the land is being used peacefully**
It investigates whether the plot is subject to any disputes or conflicts.
- **Listens to neighbours and local residents**
Immediate neighbours are invited to confirm the plot's boundaries and give their views.
- **Seeks solutions in the case of disagreement**
If an issue is raised, the committee attempts to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties.
- **Draws up a report**
Once everything is clear and there is no dispute, minutes are drawn up to confirm the findings made on site.

Who sits on the committee ?

The composition may vary from village to village, but generally includes:

- A neighbourhood or block leader representing the chiefdom;
- A village elder;
- A land focal point responsible for documentation and minutes;
- A GPS operator responsible for locating the plot.

What qualities should the commission members possess?

Members must:

- Be available to take part in field visits;
- Be familiar with the village and the history of the land;
- Be familiar with local customs;
- Be honest, impartial and a good listener;
- Be able to engage in dialogue with all parties concerned.



Key message to producers

“The verification committee is not there to take land away from producers. It is there to ensure that the information is correct, that the boundaries are recognized by neighbours and that everyone’s rights are respected.”

Thanks to this stage, the ARDFC and AJPTER certificates are based on reliable information, recognized by the community and validated transparently, which helps to protect cocoa and coffee producers, as well as their heirs, against future disputes.

5. Georeferencing of the plot in the absence of a litigation;

Georeferencing involves using a GPS device to accurately identify and record the boundaries of a plot of land. This process makes it possible to determine exactly where a cocoa or coffee plantation, or any other agricultural holding, begins and ends.

Practically, officials visit the site and record the GPS coordinates of the various points that define the plot’s boundaries.

Why is georeferencing important?

Georeferencing makes it possible to :

- The actual area of the plot to be determined;
- Clearly identify the boundaries with neighbouring plots;
- Avoid disputes over land boundaries;
- To produce a map of the plot;
- To strengthen evidence of customary rights or peaceful occupation of the land.

For cocoa and coffee producers, this is a way of better protecting their plantations and the investments made over several years.

How does the operation work on the ground?

During the field visit, the verification committee:

- **Verifies the applicant’s identity**

It ensures that the person applying for the ARDFC or AJPTER is indeed the person who owns or farms the plot.

- **Check that neighbouring landowners are present**

Neighbours are invited to attend to confirm the plot’s boundaries.

- **Check for any dispute**

The committee asks whether anyone disputes the boundaries or the occupation of the land.

If there is a disagreement, this is noted in the minutes and dealt with subsequently at the chieftdom or palace.

- **GPS survey of the boundaries**

The applicant, the neighbours and the GPS operator walk the perimeter of the plot together.

The operator records the GPS coordinates of each corner or key point along the boundaries.

- **Signing of reports**

At the end of the site visit, the reports are signed by: the applicant, the neighbours, the witnesses and the commission. This confirms that the information has been verified on site.

The minutes form an essential part of the ARDFC or AJPTER file.

It serves to:

- Retain evidence of the agreement between neighbours;
- Demonstrate the peaceful nature of the occupation or use;
- Protect the producer's rights;
- Serve as a reference in the event of any future disagreement.

What happens after the visit ?

The committee presents the findings to the chieftdom.

If no disputes are reported, the case proceeds to the next stage.

In the event of a dispute, a mediation meeting is organized to find a solution before the certificate is issued.

The GPS form (Appendix 6): a very important document

All the information gathered in the field is recorded on a GPS form. This form includes, in particular:

This form includes, in particular:

- The name of the owner or operator;
- The names of the immediate neighbours;
- The GPS coordinates of the plot;
- Key landmarks;
- The date the plantation was established.

This form is used to produce the plot map and forms part of the documentation required to obtain the ARDFC or AJPTER.



Key message to growers

A clearly demarcated plantation is a better-protected plantation. Georeferencing enables boundaries that are known only through human memory to be transformed into recognised boundaries that are permanently recorded.'

This step is essential for strengthening land security for cocoa and coffee producers and for protecting their land for the benefit of future generations.

6. Physical marking of the plot (traditional boundary marking);

Physical marking of boundaries: protecting your plantation today and for future generations

Following the georeferencing of the plot, another important step is to physically mark the boundaries of the plantation on the ground.

This is carried out in the presence of the applicant, neighbouring landowners and the verification committee. It enables everyone to see clearly where the plot's boundaries begin and end.

Why mark the boundaries ?

Physical marking helps to:

- Avoid neighbourhood disputes;
- To preserve a record of the boundaries over time;
- To make it easier for heirs to identify the plot;
- To reinforce agreements made between neighbours;
- Protect investments made in the plantation.

What markers should be used?

It is recommended to use durable natural landmarks, for example:

- Fruit trees (mango, avocado, safou, orange, etc.);
- Recognized forest trees;
- Easily identifiable perennial plants.

These markers are preferable to:

- Wooden stakes;
- Moved stones;
- Ribbons;
- Paint marks.

Trees and plants can live for several decades and serve as landmarks for children and grandchildren.

Precautions to take

• **Involve the neighbours**

All adjacent neighbours must be present or represented.

Their involvement helps to confirm the boundaries and avoid future disputes.

• **Reaching an agreement**

Before erecting a boundary marker or marking a boundary, everyone must agree. The process must be conducted through dialogue and without favouritism.

• **Keep evidence**

It is advisable to:

- Take photographs;
- Keep documents;
- Inform family members.

These items may prove useful later on.

The minutes of agreement on boundaries

Once the boundaries have been recognized and accepted by all parties, the commission draws up a **memorandum of understanding**.

This document is very important as it confirms that:

- The applicant and the neighbours agree on the boundaries;
- The plot is recognized by the neighbouring landowners;
- No disputes were identified at the time of the site visit.

These minutes must be signed by the applicant; the neighbouring landowners; the witnesses present; and the members of the verification committee.

It is then forwarded to the chieftom within a maximum of three days following the site visit.



Key message to producers

“Clear boundaries make for good neighbours. When boundaries are recognized, visible and accepted by all, disputes are reduced and plantations are better protected for children and future generations.”

Physical marking and the minutes of agreement enable a verbal agreement between neighbours to be transformed into lasting evidence, recognized by the community and kept on file in the land registry.

7. Verification and filing of the file at the chieftaincy level;

After the field visits, the work does not stop. All documents collected must be verified and properly filed before ARDFC or AJPTER certificates are issued. This step ensures that each file is complete, accurate and ready for validation by the chieftom.

Which documents are verified?

For each applicant, the file must generally contain:

- The ARDFC or AJPTER application;
- A copy of the identity document;
- The GPS data collection form;
- The signed verification report;
- Any other documents required by the chieftom.

Who is responsible for this verification?

The village head may appoint one or two land focal points to assist him with this task. These people play a very important role in ensuring the process runs smoothly.

What do focal points do ?

• Gathering the files

They sort the files according to the type of certificate requested:

- ARDFC;
- AJPTER.

• Checking the information

They ensure that:

- All the information has been provided;
- Signatures are present;
- The necessary documents are attached.

- **Number the files**

Each file is given a number to facilitate tracking and archiving.

- **Identify any problems**

They identify:

- Incomplete files;
- Files involving disputes or challenges;
- Missing information.

- **Preparing files for approval**

Complete files are forwarded to the village head for review and signature.

- **Updating the land registers**

The information is recorded in the chiefdom's registers to ensure a permanent record is maintained.

- **Preparing plot maps**

The GPS data sheets are sent to the cartographer, who produces sketches or maps of the plots.

- **Archiving the files**

A copy of the files is kept at the chiefdom for future reference.

Why is this step important ?

This verification helps to:

- Prevent administrative errors;
- Prevent documents from being overlooked;
- Reduce the number of complaints;
- To minimize disputes;
- To ensure the transparency of the process.

A well-prepared application facilitates the issuing of the certificate and builds trust within the community.



Key message to producers

“A reliable certificate is based on a complete and thoroughly verified application. Every document, every signature and every piece of information counts towards safeguarding your plantation and your family's rights in the long term.”

The verification and filing of applications ensure that ARDFC and AJPTER certificates are issued transparently, with reliable information recognized by the whole community.

8. Production of the plot sketch by a cartographer 10 days after the data and GPS records have been submitted;

The plot sketch (Appendix 9): **a simple map to better protect your plantation** Once the plot has been georeferenced, a **sketch** is drawn up. This is a simple map showing the plot's location; its boundaries; its shape; its approximate dimensions; and neighbouring plots.

The sketch allows everyone to see clearly where the plantation is located and what its boundaries are.

Why is the sketch important?

The sketch helps to :

- Avoid confusion between neighbours;
- Reduce land disputes;
- To keep a record of the plot's boundaries;
- To facilitate the recognition of land rights;
- To better protect the plantation for the heirs.

When the sketch is based on GPS coordinates and validated by the parties concerned, it becomes a very useful document for proving the exact location of the plot.

What will the sketch be used for in the future?

The sketch can be used :

- In the event of a family inheritance;
- In the event of a land dispute;
- To prepare a cadastral map;
- For future procedures to secure land rights

It represents a first step towards a better understanding and organization of land. It is advisable to submit grouped applications.

Why encourage joint applications?

Producing sketches often requires the services of a cartographer. This service comes at a cost. To reduce expenditure, it is advisable for several producers from the same village or the same group to submit their applications together.

When applications are grouped together, the costs are shared; the cartographer's movement is optimized; and the cost per producer is reduced.



Message to producers

“A plot sketch is like your plantation’s identity card. It shows where it is located, what its boundaries are, and helps protect your family’s rights for years to come.”

By working together to produce the sketches, cocoa and coffee producers can reduce costs whilst strengthening land security for their plantations and their heirs.

9. Extended validation meeting for applications with local leaders and communities

Before the ARDFC and AJPTER certificates are issued, a large meeting is organized in the village. This meeting allows the whole community to check one last time that the information contained in the files is accurate and that no one has been overlooked.

This is an important step in ensuring transparency, avoiding conflicts and strengthening everyone's confidence in the process.

Who attends this meeting?

The meeting brings together, in particular, the village chief; local dignitaries; members of the verification committee; land focal points; applicants; neighbouring residents; and other interested members of the community.

This collective participation ensures that everyone has been informed and has had the opportunity to express themselves.

Why is this meeting important?

This meeting enables:

- Carry out a final check of the applications;
- Identify any disputes;
- Correct any errors or omissions;
- Add any missing signatures;
- Find solutions in the event of disagreement;
- Approve the files before the certificates are signed.

How does the meeting proceed?

- **Opening remark by the village chief**

The village chief or their representative explains the purpose of the meeting; the rules of the process; and the criteria for approving applications.

- **Presentation of the progress report**

The focal points present information on:

- The number of applications received;
- Complete applications;
- Incomplete applications;
- Applications subject to appeals.

- **Collective review of applications**

The community can verify the information; flag any errors; draw attention to a problem that has not yet been identified.

- **Problem-solving**

Where possible, disagreements are discussed and consensual solutions are sought.

- **Validation of applications**

Complete and uncontested files are numbered, filed and prepared for the village step helps to avoid delays or disputes after the certificate has been issued.



Key message to producers

The validation meeting is the community's last opportunity to check that everything is in order before the certificates are issued. The more everyone participates, the better everyone's rights are protected.'

Thanks to this meeting, the ARDFC and AJPTER certificates are based on a community consensus, thereby strengthening their credibility, transparency and acceptance by the whole village.

10. Issuing the certificate,

Provided there is no dispute regarding the plot and the applicant has supplied all the required documents and met the relevant conditions, the ARDFC or AJPT certificate will be issued to the applicant within fifteen (15) days of the submission of the plot sketch.

Following the site visits, checks and the validation meeting, comes the final stage: **the signing and issuing of the certificate**. It is at this point that customary land rights or peaceful occupation of the plot are officially recognized by the chiefdom.

Who can sign a certificate?

Certificates must be signed by a competent traditional authority from the village or chiefdom where the plot is located.

Depending on the local customary organization, this authority may be:

- A third-degree traditional chief;
- A second-degree traditional chief;
- A first-degree traditional chief;

This authority must be officially recognized by the administration.

Who is eligible for a certificate?

Beneficiaries must generally:

- Belong to the community or family concerned;
- Be recognized as holders of customary rights or as occupants/operators of the plot;
- Have completed all the required verification steps.

What happens before the certificate is signed?

Before signing the certificate, the village chief meets with the applicant again. The immediate neighbour may also be present. This meeting serves to:

- Check the information one last time;
- Answer any questions;
- Gather any final comments or observations;
- Ensure that there are no significant disputes

If there are no disputes or significant objections, the chief approves the application; he signs the certificate; he affixes his official stamp.

The certificate then becomes a document officially recognized by the chiefdom.

How many copies are produced?

The certificate is drawn up in two original copies. One is for the archives and the other is given to the applicant. The producers keep their document to protect their rights; to prepare for passing it on to their heirs; and to have proof should the need arise.



Key message to producers

“The signature of the ARDFC or the AJPTER marks the culmination of a transparent and participatory process. It provides evidence recognized by the community and the chiefdom to protect the plantation today and for future generations.”

A certificate that is properly drawn up, well preserved and recognized by all helps to strengthen land security, reduce conflicts and preserve the heritage of cocoa and coffee producers.

11. Drawing up the village map;

All the plot sketches and other information available in the village are used to draw up the village map.

12. Archiving.

Archiving the files: preserving evidence for today and tomorrow

Once the ARDFC and AJPTER certificates have been issued, it is very important to keep all the documents in the file safe. This stage is known as archiving.

Archiving makes it easy to retrieve information when needed and protects the rights of producers and their heirs

Why archive documents?

Land title documents may be useful for many years after they have been issued. They may be used:

- In the event of a land dispute;
- In the event of a family inheritance;
- To confirm the boundaries of a plantation;
- To respond to a request from the land registry or cadastral authorities;
- To update information on a plot of land

Where should the documents be kept?

• **Physical archiving (strongly recommended)**

Documents are kept at the village council in a secure location. For example, a metal filing cabinet; a safe; or the village chief's office.

Access to the files must be controlled to prevent loss or unauthorized modifications.

• **Digital archiving (where possible)**

Where resources allow, documents can be scanned; saved on a computer; stored on a secure USB key; or backed up on a digital platform. This protects the documents from damp; fire; and accidental loss.

Which documents should be retained?

The archives include, in particular:

- ARDFC or AJPTER applications;
- Inspection reports;
- GPS records;
- Copies of identity documents;
- Sketches of the plots;
- Signed certificates;
- The village land register.

Why are the files numbered?

Each file is given a unique number. This makes it possible to:

- A file to be found quickly;
- Avoid confusion;
- Better tracking;
- To facilitate future searches.

.Updating files

The status of a plot of land may change over time. For example:

- The death of the owner;

- Inheritance;
- Change of farmer;
- Land dispute;
- Change in land use.

When this happens, the new information must be added to the file so that the records remain up to date.



Key message to producers

“A well-preserved certificate protects not only the producer, but also their children and grandchildren. A lost document can cause difficulties; a properly archived document safeguards rights for the long term.”

Archiving is the village’s land memory. It ensures the traceability of recognized rights, facilitates the resolution of disputes and contributes to social stability and the sustainable development of cocoa- and coffee-producing communities.

MODULE 5 : CASE STUDIES

In this module, we present two possible cases. One concerns the ARDFC and the other the AJPTER.

Case 1: Inheritance

Case study: Family inheritance and securing agricultural land through the ARDFC and the AJPTER



Practical case: Papa Ndzi's cocoa plantation

Instruction: The trainer should simply narrate (or have the participants read) the initial situation as a story, highlighting the problem that arose in relation to the case, what was done to address the problem (intervention by the authorities) and the outcome.

In a second stage, the trainer discusses with the producers the lessons learnt from this case. A few participants share the lessons they have drawn, and the trainer commends them while emphasizing the three key lessons identified in the case.

Initial situation

Papa Ndzi was a respected cocoa farmer in his village. For over 30 years, he had developed an 8-hectare plantation inherited from his father, which he had expanded over time.

The whole community recognized that this plantation belonged to his family. However, Papa Ndzi had no documents officially certifying his customary rights.

On his death, he left behind three sons; two daughters; a widow; and a productive cocoa plantation.

The problem

A few months after the mourning ceremonies:

- a cousin claimed that the land belonged to the clan and not to Papa Ndzi's family;
- one of the sons laid claim to the entire plantation;
- the boundaries of certain plots were disputed;
- cocoa buyers began to worry about the disputes.

The family spent several years embroiled in disputes.

Consequences:

- a fall in production;
- abandonment of certain plots;
- loss of income;
- deterioration in family relationships

Intervention by local authorities

The traditional chief, local dignitaries and the relevant authorities explained to the family the importance of securing land tenure. They recommended:

The ARDFC

This certificate would have made it possible to:

- officially recognize Papa Ndzi's customary land rights over the plantation;

- clearly identify the legitimate heirs;
- maintain an officially recognized record of the family's rights

Outcome following regularization

With the support of community leaders:

- the boundaries of the land were clarified;
- the heirs' rights were recognized;
- conflicts were reduced;
- the plantation was preserved;
- the children were able to continue cocoa production.

Lessons for cocoa and coffee producers

Lesson one: Land is a legacy

A cocoa or coffee plantation often represents several decades of work.

Without proof of recognized rights:

- heirs may be exposed to disputes;
- investments may be lost.

Lesson two: Prevention is better than cure

While the producer is still alive:

- he knows the history of the land;
- they can identify the boundaries;
- they can help ensure that rights are recognized.

After their death, evidence often becomes more difficult to establish.

Third lesson: Protecting future generations

The ARDFC and the AJPTER help to:

- protecting children and widows;
- reducing inheritance disputes;
- ensuring the continuity of farms.



Key message to remember

A cocoa or coffee tree can produce for several decades. The land on which it grows must be protected in the same way.

The ARDFC and AJPTER do not just protect the land; they also help to protect families, heirs, agricultural investments and the future of generations to come. This is why it is in the interests of cocoa and coffee producers to secure their land rights before disputes arise.

Case 2: Long-term farming

Case study: A farm and the importance of the AJPTER



Instruction

The trainer should simply narrate (or have participants read) the initial situation as a story, highlighting the emergence of the problem in relation to the case, the possible consequences, and the AJPTER as a solution. Conclude with a discussion of the outcomes following the award of the certificate.

Objective

To help small-scale cocoa and coffee farmers understand that even when land has been farmed for a very long time and is recognized by everyone in the village, it is important to have documents in place to secure land rights and prevent future conflicts.

Case study: Mr Etoa's plantation

Initial situation

Mr Etoa has been a cocoa farmer in a neighbouring village for several years. His cocoa plantation is almost ready for production. In addition to planting cocoa trees, he has gradually expanded his farm, built a drying shed, maintained the boundaries of his plantation and employed seasonal workers.

Today, the whole village knows that this plantation belongs to him. However, Mr Etoa does not possess any documents officially certifying his rights to peaceful enjoyment of the land.

A problem arises

Over time :

- the older witnesses are beginning to pass away;
- the boundaries are becoming less clear;
- new residents are moving into the area;
- some distant family members begin to lay claim to certain areas.

One day, a neighbour claims that two hectares of the plantation belong to his family. As there are no official documents, it becomes difficult to resolve the situation quickly.

Possible consequences

Without secure land tenure:

- conflicts may arise;
- agricultural investments are at risk;
- children risk inheriting a conflict-ridden situation;
- certain agricultural projects may be held up.

After all these years of work, some of Mr Etoa's efforts could be questioned

The solution : AJPTER

The Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land makes it possible to:

- certify that the farmer has been cultivating the land for a long time without any major conflict;
- to demonstrate continuous and peaceful occupation;
- to enhance the security of the farm.



Message to producers

“The longer you have been farming the land peacefully, the more important it is to keep proof of this use.”

Results following the issuance of certificates

Thanks to the support of local and community authorities:

- boundaries are more clearly defined;
- neighbours officially recognize the situation;
- the risk of disputes is reduced;
- heirs have points of reference;
- the farm is more secure.

Mr Etoa can continue to invest in his plantation with peace of mind.

Key lesson

A long history of operation is a strength, but human memory eventually fades. Witnesses grow old.

Boundaries may be contested.

Heirs may face difficulties.

The ARDFC and the AJPTER enable oral and customary recognition to be transformed into a better-documented and more secure form of recognition.



Final sensitization message

“A cocoa or coffee plantation takes decades to build up. It is wise to legally protect what many years of work have helped to build.”

Even if the whole village knows about your plantation today, it is important that this recognition is also recorded in writing.

MODULE 6 : ROLE-PLAY

Role-play: Community sensitization on the ARDFC and the AJPTER

Note: To facilitate the role-play, the trainer assigns roles to the participants. For each scene, the lines for each character are copied out and given to the person playing that role. The aim is not to recite the lines verbatim, but to grasp the essence of the message and to be creative.

Theme: Land tenure security through the ARDFC and the AJPTER

Objective of the role-play

To enable community leaders to understand: the importance of the ARDFC; the importance of the AJPTER; their role in preventing land conflicts; the benefits of land security for local development.

Characters (for each scene, write out each character's role on a piece of paper). NB: At the end, as with the case study, draw on the realities and terminology of the communities.

1. The traditional chief
2. An Elder
3. The young farmer
4. The widow who runs the farm
5. An investor/agro-industrialist
6. A community leader

Scene 1: The land dispute

Setting

Under the village discussion tree.

Dialogue

- **Young farmer**
- **Young farmer**

Chief, someone wants to sell the land my father left me. Yet our family has been farming this land for a long time.

- **Widow farming the land**

Me too – they're threatening to kick me off my field because I don't have any papers.

- **Village elder**

In our village, many disputes start like this. Everyone speaks according to tradition, but there is no recognized evidence.

- **Traditional chief**

It has become difficult to protect families' land without official documents.

Scene 2: Enlightened community leader

- **Community leader**

I attended a workshop with GIZ (ProPFR and SAFE). We were told about two (02) documents to secure our land and prevent disputes.

- **Everyone (young people, widows, local dignitaries, chief)**

Please explain why they are important.

Scene 3: Explanation of the ARDFC

- **Community Leader**

The Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) serves to officially recognize the customary rights of a family or community over a piece of land.

- **Traditional Chief**

So our traditions are taken into account?

- **Community Leader**

Yes. Traditional chiefs, local dignitaries and neighbours are involved in the recognition of these rights.

- **Local Elder**

Could this help reduce conflicts?

- **Community Leader**

Exactly. When rights are officially recognized, fraudulent sales decrease; boundaries are better understood; and families are protected.

Scene 4: Explanation of AJPTER

- **Widow farming the land**

And what about those who are peacefully occupying their land?

- **Community Leader**

That is the purpose of the Certificate of Peaceful Land Use (AJPTER). It demonstrates that a person is farming land without any recognized dispute.

- **Young farmer**

So can I secure my farm?

- **Community Leader**

Yes. It can also help with: agricultural projects; funding; support from NGOs; and investment.

Scene 5: Investor's intervention

- **Investor**

Our company wanted to develop an agricultural project here, but we were worried about land disputes.

- **Community Leader**

And now?

- **Investor**

With documents such as the ARDFC and the AJPTER, we feel more confident about working with the communities.

Scene 6: Message from community leaders

- **Traditional chief**

We need to sensitize the whole community.

- **Elder**

Our ancestors' lands must be protected.

- **Community**

Without land security: conflicts increase; young people lose their land; development becomes difficult.

- **Widow farming the land**

Women, too, must be supported in obtaining these certificates.

- **Young farmer**

Secure land gives people the confidence to invest and work.

Conclusion of the role-play

Community leader

The ARDFC and AJPTER are important tools for:

- protecting customary rights;
- preventing conflicts;
- securing farms;
- encouraging local development;
- strengthen social harmony.

Community leaders are the key players in this success

Key messages to remember

ARDFC officially recognizes customary rights. Protects family and community lands. Reduces conflicts.

AJPTER certifies the peaceful occupation of land. It provides security for land users. It facilitates projects and investment.

The trainer should prepare a number of tools, including:

- ✓ Flipchart
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Practical worksheets
- ✓ Printed case studies
- ✓ Blank comparison table

CONCLUSION

The new land certificates provide a good opportunity for participation in land governance at local level. It is up to the various stakeholders. They do not replace the land title (LT), which is the official certification of land ownership. They serve to prevent conflicts and improve social harmony. If properly drawn up, they can assist in the process of obtaining a land title.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Circular Letter No. 0001 of 20 February 2026 setting out the procedures for issuing a Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) and a Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
PAIX - TRAVAIL - PATRIE

MINISTRE DES DOMAINES, DU CADASTRE ET
DES AFFAIRES FONCIERES

CABINET DU MINISTRE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PEACE - WORK - FATHERLAND

MINISTRY OF STATE PROPERTY, SURVEYS
AND LAND TENURE

MINISTER'S CABINET

LETTRE-CIRCULAIRE N° 0001/MINDCAF/CAB/LC DU 20 FEV 2026
précisant les modalités de délivrance d'une Attestation de Reconnaissance
des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et d'une Attestation de Jouissance
Paisible des Terres (AJPTER)

LE MINISTRE DES DOMAINES, DU CADASTRE ET DES AFFAIRES FONCIERES,

A MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS :

- LES GOUVERNEURS DE REGION ;
- LES PREFETS ;
- LES SOUS-PREFETS ;
- LES DELEGUES REGIONAUX / MINDCAF ;
- LES DELEGUES DEPARTEMENTAUX / MINDCAF ;
- LES CHEFS DES UNITES DE COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL.

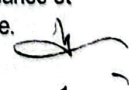
La présente Lettre-Circulaire précise les modalités de délivrance, sur l'ensemble du territoire national, de l'Attestation de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et de l'Attestation de Jouissance Paisible des Terres (AJPTER), mentionnés dans la Lettre-Circulaire n°0006/MINDCAF/CAB/LC du 26 décembre 2025 instituant une « Lettre de non-objection » du Chef de l'Unité de Commandement Traditionnel de 1^{er} ou de 2^{ème} degré territorialement compétent pour la validation, au niveau départemental, des dossiers de demandes d'immatriculation directe ou de concession provisoire des dépendances du domaine national pour des superficies supérieures à dix (10) hectares.

1- Nature des documents et objectifs visés

a) Les Attestations de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et les Attestations de Jouissance Paisible des Terres (AJPTER) sont des documents intermédiaires au processus d'obtention du titre foncier, qui est la certification officielle de la propriété immobilière. Leur institution s'inscrit dans une démarche d'internalisation, au niveau national, des bonnes pratiques internationales en matière de gouvernance foncière.

b) L'Attestation de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers et L'Attestation de Jouissance Paisible des Terres visent respectivement à promouvoir les droits fonciers des collectivités coutumières ou des communautés familiales et de leurs membres et à améliorer la protection des droits d'occupation, d'exploitation des utilisateurs des terres. Elles constituent, en outre, un commencement de preuve de l'occupation ou de l'exploitation d'une parcelle de terrain du domaine national par le demandeur.

c) Ces documents visent à contribuer également à la sauvegarde de l'espace vital des collectivités coutumières, en amorçant leur processus de sécurisation, tout en prévenant les litiges fonciers. De même, ils renforcent les efforts des Pouvoirs Publics, à travers le Ministère des Domaines, du Cadastre et des Affaires Foncières (MINDCAF) et ses Partenaires au développement, pour la reconnaissance et la protection des droits fonciers coutumiers des occupants, exploitants ou utilisateurs de la terre.



d) Les Attestations de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et les Attestations de Jouissance Paisible des Terres (AJPTER) ont vocation à être délivrées par les Chefs Traditionnels de 3^{ème} degré, sur les dépendances du domaine national situées dans leur territoire de compétence, dans l'optique de renforcer une meilleure implication des Autorités Traditionnelles à la prévention et au règlement des litiges fonciers sur les dépendances du domaine national et dans le but de donner aux collectivités coutumières, aux communautés familiales et aux populations occupant ou exploitant ces terres, des instruments provisoires reconnus par le Commandement traditionnel qui attestent leur possession coutumière ou jouissance paisible des terres, en attendant l'aboutissement du processus d'obtention du titre foncier, le cas échéant.

2- Fondement juridique

L'ARDFC et l'AJPTER tirent leur fondement juridique des Dispositions réglementaires et des Lettres-Circulaires ministérielles ci-après.

- le Décret n°2008/0739/PM du 23 avril 2008 fixant les règles d'utilisation du sol et de la construction ;
- la Lettre-Circulaire n°0001/MINDCAF/CAB/LC du 02 février 2022 proscrivant la reconnaissance et l'admission des "attestations ou certificats d'abandon des droits coutumiers" dans le cadre des procédures d'immatriculation directe ou par voie de concession concernant les dépendances du domaine national;
- la Lettre-Circulaire n°0001/MINDCAF/CAB/LC du 09 février 2024 portant codification de l'implication des Chefs des Unités de commandement traditionnel dans les procédures d'immatriculation directe des dépendances du domaine national occupées et/ou exploitées en vue de la prévention et/ou de la facilitation du règlement des litiges fonciers ;
- la Lettre-Circulaire n°0002/MINDCAF/CAB/LC du 09 février 2024 instituant un Certificat de Possession des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers Administrativement Reconnus (CPDFC-AR) dans le cadre de la procédure de traitement des demandes d'immatriculation directe des dépendances du domaine national occupées et/ou exploitées en vue de l'obtention d'un titre foncier.
- la Lettre-Circulaire n°0006/MINDCAF/CAB/LC du 26 décembre 2025 susmentionnée

3- Rôles et portée pratique de l'ARDFC et l'AJPTER

L'ARDFC et l'AJPTER ont pour rôle et portée pratique, selon le cas, de :

- constater les droits fonciers coutumiers d'une collectivité coutumière ou d'un membre ; ou la mise en valeur d'une parcelle de terre du domaine national ;
- fournir au Chef traditionnel de premier ou de deuxième degré les éléments matériels pour l'élaboration d'une lettre d'objection ou de non-objection dans le cadre d'une procédure d'immatriculation sur une dépendance du domaine national ;
- faciliter les travaux de la Commission Consultative dans le cadre la procédure d'immatriculation des dépendances du domaine national, à travers la disponibilité des documents provisoires ou intermédiaires sur : l'identité du demandeur, détenteur des droits fonciers coutumiers, la situation du terrain en cause ainsi que des éléments d'information utiles sur l'auteur des mises en valeur ;
- fournir au Délégué Départemental du MINDCAF de céans des éléments en vue de l'élaboration du Certificat de Possession des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers Administrativement Reconnus ;
- amorcer la sécurisation des droits fonciers des couches vulnérables dont les femmes, les jeunes et les personnes présentant un handicap, de même que les populations autochtones ne disposant pas de titre foncier, en les dotant d'un document intermédiaire justifiant de la possession coutumière ou de la mise en valeur d'une dépendance du domaine national ;

- justifier l'identité de l'auteur d'une mise en valeur sur une parcelle de terrain, lors des procédures d'expropriation pour cause d'utilité publique ;
- géo-référencer les parcelles concernées et matérialiser leurs limites.

4- Les travaux préparatoires à la délivrance des ARDFC et AJPTER comprennent :

- a) l'information et la sensibilisation ;
- b) la publicité pour informer tous les riverains ;
- c) le dépôt des demandes auprès du Chef traditionnel de troisième degré compétent ;
- d) la désignation par la Chefferie traditionnelle concernée d'une Commission ad hoc chargée de la vérification de la disponibilité et de la non-existence de conflits sur la parcelle de terrain en question ;
- e) le Géoréférencement de ladite parcelle et la matérialisation des limites en cas d'inexistence de conflit ;
- f) la signature d'un procès-verbal d'entente par le requérant, les voisins, les témoins, matérialisant des accords écrits et convenus qui clarifient les limites entre les parcelles occupées ou mises en valeur ;
- g) le traitement des dossiers et la production des cartes des parcelles concernées.

5- Les modalités de délivrance de l'Attestation de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et de l'Attestation de Jouissance Paisible Des Terres (AJPTER) sur le domaine national.

a) Personnes physiques ou morales éligibles :

- Sont habilitées à solliciter la délivrance d'une ARDFC sur une dépendance du domaine national qu'elles occupent ou exploitent : les Collectivités coutumières, les communautés familiales ou leurs membres, détenteurs de droits fonciers coutumiers.

- Sont habilités à solliciter la délivrance d'une AJPTER sur une dépendance du domaine national : les auteurs d'une mise en valeur probante, de nationalité camerounaise, habitant au sein d'une Collectivité coutumière, d'une Communauté familiale ou d'un village, et à condition que la mise en valeur date d'au moins cinq (05) ans et que l'occupation ou l'exploitation soit paisible.

b) Autorités compétentes :

- L'ARDFC et l'AJPTER sont délivrées par le Chef traditionnel de troisième degré, du lieu de situation du terrain concerné, dûment reconnu par les Autorités administratives territorialement compétentes.

- A titre exceptionnel, ces attestations peuvent être, le cas échéant co-signées par les chefs de commandement traditionnel de premier ou de deuxième degré du lieu de situation du terrain, lorsque les impératifs de respect des us et coutumes locaux l'exigent.

c) Espaces concernés du domaine national : les attestations faisant l'objet de la présente lettre – circulaire sont délivrées sur des terres occupées ou exploitées, lesquelles relèvent du domaine national de première catégorie. Par conséquent, ne sont pas concernées les terres vierges, libres de toute occupation ou qui n'ont pas fait l'objet d'une mise en valeur.

6- Composition du dossier et étapes de la procédure

a) Toute personne habilitée à solliciter la délivrance d'une ARDFC sur une dépendance du domaine national, doit constituer un dossier comprenant :

- une demande écrite adressée au Chef traditionnel de troisième degré du lieu de situation de la parcelle de terrain ;
- une photocopie de la carte nationale d'identité ou de l'acte de naissance ;
- le procès-verbal du conseil de famille, s'il s'agit d'une parcelle de terrain à prélever sur un ensemble plus grand de la Communauté familiale possédant des droits coutumiers sur l'espace sollicité.

b) Toute personne habilitée à solliciter la délivrance d'une AJPTER sur une dépendance du domaine national, doit constituer un dossier comprenant :

- une demande écrite adressée au Chef traditionnel de troisième degré du lieu de situation de la parcelle de terrain et précisant l'année d'occupation ou d'exploitation de la parcelle de terrain en question ;
- les photocopies des cartes nationales d'identité ou des actes de naissance des deux Parties (requérant et détenteur des droits fonciers coutumiers);
- une fiche descriptive des mises en valeur réalisées par le requérant sur la parcelle de terrain en question. Cette fiche doit être signée par le requérant.

Dans tous les cas, la parcelle de terrain en cause ne doit pas être déjà légalement attribuée à un tiers (titre foncier, concession...) ou faire l'objet d'une gestion par l'Etat (incorporation dans le domaine privé de l'Etat, classement. etc.).

Toute demande incomplète doit être complétée pour aboutissement de la procédure.

Le dépôt du dossier donne lieu à la délivrance d'un récépissé sur lequel sont indiqués la date et le numéro du dossier.

Dès réception du dossier, le Chef traditionnel de troisième degré dispose d'un délai de quinze (15) jours pour tenir une assise en vue d'examiner la demande.

c) Après écoute des Parties, le Chef traditionnel constitue la Commission restreinte ad hoc de vérification de la possession des droits fonciers coutumiers ou d'occupation/exploitation/utilisation paisible d'une parcelle de terrain du domaine national, chargée :

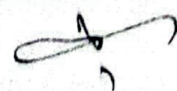
- d'effectuer une descente sur le terrain en question, afin de constater l'effectivité des droits fonciers coutumiers ou les mises en valeur probantes;
- de constater l'occupation ou l'exploitation paisible du terrain ;
- de vérifier la non-existence d'un litige foncier sur la parcelle de terrain en question, en présence des voisins ;
- de procéder, le cas échéant, au géoréférencement de la parcelle ;
- d'établir le procès-verbal des travaux qui sera transmis au Chef traditionnel, pour suite de la procédure.

La Commission de vérification ad hoc se réunit, en cas de besoin, sur convocation du Chef Traditionnel de 3^{ème} degré territorialement compétent. La commission restreinte est composée ainsi qu'il suit :

- le Chef de quartier ou de bloc, désigné comme Chef de mission et Représentant le Chef de village ;
- deux (02) opérateurs locaux GPS.

d) Après réception du procès-verbal de la mission de vérification de la possession des droits fonciers coutumiers ou d'occupation/exploitation/utilisation paisible d'une parcelle de terrain du domaine national, le Chef Traditionnel de troisième degré de céans convoque une assise de la Commission élargie ad-hoc de vérification de la possession des droits fonciers coutumiers ou d'occupation/exploitation/utilisation paisible d'une parcelle de terrain du domaine national chargée :

- d'examiner la demande d'une attestation de reconnaissance des droits fonciers coutumiers ou de jouissance paisible des terres sur la base du procès-verbal de la mission de vérification menée par la commission restreinte Ad hoc ;
- de délibérer et donner un avis, soit d'opposition, d'acceptation ou de règlement préalable d'un litige sur les limites de ladite parcelle avant validation.



Elle est composée des membres ci-après :

- le Chef Traditionnel de troisième degré de céans (Président)
- le Chef de quartier ou de bloc du lieu de situation du terrain, Chef de la mission de vérification de la possession des droits fonciers coutumiers ou d'occupation/exploitation/utilisation paisible de la parcelle de terrain concernée ;
- un Notable du village ;
- Un secrétaire de séance, qui assure la communication et le secrétariat (sensibilisation, rédaction des procès-verbaux...) ;
- une représentante des femmes du village ;
- un (e) représentant (e) des jeunes ;
- un (e) représentant (e) des personnes marginalisées/vulnérables/personne présentant un handicap, le cas échéant ;
- un (e) opérateur GPS.

En fonction du contexte, cette composition peut être ajustée pour tenir compte des spécificités de chaque village. Toutefois, elle s'appuie généralement sur les structures traditionnelles existantes de prévention et de gestion des conflits fonciers.

7- Délivrance des Attestations

En l'absence d'un litige foncier et dès lors que le demandeur a produit toutes les pièces requises et remplit les conditions exigées, l'ARDFC ou l'AJPTER est signée et délivrée par le Chef traditionnel de troisième degré du lieu de situation du terrain, dans un délai de quinze (15) jours, après obtention du procès-verbal des travaux de terrain de la Commission retreinte ad hoc de vérification.

a) La durée de validité d'une AJPTER est de cinq (05) ans renouvelable selon la même procédure que son établissement.

b) La délivrance desdites Attestations est gratuite. Toutefois, les charges liées à leur délivrance sont supportées par le demandeur.

c) Les étapes de la procédure de délivrance de l'ARDFC et de l'AJPTER sont précisées dans un Guide d'informations.

8- Fichier des Attestations

a) Un fichier annuel actualisé des Attestations de Reconnaissance des Droits Fonciers Coutumiers (ARDFC) et des Attestations de Jouissance Paisible des Terres (AJPTER) est établi et mis à la disposition des Administrations qui en expriment le besoin.

b) Les ARDFC et les documents ayant servi de base à leur établissement sont mis à la disposition de la Commission Consultative, le cas échéant, pour exploitation lors des procédures d'immatriculation des dépendances du domaine national et pour classement.

9- Dispositions légales et réglementaires permanentes de référence

a) Seuls les terrains régulièrement immatriculés peuvent faire l'objet de transactions immobilières privées, en application des dispositions de l'ordonnance n°74/1 du 06 juillet 1974 fixant le régime foncier. Il en découle que l'ARDFC et l'AJPTER ne peuvent servir de base à aucune transaction foncière ou immobilière.

b) Il importe de rappeler que sont interdits et non reconnus par le MINDCAF, dans les procédures d'immatriculation directe ou par concession provisoire : « les attestations ou certificats d'abandon de droits coutumiers » établis et délivrés par les Chefs traditionnels ou des représentants des Collectivités coutumières voire des membres de celles-ci puis homologués par les Autorités administratives. Ils sont, par conséquent, considérés comme nuls et de nul effet.

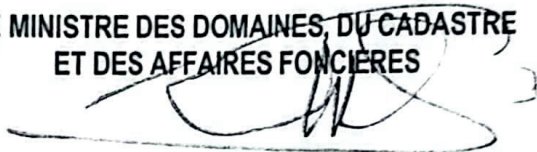
10- Disposition finale

L'ARDFC et l'AJPTER délivrées par les Chefs des Unités de Commandement Traditionnel ne sont pas des actes administratifs créateurs de droits. Elles constituent des documents constatatifs de l'existence de situations données et des éléments de preuve pouvant servir de base à la prise des actes administratifs par le Responsable administratif ou par l'Autorité administrative en ayant la compétence. Toutefois, le constat de leur nullité peut être prononcé par ces derniers ou par les juridictions compétentes.

Je tiendrai la main ferme au respect scrupuleux des dispositions consignées dans la présente Lettre-Circulaire, qui prendra effet pour compter du 1^{er} avril 2026, et compte devra m'être rendu, par vos soins, avec diligence./-

Yaoundé le **20 FEV 2026**

**LE MINISTRE DES DOMAINES, DU CADASTRE
ET DES AFFAIRES FONCIERES**


Henri EYEBE AYISSI

Appendix 2

Report on the verification mission of the possession of customary land rights on a plot of land

CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS OVER A PLOT OF LAND

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

RÉGION

DÉPARTEMENT

ARRONDISSEMENT

CHEFFERIE 3^{ème}



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN

Peace-Work-Fatherland

..... REGION

..... DIVISION

..... SUBDIVISION

..... TRADITIONAL CHIEFDOM

Report N°..... OF THE VERIFICATION MISSION CONCERNING CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ON A PLOT OR LAND

In the year two thousands.....and on.....,

following a request by M./Mrs.....

On behalf of

Located at.....

Contact

We, the members of the mission to verify ownership of customary land rights over a plot of land,

We visited the property situated at:

Division

Sub-division

Village/Quarter

Whereas the notice announcing the date and time of the mission was published and displayed by the village chief,

Whereas, furthermore, it is hours minutes,

We visited the property situated at :

Division

Sub-division

Names of parties involve in the dispute	Title	Nature of the dispute	Comments

Village/Quarter

We conducted a survey of the property, which is the subject of the application for a Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights, in the company of the applicant, neighbouring landowners and witnesses, and recorded the following:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Property constructed ☐, not constructed ☐, form

Presence of neighbours (s) boundary (ies) : Yes ☐, No ☐

Bordered by :

To the North

To the South.....

To the East.....

to the West.....

occupied / developed by Since.....

DISPUTE

Is there a dispute regarding the property ?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If Yes, specify

Whereas no objection were noted / disputes were registered

Delete the Non -applicable

Favorable ☐ Unfavorable ☐ Tick the correct box

Having been read out and translated into the local language..... to the applicants and

witnesses, who declared that they recognized its full validity, these minutes are drawn up to serve and have the legal effect required by law.

The following persons were present :

Applicant, witnesses and neighbouring residents where applicable

Names	Title	Signature or thumbprint fingerprint

Other persons

Names	Title	Signature or thumbprint fingerprint

Members of the mission

Names	Title	Signature or thumbprint fingerprint

These minutes were drawn up on the day, month and year stated above.

Signed on the / /20..

The Head of mission,

Appendix 3

Report on the verification of peaceful occupation/use

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

RÉGION

DÉPARTEMENT

ARRONDISSEMENT

CHEFFERIE 3^{ème}



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN

Peace-Work-Fatherland

..... REGION

..... DIVISION

..... SUBDIVISION

..... TRADITIONAL CHIEFDOM

REPORT N°..... OF THE VERIFICATION MISSION CONCERNING THE OCCUPATION/PEACEFUL ENJOYMENT OF A PLOT OF LAND

In the year 2000 on the, following
a request made by M./Mrs.....

On behalf of.....

Located at.....

Contact.....

We, the members of the inspection team tasked with verifying the occupation/peaceful enjoyment of a plot
of land.

We visited the property situated at:

Division.

Sub-division

Village / Quarter.....

**Whereas the notice announcing the date and time of the mission was published and displayed by
the village chief,**

Whereas, furthermore, it is hours..... minutes,

We have inspected the property, which is the subject of the application for a Certificate of Peaceful
Enjoyment of Land, in the company of the applicant, the neighbouring landowners and witnesses, and
have recorded the following:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Constructed property ☐ or not constructed ☐ form.....

Presence of neighbours (s) boundary(ies) :Yes ☐ No ☐

Bordered by :

To the North ;

To the South..... ;

To the East..... ;

to the West..... ;

occupied / developed by..... Since.....

DISPUTES

Is there a dispute regarding the property?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Si oui, précisez

Names of parties involved in the dispute	Title	Nature of the dispute	Comments

The report was:

☐ Favourable

☐ Non Favourable

(Tick the correct box)

Whereas no objections were noted / objections were recorded Following reading and translation into the local language..... to the applicants and witnesses, who declared that they recognize its full validity, these minutes are drawn up to serve and have the face of law

The following persons were present :

Applicant, witnesses and neighbouring residents where applicable

Name	Title	Signature ,or finger prints

Other persons

Name	Title	Signature ,or finger prints

Members of the Mission

Name	Title	Signature ,or finger prints

These minutes were drawn up on the day, month and year stated above.

Signed on / /20..

The Head of mission,

Appendix 4

The stages involved in issuing land certificates (ARDFC and AJPTER)

The stages of the procedure for issuing certificates recognizing customary land rights or peaceful enjoyment of land

Whether for the Certificate of Recognition of Customary Land Rights (ARDFC) or the Certificate of Peaceful Use of Land(AJPT) the issuing procedure is as follows:

1. Informing and sensitizing the community;
2. Publicizing the process to mobilize all neighbours;
3. Filling and depositing of the application at the chiefdom
4. Appointing members of the verification committee for the peaceful occupation/use of a plot of land
5. Georeferencing of the plot in the absent of a dispute ;
6. Physical marking of the ploy (traditional boundary marking) ;
7. Drawing up of a minutes of agreements on the boundaries, signed by the applicant, the neighbours and the witnesses, and forwarded to the chief within a maximum of three (03) days following the site visit ;
8. Classification and verification of the file at the level of the chiefdom
9. Production of a sketch plot by a cartographer in not more that 10 days after the transmission of the GPS file
10. An extended validation meeting to review the applications with local dignitaries and the communities.
11. Issuance of the certificate: provided there is no dispute concerning the plot and the applicant has supplied all the required documents and met the relevant conditions, the ARDFC or AJPT is issued to the applicant within fifteen (15) days of the submission of the plot sketch;
12. preparation of the village map ;
13. Archiving.

Appendix 5

Application for ARDFC

APPLICATION FOR THE ISSUE OF A CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION OF CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS (ARDFC)

Date of application:

Name:

Customary community to which the applicant belongs.....

Occupation :

Adresse :

Contact :

On behalf of :

Geographical location of the property :

Division :

Sub-division :

Village, quarter :

Estimated area/capacity :

Bordered by :

To the North ;

To the South : ;

To the East ;

To the West..... ;

Signature

The Applicant

At.....on the...../.....

Approved by Chieftdom

N°.....at.....on...../.....

Appendix 6

An application for the AJPTER

APPLICATION FOR THE ISSUE OF A CERTIFICATE OF PEACEFUL USE OF LAND (AJPT)

Date of application :.....

Name:

Community of origin

occupation :

Address :

Contact :

on behalf of :

Geographical location of the property :

Division :

Sub-division :

Village, quarter :

Estimated area/capacity :.....

Bordered by :

To the North ;

To the South : ;

To the East ;

To the West..... ;

Signature

The Applicant

At.....on the...../.....

Approved by Chieftdom

N°.....at.....on...../.....

Appendix 7

GPS Data sheet

GPS Data Collection Form

GPS number Date of collection

Name of data collector..... Contact

1. Information on the owner/head of the household

Community Village

Name

Indigenous ☐ Non-indigenous ☐ Gender.....Age.....Household size.....

Contact.....

2. Information on the plot

constructed ☐ Not constructed ☐ others (specify)

Date of development Description : Bordered by :

To the North ;

To the South : ;

To the East ;

To the West..... ;

Are there any dispute on the plot of land? Yes ☐ NO ☐

3. GPS coordinates of the plot of land

Waypoint Number	Longitude Coordinate (X)	Latitude Coordinate (Y)	Description

Appendix 8

ARDFC Template

Template Certificate of Recognition of Customary Rights (ARDFC)

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix-Travail-Patrie ----- RÉGION		REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN Peace-Work-Fatherland ----- REGION
----- DÉPARTEMENT		----- DIVISION
----- ARRONDISSEMENT		----- SUBDIVISION
----- CHEFFERIE 3 ^{ème}		----- TRADITIONAL CHIEFDOM

Certificate of Recognition of Customary Rights (ARDFC) FOR A PLOT OF LAND

I the undersigned, Chief of the village of

With regards to the application of the

by M. /Mrs/Miss/

For the purpose of obtaining a ARDFC ;

With regards to the documents provide by the applicant ;

With regards to the report of the verification mission concerning the customary rights of this plot of land ...
.....;

which certifies the recognition of customary rights and he absence of any boundary disputes with
neighbouring land owners

Certify that the property located at :

Type of land : Savana ☐, Forest ☐, Habitat ☐, cultivated farm ☐, fallow land ☐,

others.....

With a capacity/estimated area of hectares.

Description: bordered by :

Division

Sub-division

Village

To the North ;
To the South : ;
To the East ;
To the West..... ;

Is occupied/used by

This land may not be the subject of any land transaction prior to registration, in accordance with the land legislation in force.

In witness whereof, subject to any undisclosed rights that may subsequently alter the scope of the applicant's rights, this ARDFC is hereby issued to the applicant to serve and have the force of law.

Done at..... on.....

The Village Chief

Appendix 9

AJPTER Template

Template Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land (AJPTER)

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

RÉGION du Centre

DÉPARTEMENT DU MBAM ET KIM

ARRONDISSEMENT DE YOKO

CHEFFERIE 3^{ème}



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN
Peace-Work-Fatherland

Center REGION

MBAM AND KIM DIVISION

YOKO SUBDIVISION

.....TRADITIONAL CHIEFDOM

CERTIFICATE OF PEACEFUL POSSESSION OF LAND (AJPTER) FOR A PLOT OF LAND

N°

I the undersigned chief of the village of

With regards to the application of.....

by M. /Mrs/Miss/

For the purpose of obtaining a Certificate of Peaceful Possession of Land;

With regards to the documents provided by the applicant;

With regards to the report of the verification mission concerning the occupation/peaceful enjoyment of a plot of land carried out on the

Which certifies the peaceful occupation of the land, the agreements reached with the customary landowners, and the absence of any boundary disputes with neighbouring landowners

Type of land : Savana ☐, Forest ☐, Habitat ☐, cultivated land ☐, fallow land ☐,

others..... With a capacity/estimated area of hectares.

Description : bordered by :

To the North ;

To the South : ;

To the East ;

To the West..... ;

Is occupied /used by ;

This land may not be the subject of any land transaction prior to registration, in accordance with the land legislation in force.

In witness whereof, subject to any undisclosed rights that may subsequently alter the scope of the applicant's rights, this AJPT is hereby issued to the applicant to serve and have the force of law.

Done at on.....

The Village Chief.....

Date of issue.....

Expiry date.....

Example of a plot plan



