

## **INTRO:**

The Government of Cameroon, in recognition of its role in the stewardship of 11% of Congo Basin Forests within its territory, has committed to an ambitious and transformative vision of sustainable management of its forests through its national REDD+ program. Supported by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank, and the German Development Bank (KfW), the government has led the design of a subnational REDD+ program focused on the southern region of the country. The program area contains 92,676 Km<sup>2</sup> of carbon-rich tropical forests, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Dja Reserve, several national parks, a gorilla reserve, cocoa and oil palm smallholders supplying to global markets, as well as many indigenous and forest dependent communities.

In addition to the role of its technical and financial partners such as the World Bank, KfW, and others, as well as its many civil society partners, the Government of Cameroon recognizes the key role of the private sector in partnering for sustainable management and use of its forest resources, and seeks to encourage and promote the highest standards in environmental and social responsibility in natural resource utilization.

The Government of Cameroon acknowledges the efforts made by Taylor Guitars and Madinter Trade, co-owners of the Yaoundé based Crelicam ebony mill, to ensure environmentally and socially responsible business practices, and the sustainable use of Cameroon's tree species that are key to the musical instrument industry.

Taylor Guitars is one of the world's leading manufacturers of premium acoustic guitars. Taylor Guitars and Madinter, as industry leaders in sustainability, have committed to transparent and sustainable sourcing, and a key feature of beauty and function of a guitar is ebony, a traditionally used resource long sought by musical instrument makers worldwide. All ebony used by Taylor Guitars comes from Cameroon's forests.

In order to understand the ecology, extent, and planting potential of this key species, as well as the needs and benefits of the communities from which its supply is sourced, Taylor Guitars fully funds The Ebony Project in partnership with The Congo Basin Institute (CBI), a multi-institution forest and agroforestry research center. The project seeks to better understand the ecology of African Ebony (*Diospyros crassiflora* Hiern) and to enhance stocks through community-driven planting efforts. The project also provides fruit and medicinal trees prioritized by forest communities. From its inception, The Ebony Project has been designed as a pilot for larger scale restoration initiatives.

In recognition of the common goal of forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forest resources:

## **Both parties agree to:**

1. Support sustainable sourcing and forest restoration within the subnational REDD+ program area as an element of activities to sustainably manage Cameroon's forest resources, restore degraded land, and improve the livelihoods of participating communities, with a focus on improving techniques for

propagation and planting of key tree species used in the manufacturing of musical instruments, as well as fruit and medicinal trees prioritized by forest communities.

2. Work with forest communities in the REDD+ program area to improve management practices, including in the development of key species inventories and management plans to ensure a sustainable income from these species to the communities.
3. Jointly explore the potential for expansion of The Ebony Project model of community engagement, plant propagation and planting into restoration and agroforestry activities within the ER-Program area.

### **Government of Cameroon agrees to:**

1. Collaborate with CBI to conduct a technical analysis of the feasibility, opportunities and obstacles of expanding the current Ebony Project into additional forest communities, agroforestry projects, and restoration project areas within the subnational REDD+ program.
2. If expansion is determined to be feasible within the framework of activities for the ER-Program, the Government of Cameroon agrees to work with CBI to secure financing to scale up these activities within the ER-Program area.
3. Support forest communities that supply ebony in the development of basic inventories and improved management plans.

### **Taylor Guitars agrees to:**

1. Continue to provide financial support to CBI for its laboratory and field work to better understand the basic ecology of African ebony, and to improve propagation techniques for the planting of ebony as well as other high-value native tree species for the next three years.
2. Continue to provide good jobs, transfer technology and expand in-country value added processing at the Yaoundé based Crelicam mill.
3. Support the Government of Cameroon in exploring opportunities to secure additional partnerships in support of its REDD+ program.
4. Collaborate with the Government of Cameroon in communication efforts to engage Cameroonians and the international community on the importance of Cameroon's forest to the people of Cameroon, in the global fight against climate change, the protection of crucial habitat and biodiversity, and to the future of the music industry world-wide.

The Government of Cameroon and Taylor Guitars hereby embark on this partnership as a bold first step in public-private collaboration, inspired by the common vision of protecting Cameroon's rich forest resources for future generations.