

**Title: What if forest resources were managed differently? 30 years of experiences and learned lessons from multi-stakeholders' participative model**

- **Date:** February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018
- **Hour:** 17h
- **Venue:** Conference room of LABEF
- **Lecturer:** Karin ORTEGA, conservationist, President of the FONDATION TOBE

**Abstract**

Benin is among the countries wherein both customary and statutory rights drive the governance of forest resources. In the protected area (out of gazetted area), customary right has taken precedence over the statutory one, providing families and communities with legitimacy and extended rights over large agroforestry lands and forests. These ecosystems, generally fall under the tragedy of the common goods, and therefore are under strong human pressure. Over the last decades, non-governmental organizations and specialized agencies of decentralized states have been interested in the integrated and sustainable management of these ecosystems, as a way to stimulate their contribution to local development. This presentation will focus on the Tobé-Kpobidon community forest where a multi-stakeholders' participative model for forest governance is being implemented since 30 years. The presentation will describe the structure and functioning of the governance model, as well as its socio-economic and ecologic outcomes over the 30 years of implementation. The presentation will take an additional step to discuss the learned lessons and explore improvements for increased socio-economic and ecological impact of the model. The model has already inspired some forest management projects in Benin and in West Africa.

**Key words:** Participative management, forest, Tobé-Kpobidon, Benin