

Report of Ex-post Evaluation

PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F)

**Establishment of the Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla
Sanctuary (MMGS) in the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)**

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Sanctuary (MMGS) at the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)
Project PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F)**

Ex-post evaluation Report¹

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Abbreviations

ANPN	Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux / National Parks Agency (Gabon)
CD	<i>Comité Directeur</i> (Project steering committee)
DFAP	<i>Direction de la Faune et des Aires Protégées</i> Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas (Cameroon)
ECOFAC	Project “ <i>Ecosystemes forestiers d’Afrique Centrale</i> ” (European Community)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN/UICN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MINFOF	<i>Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune</i>
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
POA/YPO	<i>Plan d’Operations Annuelle/</i> Yearly Operations Plan
SGM/MGS	Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary established in 2008 (Cameroon)
SGMM/MMGS	Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary (the ITTO Project’s name)
SIG	System of Geographical Information
SOFOPETRA	Petra Forestry Society (a private enterprise that operated in the ZPFM ambit)
TRIDOM	Trinational Dja-Odzala-Minkebe Trinational Transboundary Conservation Area Initiative
ZPFM/MFPA	Zone/Area of Protected Forests of Mengamé (the influence area of the SGM)
WWF	World Wildlife Fund WWF (<i>Fond Mondial pour la Nature</i>)

Overall Executive Summary

1. Introduction

An ex-post evaluation of the ITTO Project PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F) “Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) in the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)” was conducted in June and July 2014 with a 10 days-long visit to Cameroon (July 2-10). A visit has been planned to Gabon². A field visit to the execution site in Cameroon has been made (July 5-8). A large portion of the limits of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and of the proposed Kom National Park were visited.

The Project aimed at the protection of the gorillas and their environment in the Mengamé area of Cameroon, in collaboration with the Government of Gabon. Mengamé, in Cameroon, and Minkebé, in Gabon are densely forested areas reputed for the presence of exceptionally high density populations of gorillas and elephants among other endangered or rare species. The approved execution time was 24 months. The total budget approved for the Project was US\$ 968,091, being US\$ 770,751 provided by **Japan, Switzerland and USA** through ITTO and US\$ 197,340 as counterpart by the Cameroon Government. The Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was the implementing agency with a contractual participation of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Cameroon).

The Project has been approved by the ITTO Council at its Thirtieth Session in June 2001. Full financing was pledged by the governments of Japan, Switzerland and USA at the Thirty-first Council session in November 2001. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the Project was signed on 24 April 2002 and the first disbursement of funds was made in September 2002. Four Project extensions were granted until June 2008 without additional funding by the ITTO Secretariat, based on official requests including proper justification with appropriate detailed work plan and budget. An acceptable version of the Project completion report was received in May 2011. The final financial audit report was received in January 2013. The Project has been presented as completed during the Forty-Seventh Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management on November 2013.

Despite the funding and the execution correspond exclusively to Cameroon, this Project was planned to have some outputs achieved also in Gabon. This country was to make a separate coinciding and coordinated Project proposal that has indeed been prepared (PD 145/02) but did not prosper. A pre-Project PPD 147/10 Rev.1 (F) was carried out in 2011 to develop a Project proposal somehow on line with the follow up of the Project PD 066/ Rev. 1 (F). This new proposal is the PD 663/12 (F) that so far has not been approved by ITTO, for the Gabonese component.

2. Project facts

The development objective of the Project was defined as “*to contribute to the development of an integrated approach for the protection of the forests with the conservation of the gorillas and the development of mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities*”. Two specific objectives were proposed: (i) “*To initiate processes of community participation and awareness in order to conserve Mengamé Protection Forest Area (MPFA or ZPFM)*” and; (ii) “*To initiate a process for cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for the joint management of the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS or SGMM)*”.

It was expected that the proposed Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary may cover up to 122,400 ha in the Cameroon side and 137,500 ha in the Gabon side, forming an ecologically viable patch of forests still in natural conditions. Cameroon also planned a zone of influence including a buffer zone (ZPMF) of 513.000 ha in the region around the protected area.

² The Gabonese Embassy in Brasilia mistakenly emitted a visa with a validity ending before the arrival of the consultant. No solution to the problem was provided neither by Gabon’s Embassy in Yaoundé (Cameroon) nor the immigration authorities in Libreville (Gabon).

Seven outputs were planned: (i) The ZPFM's management structure is in place, (ii) MMGS's management goals are shared by local population and other stakeholders, (iii) guidelines for management of production forests and others in the ZPFM are elaborated, (iv) trans-frontier cooperation structures is established (v) agenda definition and strategy building process is initiated, (vi) illegal activities in the MMGS are prohibited and poaching is reduced and, (vii) a project management plan for the MMGS is elaborated. Twenty-two activities were designed to achieve these outputs (see Table 1).

3. Findings

3.1 Project results

The duration of this project implementation had lasted 104 months (September 2002 to January 2011) instead of 24 initially deigned. The project Completion Report was submitted in May 2011 and its final audit was received in January 2013. However it is important to point out that the effective project termination has been 2008 as no activity directly related to the Project has been realized after that year. US\$ 70,947 of the ITTO contribution was to be returned to ITTO in 2013, after submission of the financial audit.

As can be seen in Table 1 six out of 22 activities were not achieved. But, even considering carried out activities none of the five outputs, nor the two specific objectives or the development objective were attained. The activities that were carried out, including those made with adequate quality, were largely unsuccessful or had no follow up.

Two explicit or implicit pre-conditions of the Project were not fulfilled: (i) the establishment of coalescent protected areas in each side of the international limit and, (ii) the collaboration of Cameroon and Gabon to jointly manage the protected areas.

Table 1. Achievements of the Project since initiation until its technical finalization		
Product/Activity	Achievements 2002-2008	Comments
Output 1.1 The ZPFM's management structure is in place		
• Staffing	Project Director, Technical Advisor, technical staff (biologist, accountant, social-economics affairs, secretary, GIS specialist, driver)	Staff has been in place since October 2003 or later. The Project Director and eco-guards were the first in place. Most appointments were late in the process.
• Headquarters (160 m ²) & herbarium	Not done	This small building was never built. The headquarters operated in a rented house for a while.
• GIS	Done	It was installed and operative for a while. Products are unknown.
• 4 guard posts	Not done	The posts were never built.
• Equipment	A 4-wheel drive truck, 4 radios, SIG equipment, computers, camping material, electric generator (mostly purchased in 2003)	During the first two years the vehicle's Project has been provided by the Government. No equipment is left over.
Output 1.2 MGS's management goals are shared by local population and other stakeholders		
• Sensitization planning	The work to raise awareness and sensitize local policy makers as well as villagers has been intense over the period (2003-2007).	Over 200 meetings with villagers and others. However, much interference compromised the work that has not been continued.
• Seminars & workshops with local authorities and villagers		
• Socioeconomic research		
Output 1.3 Guidelines for management of production forests and others in the ZPFM are elaborated		
• Regulations for logging	Prepared in 2006	The regulations are quite good and, in theory, accepted by some
• Directives for participatory	No specific document	

management in buffer zones	available. Directives are included in the management plan.	logging enterprises.
Output 2.1 Trans-frontier cooperation is established		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination meetings between Cameroun and Gabon officers to establish 	Most meetings, workshop and other actions planned were carried out (2003-2007). Two workshops were particularly important (Sangmelina, 2004 and Oyem, 2005) to elaborate an anti-poaching strategy.	However, the Gabonese side did not develop its part of the agreements or strategies nor the planned twin ITTO Project.
Output 2.2 Definition & launching of a Cameroun/Gabon strategy for the SGMM.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft strategy and national validation workshops 	A draft was produced with Gabon's staff participation.	No validation workshops. Gabon's abstention to approve it.
Output 2.3 Illegal activities in the Sanctuary are prohibited and poaching is reduced		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building of 3 control posts 	Not done	These posts could have been built in the Cameroon side.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacitation of 30 eco-guards 	Training was carried out for 15 Cameroon's eco-guards	Not for Gabonese guards.
Output 2.4 Trans-frontier cooperation is established		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-resources inventory 	Done in 2006	The studies were not published or divulgated. All these reports were made under agreement with the WWF. They are of sufficient quality for a first management plan. Some reports are much more wildlife resources inventories or census than comprehensive ecological studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special studies about elephants and gorillas 	Done in 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ornithological study 	Done in 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study about non-timber products 	Done in 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study about aquatic biota 	Done in 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study on ecotourism potential 	Done in 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management plan for the MGS 	Done as a draft only for Cameroun's side, in 2007. It was validated at local level in 2007.	Inconclusive due to the fact that the Kom sector status was not defined.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International workshop for management plan validation 	Not done	

However some unexpected results were achieved during and after effective project termination (see Table 2), including the establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary in 2008 however much smaller than as previously planned. The Cameroon Government is currently planning significant investments in this area: a director and 22 eco-guards are in place, its management plan is ready for approval, a headquarters will imminently be built and an operational budget for the Sanctuary is considered for 2015.

Table 2. Achievements not included as original Project's outputs or attained after its technical termination and their limitations	
Establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (2008)	A pre-condition of the Project was the establishment of a large protected area in the Cameroun side, under the name of Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary. It was decided to establish two separate protected areas: (i) the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (27,723 ha) and the Kom National Park (67,838 ha). However, until today only the first was established.
New draft management plan for the MGS (2014?)	On the basis 2007 draft a new actualized and specific management plan for the MGS was prepared and validated at local and national level. It is waiting for approval by the MINFOF and expected for this year.
Documentation (draft decree) for the establishment of the Kom National Park (2008)	The decree is since 2009 in the Prime Minister's office. No official reason has been provided for the delay.
Regularization of the eco-guards as permanent MINFOF staff (2009-2014)	This has been an important step as previously they were contractual without any stability. Today 20 eco-guards serve in the ZPFM.

New <i>Conservateur</i> (Director) of the MGS (2010)	From 2009 to 2010 the <i>Conservateur</i> & Director of the Project has been located in Yaoundé. A new professional <i>Conservateur</i> is in place since 2010 but based in Sangmelina.
GEF/UNDP TRIDOM Project provided a new 4-wheel drive truck for use in the ZPFM and limited funding (2012-2014) for poaching control.	This Project oriented to poaching control is near ending and had limited impact in the region. The vehicle provided is the only that is partially available to the MGS.
Approval of a Manual of Procedures for the financing of micro-Projects (2005)	This has been quite an extraordinary initiative approved by the Directors Committee of the Project in 2004 and ratified in 2006.
Establishment of a Provincial Commission for the selection of micro-projects to be financed (2006)	In 2008 the Provincial Commission approved 6 projects including chicken production, sheep management, production and distribution of plantain bananas in villages along the limits of the MGS.
Establishment and operation of a Special Revolving Fund and Account to manage the funds for micro-projects (2008)	The Directors Committee approved the use of around US\$60,000 for these projects aiming at improving living conditions and the economy of local villagers. With Project's ending this initiative was lost. Most micro-projects failed due to lack of technical assistance.
Instauration of a 50 FCA F/ha/year voluntary contribution by forest concessionaires (2005)	Interesting initiative that was accepted by some forest enterprises to contribute to improve economy and quality of life of villagers around the MGS. This money was to be used through the mayors of the villages. Between US\$ 25-30,000 were collected and used for small infrastructures such as wheels. This practice has been discontinued.
Demarcation of a portion of the MGS (2009)	The western portion of the Sanctuary (20 km) has been demarcated in the field with active participation and individual agreement of concerned villagers. This essential task has been interrupted and not continued over the remaining 21 km. The demarcation has included the opening of a path line but no permanent marks were used. Today these limits are again covered by vegetation.
Every member of the government and large sectors of the society are aware of the gorilla issue and of the MGS	The Project through its Directors Committee, its international and many national meetings has often been in the press and it contributed to inform and raise public awareness on the issue of transboundary conservation especially with regard to gorillas and elephants.
Headquarters of the MGS in Oveng may be built in 2014	A CFA F 150 million budget has been allocated for this infrastructure and a public bidding has already approved an enterprise.
Staff may receive equipment in 2015	The so much needed equipment for the eco-guards has been budgeted and may be purchased in 2015.

3.2 Assessment of project design

The Project proposal contained all elements and requisites that are usual in such documents, including a clear strategy or project rationale, definition of executing and collaborating agency, costs and also an appropriate logical framework. However, searching for an explanation to the poor project results some aspects may be highlighted (more are mentioned in the full report):

- 1) There was not a clear correlation between the development objective and the two selected specific objectives and budget allocation. The specific objectives somehow excluded the matter of income generation for the villagers that is highlighted in the development objective (... *and the development of mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities*). This fact has been a source of criticisms. It is obvious that this aspect was the essence of a future Phase II but as the second phase never took place it looks as if the Project planned disproportionately high investments in studies and almost "*nothing for people*". Indeed, out of a budget of almost one million dollars only US\$22,500 (2.3%) was originally allocated to the output "*MMGS management goals are shared by local people and other stakeholders*".
- 2) Many comments were made about the proportionally high cost of the studies -subcontracts- included in the Project. These studies were, beyond doubts, indispensable. However, they represented (output 1.3 and 2.4) 32.6% of the total cost of the Project and 41% of ITTO's contribution.

- 3) The non-fulfillment of the implicit pre-Project conditions had a strong influence on the Project, especially the establishment of the protected areas. However, the lack of participation of Gabon cannot be used as excuse for the bad results of the Project in Cameroon.
- 4) The real difficulties to install the Project in the field seem not to have been enough considered in project design. Oveng, the nearest “large” village near the proposed Sanctuary offered absolutely no conditions to receive the project staff. The obstacles decurrently of the isolation explain most of the delays in field activities. Also the projects failed in assess the cultural condition of the local populations that made it very difficult to develop the sensitization/awareness component of the project.
- 5) The budget distribution and the real costs of each activity were probably under-estimated. In addition the Project suffered a strong impact of the dollar devaluation that took place during execution.
- 6) Compensations for wildlife damages in crops -even being small amounts- were not included among project’s costs.
- 7) The assumptions for success made in the logical framework depend very much on direct or indirect political willingness of concerned authorities of Cameroon and Gabon. The actions directly depending on political willingness were the establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and of the Kom National Park, the participation of Gabon in the joint venture, approval of the management plan. But political will was also indirectly present in matters such as the building of the headquarters and the posts, the opportune liberation of budgeted funds, etc. Political will with regard to all these aspects seems to have been much below expectations. However to define political will is not easy as it assumes several forms and levels. It is also intimately associated with an extremely rigid and complex public administration that is often used as a pretext. The logical framework seems also to have underestimated the real dimension of the influence of the national bureaucracy on the success of the Project.

3.3 Project implementation

Excepting for the enormous delays the project implementation has been as planned. The Directors Committee (Project steering committee) has been in place and met ten times during Project’s life, annual operations plan were prepared every year, annual reports were produced, Cameroon delivered on time and in excess its agreed contribution to the budget, a mid-term review was made, the money management was correct, etc.

The commitment of the Government -especially the MINFOF- with the previously mentioned limitations, has been obvious. However other stakeholders such as many local authorities and especially the local people were and are not in favor of the Project concept. Most were indifferent and their only expectation has centered in rapid direct advantages. As soon as these benefits were not confirmed many of them turned to be against the Project. Others, especially villagers, consider themselves as victims of the project arguing that hunting is more difficult and that they are unarmed against the raids by gorillas and elephants in their agriculture fields.

Ownership is much more difficult to define in the context of this and its related projects (PD 145/01, PPD 147/10 and PD 663/12). Some interviewed persons consider that the project has had a top down approach. As a matter of facts the dominance of the large international environmental NGOs in the region is enormous. PD 66/01 had a strong influence of the WWF and this has been drastically accentuated in the case of PD 145/01 (WWF), PPD 147/10 (IUCN) and PD 663/12 (IUCN and WWF). There is no doubt that their technical contribution is very important, may be indispensable under current circumstances. However it is advisable they develop a more participative and somehow discrete modus operandi.

The Project has been perfectly on line with ITTO’s Objective 2000, Libreville Action plan and other policy and strategy instruments of the ITTO as well as with other international agreements regarding biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin and elsewhere. However Project’s contribution to these efforts has been minimal.

The quite consistent efforts of the Project staff to raise awareness amid local people were essentially infructuous. It may be a consequence of the style of sensitization developed, too much “emitter-receptor” style and focused in the “carrot and stick” model despite the Project had no “enough carrots” to offer. However, the main reason of failure has probably be the lack of continuity as well as frequent interferences of a rich and influential entrepreneur who wants to administer the Sanctuary to develop an ecotourism business. To control this situation the Project developed some actions that were not included in the original design, such as the establishment of a small revolving fund for micro-projects and the collection of a voluntary contribution from the logging enterprises acting in the influence zone to also contribute to small improvements in local public services. Both activities were promising but discontinued adding discontentment amid local stakeholders.

The studies made were of a good quality, certainly enough for the preparation of a management plan for the Sanctuary and to provide guidance for the forest management in the influence and buffer zone of the Sanctuary. However, as the management plan has not been approved nor applied, these important inputs are not yet being truly used. Considering that all these studies -essentially wildlife inventories- were prepared 9 years ago, their validity today is relative as this area has been submitted to heavy poaching and exploitation of resources.

Effectivity and effectiveness, considering the delays and its ending products, were obviously very low or nil. However, the administration of the funds has been correct and followed ITTO as well as Cameroon rules, as demonstrated by an independent audit.

Contrarily, there is hope for sustainability. Protected areas when legally established have reasonable possibilities of survival.

3.4 Conclusion about project implementation

The Project has not been successful. Its outputs were all late and extremely limited if compared with what was planned to achieve. The problems it intended to solve when designed (2000) are all much worse today. The gorilla and the elephants and the ecosystem that support these species are much more endangered today than 14 years ago. The small and still unprotected Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary is the only concrete result achieved.

However, it is also evident that today’s situation would be even worse without this Project.

4. The situation today, new threats and opportunities

As today the concrete achievements of the Project and their limitations are:

- 1) The Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been established over 27,723 ha (21% to 40% of what has been planned). It is not managed, not demarcated nor well protected. However, as per evidence collected during the mission it still contains gorillas and elephants and other valuable species and its forests are still relatively intact. If effective protection begins soon the area may recover and become a asset for wildlife and in general for forest conservation as part of the TRIDOM concept.
- 2) There is a draft legal instrument for the establishment of the Kom National Park waiting for approval since 2009 in the Office of the Prime Minister. This area is still in good natural conditions and it is essential to complement the small MGS as to have a viable representative sample of the Cameroon portion of the Central African forest, as planned since 2000. In theory the MINFOF is providing some protection to the area through the eco-guards.
- 3) There is a well-trained *Conservateur* for the Sanctuary. However:
 - a. He is based in Sangmelina.
 - b. The only vehicle available to him pertains to the anti-poaching component of the GEF/UNDP TRIDOM program.
 - c. His responsibilities additionally cover the proposed Kom National Park and the 512,000 ha of the ZPFM as well as the anti-poaching control of the mentioned program.

- 4) Twenty relatively well trained eco-guards are located in strategic locations around the Sanctuary and also around Kom area and the entire ZPFM. However:
 - a. They have no equipment of any kind except their uniforms. No vehicles, camping equipment, arms, communication nor GPS or photographic capacity to document their actions.
 - b. Non demonstrated accusations of corruption (complicity with ivory trafficking) against some of them are frequent.
- 5) Local people and villagers are aware of the situation of the endangered species, of the existence of the MGS, of the legal risks of hunting prohibited species and are informed other conservation initiatives in place. However:
 - a. Their participation is almost inexistent and many of them are hostile to the initiative.
 - b. Their main objection is that they obtained no benefits from the Project.
 - c. The forest enterprises acting in the ZPFM were and probably continue to be much more positive with regard to the protected area proposal. They even made voluntary contributions. Pitifully, this initiative has not been continued.
- 6) There is good technical baseline information on the Project area thanks to the studies developed by the WWF. However these were not published, are little known and as they are nine years old some of the information is already outdated, especially with reference to the big game census made.
- 7) A management plan specific for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been prepared and was submitted in 2014 to an ample discussion with relevant stakeholders. It is supposed to be approved soon by the MINFOF.
- 8) The guidelines for the forest and buffer zone management are good and will be useful as soon as applied.
- 9) The construction of a relatively large headquarters for the MGS has been budgeted, the work has already been adjudicated in a public bidding and it is expected that the construction enterprise may deliver the building in 2014.
- 10) After the MGS management plan is approved it is expected that the next annual budget will allocate funds to equip the rangers and resources for management.
- 11) Progress is arriving to the village of Oveng and to the region of Mengamé and Kom. A road (N9) is being paved to link Sangmelina with the Congo Republic, passing not far from the northern limit of the proposed Kom National Park and easing the access to Oveng. A railway is also considered to be constructed to pass even nearer the northern limits of both areas. Additionally, the road N17B that goes from Sangmelina to the frontier, passing through Oveng down to Aboulou, between Mengamé and Kom areas, may also soon be paved or at least improved. And, the road between Ebolowa and the Gabon frontier (N2) that passes not far from the western limit of the MGS is already paved and getting more and more traffic.
- 12) The improvement of the highway N9 and especially the planned construction of a railway, in addition to promote regional integration, are related to the mining potential in the Congo Republic as well as in Cameroon. Mineral deposits were discovered in the area between the Dja National Park and the proposed Kom National Park and will be exploited by three large mining enterprises. But informal mining is already going on. Large scale agriculture has also been announced in the region, especially oil palm and rubber plantations.
- 13) An investment by the Government is actively building a relatively large facility in Aboulou to promote frontier market in expectation of the improvement of the road including the building of a bridge over the Kom River. This road has been the reason of the division of the initial proposal for a large protected area in two separate ones.
- 14) The most surprising recent event with regard to the officially established Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been the inopinate opening of a new road cutting it in two pieces. This road has been constructed in 2014, not long before the visit of the ex-post evaluation mission. The work was carried out by the Ministry of Public Works with support of the Prime Minister's office.

5. Gabon's participation

It is not clear why the Gabonese authorities did not follow up on their own initiative to establish the Minkebé Gorilla protected area in the limit with the proposed Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary of Cameroon. A project has been prepared (PD 145/01) but it received no follow up after the ITTO Panel of Experts requested modifications. The specific objectives of this project (US\$1,373,504 of which US\$841,679 from ITTO) were very similar to the PD66/01. Instead, Gabon established in 2002 the large Minkebé National Park (757,000 ha) excluding the portion that has been considered for the Minkebé-Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary. Otherwise this Park has no common limits with the protected area in Cameroon. Nine years after Gabon submitted the PPD 147/10 which was achieved giving place to the PD 663/12 that is under review. The objectives of PPD 147 and PD 663 are far more ambitious and pretend to establish ecological corridors among the protected areas in the forests of Cameroon, Congo and Gabon. The original idea about Mengamé and Minkebé is still present but under a much more general approach.

6. Lessons Learned

- 1) Projects that include financing in protected areas management must be conditioned to their previous legal establishment ("gazettment"). It is not possible to have any precision on the date when a government will officially or formally establish a protected area. Therefore it is advisable not to develop projects that finance management or other development actions only on the basis of an offer or even of a formal compromise of establishment of new protected areas. Otherwise, the establishment of the protected area must be a condition for any project that intends to contribute to their management.
- 2) A different case is when the project is exclusively oriented to assist in the preparation of the documentation (scientific justification research, delimitation studies, public consultation, draft decree or resolution, etc.) necessary for the country to establish a new protected area. In such a case no investments must be included in protection, management or any other action not strictly related to the establishment and appropriate formal insurances of its future gazetting must be provided by national authorities.
- 3) Transboundary or bi-nationally managed protected areas, as well as international ecological corridors, are unquestionably necessary but their possibility of success is limited and very difficult to achieve. When ITTO accepted the commitment of promoting transboundary biodiversity conservation it entered in the most difficult and complex aspect of nature conservation through protected areas in tropical developing countries. In addition to the well-known growing difficulties to establish new protected areas everywhere, in frontier areas several factors make it even more difficult and complex. To invest in these projects requires a much more careful approach, longer time and higher costs than any other ITTO project made at a national level. In most cases undoubtedly more than a decade of sustained effort is necessary for such initiatives to make substantial progress towards their three goals: biodiversity conservation, community participation and development, and international peace and cooperation.
- 4) Projects related to protected areas with transboundary implications must not overlap actions in the neighbor country. Twin parallel projects are more appropriate. It is not realistic to have a national project spending money to achieve goals in another country, even if such money is an international donation. This has been the case of PD 66/01.
- 5) To have a well-controlled frontier does not require as pre-condition to have transboundary or bi-national protected areas nor joint management plans. This may be desirable but two adjacent well managed protected areas will be as effective for poaching control. Even more, the collaboration at the level of protected areas's local staff and rangers will come alone, without national authorities meetings or international agreements.
- 6) Careful attention must be given to the implications of logistics in remote or isolated areas. This Project has been another example of the consequences of not taking enough into consideration the reality of the locality where the project must be developed.

- 7) The assessment of the socio-economic and cultural reality of the region must be well known and taken into consideration in project design. The sensitization effort to raise awareness among local people and villagers has not been successful mostly because it did not take into account the real situation of the population. Extremely low level of education, installed deception with regard to the Government, special cultural aspects and poverty condition were all underestimated factors. In addition the initial budget provision for this activity has been unrealistically small and despite more money has been utilized for this purposes it has not been sufficient. Also raising awareness and keeping information on date must be a continuous process that in the case of the Project begun late and has been abruptly abandoned in 2008.
- 8) Activities related to economic incentive programs should form part of project design. The inclusion of mechanisms to provide some tangible benefits or compensations to affected local population since the first phase of this kind of projects is essential. Revolving funds, as timidly intended in this Project because it was not initially included -it was planned for the second phase- are an important tool to captivate attention and good wills of the villagers and provide an opportunity to promote the message of long term conservation. However, their administration is costly and it is indispensable they have supervision and continuity.
- 9) Mid-term evaluations are always very useful tools. This Project demonstrated once again the relevance of realizing mid-term evaluations or reviews, especially when it is not starting or it is significantly delayed. Mid-terms reviews made by ITTO's own staff, such as it was in this occasion, are cheap and efficient.
- 10) Flexibility on Project deliverables should be allowed especially when currency fluctuations outside of the Project control significantly increase costs. Unexpected exchange rates particularly affected the Project's implementation. Project budget design should anticipate this and accordingly make provisions. Ten percent of the total budget could be held in reserve as a contingency fund, only to utilize if such fluctuations require, and with specific ITTO authorization.
- 11) Economic sustainability for protected areas is almost a dream, but it is possible to be partially achieved. As it is very well known almost no protected area in the world is self-sustained even if they generate massive tourism. They usually depend upon national or regional public budgets. However, their contributions to local economic development may be substantial, often much more than their annual costs or budgets. Tourism or eco-tourism potential is the most commonly mentioned alternative for protected areas direct or indirect financing. However, the inexorable condition to take advantage of this possibility is adequate tourism infrastructure (roads, public services, hotels, etc.) and a reasonable management of the protected area. These requirements may be taken in charge by governments, by private sector or by a combination of both. None of these conditions exists in the Project area. But they may progressively become a reality.
- 12) Political willingness or support and country's bureaucracy must be carefully evaluated and prudently considered in project design. This Project in particular rested too much, directly and indirectly, on political willingness in the two countries, as shown in its logical framework. And, as demonstrated by the facts, the lack of political support has been the cause of almost every not achieved result. As mentioned before the absence of political support did not come, in general, from the Forestry or Environmental branches but from higher levels of government or from other sectors.

As political will is difficult to separate from bureaucracy this factor must also be taken into account when expecting to realize actions in brief periods of time. Public budgets in developing countries are always insufficient and excessively rigid. However, budget cuts may happen in any moment disrupting planning. All these facts are well known and the only answer possible, in addition to be prudent in expected outputs, is to plan longer execution periods. Two years is too short.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations regarding the project and project's follow up

It may seem contradictory, but the first and most important recommendation is not to abandon the idea of having a complex of protected areas in both sides of the limits of Cameroon and

Gabon, taking into consideration new facts and concepts, such as the proposal to establish international ecological corridors linking all TRIDOM protected areas.

The worldwide biological importance of the area is such that no effort must be disregarded to save an ecologically viable sample of it. Moreover if considering the impacts of new massive being installed in and around the area. It is a world's obligation to save it.

The main recommendations are:

- 1) A follow up for the PD 66/01 in Cameroon is still necessary. It could be a second phase or a new project that assists the country to effectively implant the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park if this is gazetted. Such a project must include the following elements:
 - Install and launch the management of the protected areas.
 - Renewal and enhancement of the sensitization program.
 - Management of the buffer zone of the protected areas.
 - Develop a set of demonstrative sustainable economic activities with villagers that are compatible with protected areas including wildlife management.
 - Active promotion of investments to facilitate ecotourism in the area.
- 2) The conditions for such a new operations should be:
 - The legal establishment of the Kom National Park (the MGS alone is not an ecologically viable sample as it is too small).
 - The prohibition of public use of the new illegal road opened inside the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary that must remain entirely under control of the MINFOF exclusively for service's use.
 - The official approval of the MGS management plan.
 - The building and equipment of the Oveng headquarters and the installation of the MGS staff in Oveng.
 - The demonstration of the budgetary provision for the MGS operations and for project.
- 3) The establishment of the Minkebé complement (Gabon) for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary as originally planned is still highly desirable. It would be ideal that the Minkebé complement for the Mengamé Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary be established as originally planned. If this requires technical assistance from ITTO it is worth to be done. The preconditions to approve such a project are similar to those mentioned for Cameroon, especially with regard to a legal instrument for the protection of the Minkebé area. Eventually it may be better to enlarge the existing Minkebé National Park to cover this area and to make it coalescent with the Mengamé National Sanctuary.
- 4) Another much more ambitious project (PD 663/12) is the intent to build ecological corridors within all protected areas included in the TRIDOM. This can be achieved, as proposed in the PD 663, as an international project executed by an agreed international agency to be developed with participation of the three countries. However, it may be advisable to develop it through three coordinated national projects to warrant national ownership and support. Even accepting that the ideal is to complete all proposed corridors only to make corridors in each country will already be a very important result.
- 5) The needs for similar projects in the future. The lack of success of this operation is by no means an argument to justify not continuing ITTO's contribution to the conservation of biodiversity in tropical forests. Projects dealing with existing or new protected areas and especially with those that are located coinciding with international boundaries are everyday more important. Most of what remain as natural forests in tropical countries is precisely located in remote frontier areas. Additionally the need of close collaboration among neighbor countries to jointly combat poaching, logging and other illegal extractive activities is evident. These coordinated actions are also parts of the larger goal of establishing ecological corridors. These are the superior reasons that justify the consultant's recommendation to consider a follow-up project to the PD 66/01 in Cameroon and of parallel coinciding initiatives in Gabon.
- 6) The objectives of such future projects. The tropical forests biodiversity conservation objective of future similar projects must not be changed. As mentioned, issues that affected the PD 66/01 do not modify the urgent need of such projects.

- 7) Innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at biodiversity conservation in TBCA. There is no much room for innovation in such a well-known matter. However, based in the evaluation of several similar projects of ITTO and of other agencies it is considered advisable to take into consideration the following suggestions:
- (i) No project must be approved if the protected area to be managed -or improved in any way- is not previously duly legally established (gazetted). If projects are of a transboundary nature the same rule would be applicable to both sides.
 - (ii) The only exception to the previous recommendation is when the project is limited to the realization of studies conducting to the establishment of new protected areas.
 - (iii) ITTO's participation in truly international projects -directly administered by an international organization, as in the case of the GEF/UNP-TRIDOM- must be conditioned to the same previously mentioned requisites.
 - (iv) ITTO's long experience in natural forest management, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry and, especially, in community forest development can be more and better used in biodiversity conservation projects that pretend to manage protected areas buffer zones or ecological corridors. As a matter of facts this can be a very important contribution of ITTO to conservation efforts as buffer zones's population are at the origin of most management problems inside protected areas.
- 8) The organizational arrangements of the project in relation to the transboundary aspects. Transboundary issues must be discussed at two levels:
- (v) Practical operational local level -in situ- reuniting protected areas managers or rangers or appropriate police officers of both countries, without intervention of diplomacy;
 - (vi) Overall planning or coordination binational meetings. These last are essentially to provide political support to protected areas managers when involved in eventual joint field operations, such as required to combat poaching.
- Again, if so required by both countries studies may be carried out in adjacent areas of both countries but, in such an event, the project must be international in nature, conducted by an international organization under agreements with each country.
- 9) Follow-up and evaluation practices. There is nothing new to add to this question that has not been mentioned earlier:
- Mid-term evaluations are extremely useful in relatively large projects, especially if their progress is not as planned. It is also cost-effective.
 - Not every large project that is unsuccessful requires an ex-post evaluation. The present ex-post evaluation only confirmed what was quite evident before making it.
 - As so often stated an ex-post evaluation loose effectiveness in proportion to the time elapsed since project termination. The PD 66/01 has been evaluated five years after its effective termination. It would be impossible to make this evaluation without the participation, as national consultant, of the former Project Director who is probably the only available memory of most of the process.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation's background

ITTO decided in November 2013 to conduct an ex-post evaluation of the Project PD 66/01 Rev. 1 (F) "Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) in the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)".

The Project aimed at the protection of the gorillas and their environment in the Mengamé area of Cameroon, in collaboration with the Government of Gabon. Mengamé, in Cameroon, and Minkebé, in Gabon are densely forested areas reputed for the presence of exceptionally high density populations of gorillas and elephants among other endangered or rare species. Two specific objectives were proposed: (1) to put in place a community participation process for the proposed sanctuary to ensure its protection, and (2) to initiate a process of transboundary cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for the joint management of the area in each country. The approved execution time was 24 months.

The Project has been approved by the ITTO Council at its Thirtieth Session in June 2001. Full financing was pledged by the governments of Japan, Switzerland and USA at the Thirty-first Council session in November 2001. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the Project was signed on 24 April 2002 and the first disbursement of funds was made in September 2002.

Four Project extensions were granted until June 2008 without additional funding by the ITTO Secretariat, based on official requests including proper justification with appropriate detailed work plan and budget. An acceptable version of the Project completion report was received in May 2011. The final financial audit report was received in January 2013. The Project has been presented as completed during the Forty-Seventh Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management on November 2013.

1.2. Evaluation scope, focus and approach

This ex-post evaluation has been conducted in June and July 2014 with a 10 days-long visit to Cameroon (July 2-10). A visit has been planned to Gabon as required by the terms of reference of the consultants. Due to unexpected problems this part of the mission has not been realized³. A field visit to the execution site in Cameroon has been conducted (July 5-8). A large portion of the terrestrial limits of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and of the proposed Kom National Park were visited. Most relevant concerned authorities and several actors in Yaoundé, Sangmelina and in the field were interviewed. The international consultant has been assisted by a local consultant⁴ in Cameroon and by the ITTO Regional Representative⁵ as related to Gabon.

This is obviously an exceptional ex-post evaluation. As it was to be expected in a Project that exceeded five times its programmed execution period (104 months instead of 24), this

³ The Gabonese Embassy in Brasilia mistakenly emitted a visa with a validity ending before the arrival of the consultant. No solution to the problem was provided by Gabon's Embassy in Yaoundé.

⁴ Mr. Etienne Nkomo

⁵ Dr. Marcellin Nziengui

evaluation must take into consideration many factors that are not considered in other ex-post evaluation for “normal” projects (with a duration that may exceed approved execution time but not over such a long period).

Despite the funding and the execution correspond exclusively to Cameroon, this Project was planned to have some outputs achieved also in Gabon. In addition, this country was to make a separate coinciding coordinated project proposal that has been prepared (PD 145/02) but did not prosper. A Pre-Project PPD 147/10 Rev.1 (F) was carried out in 2011 to develop a project proposal somehow on line with the follow up of the Project PD 66/ Rev. 1 (F). This new proposal is the PD 663/12 (F) but so far it has not been approved by ITTO.

Also, this ex-post evaluation has been realized five years after Project activities termination and three years after approval of the completion report. Therefore, the facts that occurred after termination -even if direct or indirect consequences of the Project- cannot formally be accounted as project results. However, as this evaluation had to assess to what extent the conservation status of the patch of natural forests that was selected to become a protected area in southern Cameroun (Mengamé) is better protected today than it was in 2000 all related events and facts that occurred since Project termination had to be taken into consideration. Among those several new initiatives took place such as the establishment of the large Minkebé National Park in Gabon, the approval of a considerable new GEF/UNDP Program for the TRIDOM and the application of the concept of ecological or “conservation” corridors. Many international agencies including NGOs developed new operations in the region. And, of course, a rapidly evolving social, economic, political and administrative situation in the countries and in the region of the Project made it particularly difficult to understand their influence in project execution. Many new infrastructures are being built and a large number of new large economic activities especially mining are being developed in the TRIDOM area. Additionally the report had also to deal with still ongoing situations and with those that are expected to happen soon.

To carry on this evaluation, as usual, an intense review of the Project documents and associated references was made. This part of the work has been complex as due to the extremely long Project execution over 50 project documents have been produced only for Cameroon. Others were produced with regard to Gabon. The documentation frequently presents subtle but important translation problems between those written in French and in English and quite often they are inconsistent (dates, events description, amounts). Several documents have no date at all. Also, the Project refers to several different areas (see table 1) including different concepts that in addition suffered changes of size and limits during the 14 years elapsed between Project formulation and ex-post evaluation.

Table 1. Useful information to understand the evolving situation of the areas considered & mentioned in projects PD 66, PD 145, PPD 147 and PD 663				
	Name	Location	Size (ha)	Comment
MMGS/SGMM	Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary	Cameroon & Gabon	As much as 260,000	The original total potential area to become a transboundary Sanctuary.
MGS/SGM	Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary	Cameroon	27,723 (26,890?)	Initially planned with 65,000 ha up to 122,368 ha, including Kom. Gazetted in July 2008.
Complex Mengamé-Kom		Cameroon	95,800	MGS and KNP are now being designed as a “complex”.
ZPFM/ MFPA	Mengamé Forest Protection Area	Cameroon	512,938	Including the MGS, the KNP, the buffer and influence zones and a small Community Forest.
KNP/PNK	Kom National Park	Cameroon	67,838 (69,120?)	Waiting to be gazetted since 2009.
MFR	Minkebé Forest Reserve	Gabon	600,000	It has been transformed in the Minkebé National Park.
MNP	Minkebé National Park	Gabon	757,000	Established in 2002 over the Minkebé Forest Reserve.
MPA	Minkebé Protected Area	Gabon	137,500 ?	Seems to be the rectangle that was expected to become Gabon’s portion of the MMGS

The consultants made a special effort to apply the recommendations of the report on the Meta-Evaluation of previously evaluated ITTO Projects {ITTC-JC (XLV/2)}. This was feasible for most substantial aspects but, due to the exceptional characteristics of this operation, it has not been possible to use this model in every case.

2. Project facts

This section reproduces a very brief summary of the facts as considered and planned in 2000 and 2001, when the Project was being designed and approved. A few comments are advanced about the actual situation to avoid unnecessary repetitions in the text.

2.1 Background

In 1994 a group of adventure tourists made public the easy viewing of gorillas and elephants in a logging road boarding the Mengamé sector that was under forest exploitation by SOFOPETRA. The enterprise’s owner became interested in the tourism potential of the area and invested money in a Project to build tourism facilities⁶. He also made an intense lobby in Yaoundé and in the region, where he made many promises. As a consequence, a first official visit to the area was carried out by the Ministry of Tourism. By late 1990s the conservation importance of the region of Mengamé was a public matter. The adjacent region of Minkebé in Gabon received correlative attention of the specialists.

When the 1997’s Central African Presidential Meeting about sustainable management of tropical natural forests took place in Yaoundé, the relevance of the Mengamé-Minkebé area was highlighted. This meeting produced the Yaoundé Declaration that declared as of special importance for countries to joint efforts to conserve relevant natural areas that overlap international boundaries, including the establishment of protected areas. As follow up to this decision a bilateral mission Cameroon-Gabon was developed in July and August 1999 confirming the value of a joint effort to protect a patch of natural forests in both sides of the

⁶ Including a partially constructed lodge, today abandoned.

limits, especially aiming at the conservation of gorillas and their ecosystem and poaching control. The term “Mengamé’s Forest Protection Zone” (ZPMF) described the Cameroun side of the proposed area of some 513,000 ha including a core area of 65,000 ha and, potentially as much as 122,368 ha if so accepted by local population.

In 2000 the Cameroun Government requested ITTO assistance to prepare the corresponding Project. ITTO provided two consultants⁷. As a result, the Cameroun Government submitted the Project proposal PD 66/01 Rev. 1 (F) “Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) in the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)”. This proposal was approved in June 2001, in the ITTC Session XXX held in Yaoundé. A year after Gabon also prepared a draft project to be submitted to ITTO (PD 145/02) but it did not prosper.

Also in 2001, in Brazzaville, an international plan was developed to establish and manage several transboundary protected areas in the context of agreements adopted by the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) as one important element of the decision to sustainably use the regional forest estate. It is in this context that the tri-national complex or inter-zone Dja-Odzala-Minkebé (in Cameroon, Congo and Gabon) better known as TRIDOM was edified as a top priority, including the prospects regarding Mengamé and Minkebé. This initiative gave place in 2004 to a relatively large GEF/UNDP-TRIDOM Project that it is still active.

2.2 Mengamé-Minkebé (MMGS) context

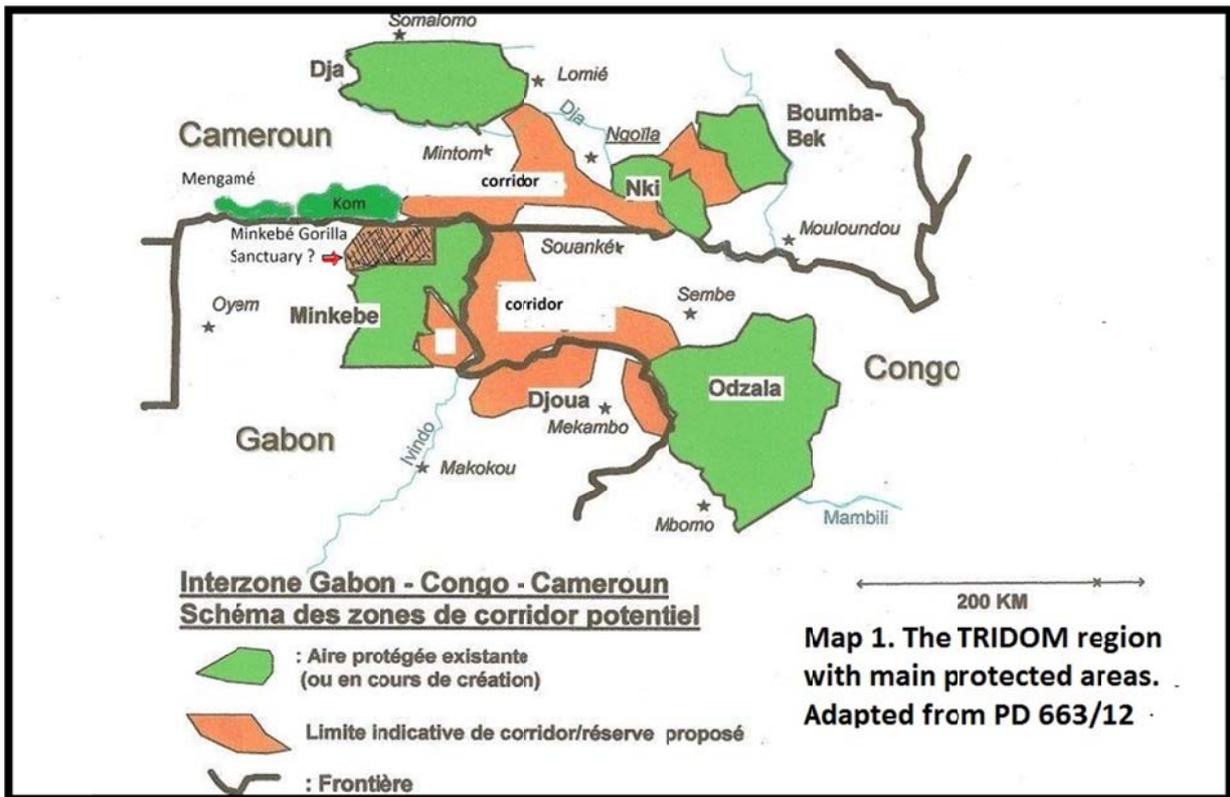
The Central African forests, especially those located in the Congo basin, are repository of an extremely rich biodiversity that includes a unique assemblage of large forest mammals such as western gorillas and chimpanzees, forest elephants, buffaloes, panthers, *bongos* and *sitatugas*, amid those that are more conspicuous. Many of the species of animals and plants in this unique ecosystem are rare or endangered.

The area designated, in the original ITTO Project, as Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) is a key portion of the Central African natural forests that covers 260,000 ha, located in Cameroon (122,400 ha) and in Gabon (137,500 ha) that is particularly rich in wildlife diversity with high populations of endangered animals such as gorillas, elephants and chimpanzees. This is why it became the object of this Project as well as an asset of the wider TRIDOM Project.

Originally these forests were the land of the pigmies (Baka) that were nomad hunters and of Fang, an ethnic group of the Bantu people, which practiced some agriculture. But since long time ago other Bantu groups began to occupy the area, especially along rivers and growingly along roads at the pace these were built to practice agriculture, pushing the pygmies deeper into the forests. Today the pigmies are a small minority. At the independence time the area in both side of the frontier was already occupied by small farmers of different Bantu ethnic groups among other groups from Cameroon, Gabon and neighboring countries. This occupation by small farmers has grown continuously and, today, some 12,000 people are living in the Cameroon side⁸. Many are moving from self-consuming shifting cultivation to small patches of permanent crops such as cacao, applying an extensive agroforestry traditional system. Despite some logging already existed in the 1980s this activity became really important in the 1990s in application of a new law that adopted the forest concession model. Practically all Project area has been conceded to forest enterprise that amplified the environmental impact of farmers by opening logging roads everywhere and bringing more people into the region.

⁷ Through Project PPD 73/89 (M,I,F) "Assistance for Project identification and formulation".

⁸ Some 8,000 inhabitants were registered in 2002.



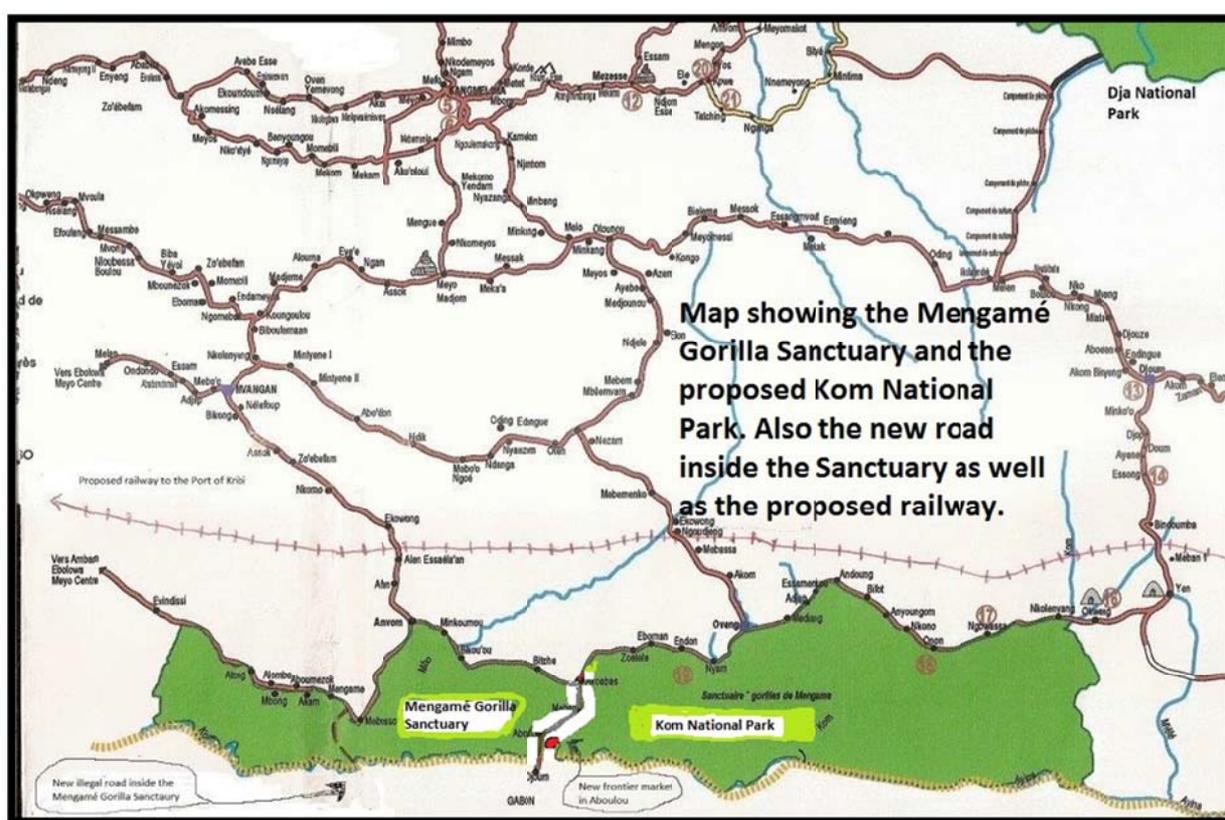
Pigmies fully depend on forests but farmers also heavily dependent on forest resources for survival and/or to make some extra cash money. As a matter of facts practically all farmers are to some extent permanent or opportunistic hunters and fishers as well as collectors of vegetal goods extracted from the forests. As population growth and more people arrives the pressure on wildlife increase. As in other forested areas this includes the use and commercialization of bush meat. On the other hand, especially if some degree of protection for the wild game is insured, there are increasing conflicts with local farmers that may suffer from losses caused by animal incursions in their plantations. Elephants and gorillas are among those that cause more damage.

However, to a large extent the problem for large animal's survival in the MMGS is a consequence of illegal commercial hunting. Elephants were killed by the thousands as well as gorillas and chimpanzees. Ivory as well as different body parts of big apes⁹ are traded especially to Asia and the Middle East and this is today a main cause of these animals rarefication. Buffaloes and other ungulates are being killed for meat markets in relatively large towns. Gangs of delinquents are the main actors but even pigmies, excellent hunters, are involved. Gang poaching and trade of wildlife take advantage of the frontier to act. Apparently the poacher's gangs are mostly based in Gabon. But the Gabonese Government may state the opposite. The fact is that frontier is fertile ground for illegal activities of any kind. The ITTO Project was planned as a binational activity to achieve cooperation especially to facilitate the control of this problem trough joint management of the area in both sides of the boundary.

⁹ All animals are also killed for food, including gorillas. In addition to hunting in 2003 the gorilla population of Minkebé has been affected by an Ebola outbreak that may have killed as many as 500 individuals. The disease did not spread inside Mengamé thanks to the high seasonal level of rivers water.

The Minkebé proposed sanctuary area, in Gabon, is a rectangular patch of forests (see maps) that is part of a continuous forest range, which northern portion limits partially with Mengamé, divided only by rivers (Kom and Ayira Rivers) that during the dry season may be crossed on foot. Its size has been preliminary estimated at 137,500 ha. The prevailing situation in the Gabonese side, at the time of Project preparation, was very similar to the one prevailing in Cameroon.

It is important to mention that at the time of Project preparation there was in Gabon a large forest reserve (600,000 ha) named Minkebé. However, this reserve had no common limit with Mengamé. In August 2002 the Gabonese Government transformed it in an even larger Minkebé National Park (757,000 ha). This new Park, as the previous reserve, had no common boundary with Mengamé. Apparently the Gabonese Government has been reserving a “Minkebé protected areas” (see striped rectangle in Map 1) to establish the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary that has never been established. Since the creation of the Minkebé National Park (MNP) the situation in Northern Gabon has been compounded by an increasing gold mining activity both formal and informal taking place inside and around this Park and by a fast growing gang poaching activity.



2.3 Main problems to address

The Project document stated that the two key problems linked to the threat on the integrity of the gorillas in the MPFA were: (i) “*the lack of a management approach of the reserve*” and, (ii) “*the lack of binational structures and orientations for cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for transboundary conservation of the Gorillas*”. In relation to the first key problem, the major causes were attributed to the lack of capacity and infrastructure in the area concerned to ensure conservation, the low level of awareness on conservation values in the local communities and, the low level of coordination of local government services. The consequences of the second problem were the lack of an approach to control the human

impacts on shared values, the lack of binational mechanisms to combat poaching, the lack of development and conservation strategy, and the lack of data for management planning.

2.4 Development objective

The development objective of the Project was defined as “*to contribute to the development of an integrated approach for the protection of the forests with the conservation of the gorillas and the development of mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities*”¹⁰.

2.5 Specific objectives and outputs

Two specific objectives were proposed:

- (1) “*To initiate processes of community participation and awareness in order to conserve Mengamé Protection Forest Area (MPFA or ZPFM)*” and;
- (2) “*To initiate a process for cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for the joint management of the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS or SGMM)*”.

Table 2 reproduces the expected outputs of the Project as well as its activities, as proposed in the Project document.

2.6. Project rationale

The Project rationale at the time of its design was based in the principle that conservation of highly valued and persecuted species such as gorillas and elephants, among others, in frontier areas with dense forests in both sides, requires a coordinated binational effort. This is why the Project includes the name of Minkebé, the Gabonese area adjacent to Mengamé and this is also why a series of joint actions (i.e. appointment and capacitation of guards, training and coordination meetings) were included in the Project as well as a common management plan for the SGMM. The Project preparation team received warrants in Cameroon as in Gabon about the reciprocal interest in a joint effort to control poaching and to jointly manage the proposed SGMM.

Since its conception this operation has been planned as a program including a Phase I in Cameroun (PD 66/01 or SGMM) co-existent with a Phase I in Gabon and followed, at least in the Cameroun side by a Phase II. It is very important to keep this in mind to understand the evolution of the SGMM Project.

The strategy regarding Phase I in Cameroun with some elements regarding Gabon had the following key elements:

- 1) Previous to Project execution the Government of Cameroun would classify, delimitate, legally establish and demarcate the ZPFM, producing: (i) a core protected area (a Sanctuary), (ii) a buffer zone with adequate consensual limited economic activities and, (iii) a perimeter with regulated normal economic activities.
- 2) Basic infrastructure and equipment would be installed to allow the Project execution in place and to initiate sensitization of villagers as well as urgent protection.
- 3) The most pressing action would be to raise awareness and interest among local populations aiming at the consolidation of a consensual and highly participatory collaboration for the management of the ZPMF.

¹⁰ As written in the original English version of the Project Document. The translation into the French document implies a less coherent development objective.

- 4) Simultaneously the Project would realize all necessary international contact with its Gabonese counterpart to initiate trans-frontier conservation especially with regard to professional poacher's activity.
- 5) Being obviously necessary to have adequate knowledge of the biological and ecological facts of the area proposed to be a sanctuary, a series of studies were programmed, dealing with mammals, birds, fisheries, vegetation and other facts of the ecosystem, with emphasis in gorillas and elephants both in Mengamé as in the nearby portion of Minkebé.
- 6) Also, in the same lines, a detailed study/inquiry on the socioeconomic and cultural reality of the zone was programmed.
- 7) Recognizing that it was essential to provide economic returns to the local population a socio-economic study as well as studies on the potential value and limitations of the proposed area for ecotourism and on economic values of non-timber products were planned. A second phase of the Project would take more concrete actions in this regard.
- 8) As sound geographical system information was an obvious necessity for studies and all other actions, such as demarcation and planning, the Project included a component on this matter.
- 9) As a result of the above collected information the Project was to produce two plans:
 - a. A joint management plan for the MMGS.
 - b. A set of norms or regulation for the forest enterprises operating in the ZPMF.
- 10) As mentioned, the strategy included the parallel execution of a twin ITTO Project in Gabon and, also, a Phase II for the PD 66.
- 11) As also anticipated, this operation has been conceived as a two-phase Project. All above mentioned action were part of the strategy of the two years-long first phase. A second phase was to:
 - a. Develop or support community economic activities that may have a positive impact on the conservation of the SGMM
 - b. Application of the management plan of the SGMM
 - c. Application of a ecotourism development plan
 - d. Application of a plan for common binational activities
 - e. Development of a biodiversity monitoring system

2.7 Executing agency and collaborating agencies

The executing agency in Cameroun was the Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas (DFPA) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (today the Ministry of Forests and Fauna). World Wildlife Fund's participation was planned since Project design. This organization had to provide the Technical Advisor and develop the studies and other technical material such as the documentation for the legal establishment of the Sanctuary as well as its management plan. The Cameroon government also considered pertinent to associate and coordinate Project activities with the Jane Goodall Institute that was also operating in the region.

2.8 Project costs

ITTO Budget		770,751
Government of Japan	530,751	
Government of Switzerland	200,000	
Government of U.S.A.	40,000	

Government of Cameroon		197,340
Total Budget		968,091

The contributions to the costs of the Project are mentioned in table 2. Table 3 shows the ITTO budget distributed by outputs and

activities. The most costly rubrics of the budgets were sub-contracts such as with the WWF (49.2%), Project's international staff (19.8%), miscellaneous items (14.7%) and capital items or edifications (10.6%) in addition to duty travel and consumable -operational- items. The Cameroon contribution supported national staff (63.8%), capital items or equipment (15.2%) and consumable expenses.

Table 3. Outputs, activities and costs as included in Project proposal (2001)		
Output	Output/Activity description	Cost (US\$)
Output 1.1	The MPFA management infrastructure is constructed.	258,350
Activity 1.1.1	Put in place Sanctuary and ITTO Project staff.	158,450
Activity 1.1.2	To construct the Conservation Center Office with a herbarium (160 m2) at Djoum.	66,900
Activity 1.1.3	Installation of a GIS system in the conservation office	13,000
Activity 1.1.4	To construct 4 field posts (at Amvom, Nkoleyeng, Akoabas, Oveng).	20,000
Output 1.2	MMGS management goals are shared by local people and other stakeholders.	22,250
Activity 1.2.1	To design a public and local communities awareness raising program.	3,000
Activity 1.2.2	To organize awareness raising seminars for stakeholders authorities training workshops for stakeholders (local people, military, judicial and administrative officers, economic operators).	9250
Activity 1.2.3	Carry out action research on economic initiatives by local populations	10,000
Output 1.3	Guidelines for management production forests contiguous to the MPFA and for transitional resource-use zone management elaborated.	21,000
Activity 1.3.1	Establish guidelines for timber exploitation in transitional resource-use zones contiguous to the MPFA.	10,500
Activity 1.3.2	Establish guidelines for collaborative management of buffer zones of MPFA.	10,500
Output 2.1	Structures for cooperation in joint MMGS management are set-up and are operational.	47,310
Activity 2.1.1	To organize a meeting to make a proposal of TBC cooperation structures and their role	20,000
Activity 2.1.2	To organize a high level Cameroon/Gabon consultation meeting to give general orientation to transboundary cooperation in relation to MMGS.	6,250
Activity 2.1.3	To organize two meetings every year for provincial commissions on transboundary cooperation (one in Cameroon, one in Gabon).	15,120
Activity 2.1.4	To organize 3 meetings per year for technical teams.	6,000
Output 2.2	Agenda defining and strategy-building process is initiated.	4,500
Activity 2.2.1	To propose a strategy for transboundary cooperation Cameroon/Gabon for the MMGS management (by a task-force of experts).	2,500
Activity 2.2.2	Organize national workshops for validation of Cameroon/Gabon strategy of cooperation in TBC.	2,000
Output 2.3	Illegal activities in the Sanctuary are prohibited and poaching damages are reduced.	49,100
Activity 2.3.1	To construct three binational field posts along the Cameroon/Gabon border (1 at Aboulou and 2 along the Ayina River) for joint patrols.	19,400
Activity 2.3.2	To train 30 eco-guards (15 for the MPFA and 15 for the Minkebe Gorilla Sanctuary).	29,700
Output 2.4	A joint management plan for the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary is elaborated.	295,000
Activity 2.4.1	To conduct a multi-resource inventory in the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary.	224,000
Activity 2.4.2	To conduct special management planning studies for: the Gorilla and the elephant, fisheries, on-timber forest products, ecotourism development.	57,200

Activity 2.4.3	To carry out a detailed socioeconomic study	9,000
Activity 2.4.4	Elaborate a management plan for the MMGS and 2 Project proposals to submit to ITIO (for Mengamé Protected Forest Area Phase 2 and for Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary Phase 1).	1,000
Activity 2.4.5	Organize a binational validation workshop on management plan.	2,000

2.9 Project execution

The Project has been planned to be executed in 24 months. The official starting date has been September 13th, 2002. Its duration was to be 24 months.

The structure of Project management included a Project Director, and four “divisions” (Administration, Socioeconomics, Conservation Biology and Geographic Information System). A Technical Advisor was placed at the level of the Project Director. The Project had two high level councils: A Directors Committee¹¹ and an Advisory or Consultative Council.

The Directors Committee was to be chaired by the Director of the Forest Department of the Ministry and composed by 9 members representing all interested parties, including the ITTO and one ONG. It was expected to meet at least once a year. It has often counted with the presence of the Ministry in person. A Consultative Council with local population and local authorities has also been established to reinforce information and participation.

The Project Director had to be the nominated and paid by the Ministry and was supposed to be simultaneously the Director (*Conservateur*) of the ZPFM. An MSc degree was required. It was to be assisted by a biologist, a socio-economist, an administrator/accountant, a secretary and a driver. Fifteen eco-guards were to be appointed by the Ministry and trained by the Project. The Technical Advisor had to be selected and provided by the ITTO in agreement with the WWF. The required qualification included experience in conservation and at least an MSc level.

A first report and a detailed annual action plan was planned to be produced 8 weeks after starting. A mid-term evaluation was expected to be realized during 2001 and two ITTO missions were also planned in December 2001 and September 2002¹².

3. Findings

Table 4 shows a summary chronology of the Project execution, since its origin until today. The Project was approved in June 2001, signed in April 2002 and the first disbursement has been done in September 2002. That same year the Directors Committee (CD) was established and had its first meeting approving the POA for 2002. Cameroon appointed a Project Director and provided a new four wheel drive truck. A few “eco-guards” -rangers- were in place before Project design for poaching control.

As reported in the proceedings of the CDs that were held every year or more frequently (twice in 2003 and three times in 2005) the progress in the field have been minimal until 2004. A Technical Report and a POA for the following months were submitted to each CD. A first agreement with the WWF was signed in 2002 in order to provide the Technical Advisor but this officer only started to work in early 2004. Except sporadic visits of the Project

¹¹ Its English title would be “Project Steering Committee”.

¹² These were provisions included in the Project Document. As a matter of facts the Project started only in September 2002.

Director, nobody except eco-guards was on place until October 2003. However, some initial contacts with local authorities and population were made. The efforts were concentrated in recruiting professional staff that proved to be very difficult both due to lack of interest for a post in such a remote location and to the limited qualification of those who accepted to go. An electric generator was purchased in 2003 in view of the installation of the headquarters in Oveng village (the largest nearby Mengamé). Under agreement of the MINEF with the J. Goodall Institute (JGI) inventories on gorilla and chimpanzees, elephants, rodents, ungulates and vegetation as well as a social study took place. This agreement expected that a good coordination be established between the work of the JGI in the area -mostly studies- and the Project.

It is only by mid-2004 that all positions were filled. The agreement with the WWF was reviewed that year. Two new ideas were launched: (i) a micro-project financing to attend the demands of local people for compensatory benefits and, (ii) the collection of a voluntary contribution of 50 FCA F/ha/year from the forest concessionaries acting in the ZPFM. Until June 2004, exactly three years after Project signing, only US\$ 105,700 (13.7 %) of the ITTO contribution has been utilized. However, by them 77% of Cameroon's budget was already utilized. Routinely the POAs of each year repeated almost exactly the same actions already included in the preceding one.

The Project document considered the realization of a mid-term review by the end of 2001. The third meeting of the CD in 2003, responding to the slow progress of the operation decided that this mid-term review was indispensable. It took place in July 2004 and produced an excellent overview of the Project situation and very good recommendations some of which were applied for the Project follow-up. It confirmed that the Project progress was not only too slow but that it was also seriously unsatisfactory with most activities not even initiated. Three main unexpected factors influenced this result:

- (i) The non-establishment of the MGS,
- (ii) The rigidity and inadequacy of the public administration rules for Project execution and,
- (iii) The legal context of each country for the preparation of a joint management plan for the MMGS.

But they also noted other problems such as:

- (i) The inadequacy of the "sensitization" effort they considered too much focused on "carrots and sticks",
- (ii) The absence of coordination and collaboration with the J. Goodall Institute,
- (iii) The lack of coherence among the different public actors in the ZPFM,
- (iv) Delays and complications regarding budget executions attributed to ITTO's requisites.
- (v) Potential risks caused by the expectative created by the launching of the modest micro-projects initiative.

The mid-term review recommended that the management plan be made only for the Cameroon portion of the MMGS. Obviously it also recommended the urgent establishment of the MGS, among several other pertinent advises.

The years 2005 and 2006 were the years of more activity and productivity in the life of the Project. There were three meetings of the CD in 2005, responding to the growing concern of the parties for the accumulated delay and absence of results. The new Project Director as well the staff moved to the field, installing their base in Oveng and launched an important effort of communication with local communities to inform about the Project, raise awareness about the relevance of the conservation of wildlife and promote the benefits this Project may have for

the local development. The GIS became operative. More eco-guards were appointed and trained. At a point, in 2006, 22 eco-guards were at work. A draft second phase of the Project has been produced with WWF assistance but had no follow up.

Table 4 . Chronology of the main events of the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Project			
Year	Month	Event	Main progress during the year
1997	March	Yaoundé Declaration	➤ Highlight transboundary conservation
1999	August	Gabon-Cameroun Joint Mission	➤ Confirm the importance of the Mengamé-Minkebé region & willingness to address joint conservation effort
2000	March	Cameroun request ITTO's support	➤ ITTO provides two experts to assist Project formulation ➤ Project formulation and submission to ITTO
2001	June	ITTO Project's approval	
2002	April July August September October November	Agreement signing POA 2002 Starting date First ITTO disbursement (\$250,000) CD Meeting "Technical" (field) start up	➤ Administrative procedures ➤ Brief field visits ➤ Agreement MINEF-J. Goodall Inst. ➤ Equipment: one 4 wheel drive vehicle ➤ Donation of an area to build headquarters ➤ 15 eco-guards selected & in the field ➤ Staffing in progress
2003	January June December	POA 2003 CD meeting CD meeting First Project Extension until December 2004 (NOLF.04-0633)	➤ Technical reports by the J. Goodall Inst. ➤ Staffing initiated ➤ Meetings
2004	January April June July December	POA Jan.-Sep. 2004 Agreement MINFOF-WWF for studies CD meeting Mid Term Evaluation End first Project Extension	➤ "Sensibilization" of local population ➤ Meetings ➤ The Technical Advisor is appointed ➤ End of the MINEF-J. Goodall Inst.
2005	January June December	CD meeting POA 2005 Modification agreement MINFOF-WWF CD meeting Second Project Extension until June 2006 (NOLF.05-0121) CD meeting	➤ "Sensibilization" of local population ➤ Meetings ➤ All staff is in place at Oveng ➤ A new Project Director is appointed.
2006	June July December	End second Project Extension Third Project Extension until June 2007 (NOLF.06-0222) POA Set. 2006-Jun. 2007 CD meeting	➤ Forest management directives ➤ Wildlife evaluation ➤ Birds evaluation ➤ Ecotourism study ➤ Floristic evaluation ➤ Extractivism report ➤ Fisheries evaluation ➤ Socio-economic report ➤ Draft management plan Kom/Mengamé plan
2007	June	End third Project Extension Fourth Project Extension until June 2008 (NOLF.07-0258)	➤ Draft management plan Kom/Mengamé is approved by local population
2008	February June	CD meeting End fourth Project Extension	➤ Establishment of the Mengamé Sanctuary ➤ End of field Project activities
2009	November	CD meeting	➤ Draft decree for KNP in prime Minister's office
2011	January	Draft completion report	

	May	Completion report	
2013		Final audit report	
2014	July	Ex-post evaluation	

Most important is the fact that the CD approved an agreement with the WWF to carry out the several studies that were necessary to achieve the management plan. The terms of reference were also discussed and approved by the CD and most of the field work for these studies has been achieved in 2005 while the reports were mostly submitted in March 2006. In 2005 new guards were recruited and trained and some other activities of the Project also begun to be fulfilled including international meetings (Cameroon-Gabon). By the end of 2006 the Project expenditures reached US\$ 547,651 (71%) essentially as a consequence of the funds transferred to the WWF.

It is also in 2005 that as per recommendation of the mid-term review the micro-project initiative was re-formulated. The previously drafted “Manual of Procedures for Financing of micro-projects Generators of Income for local Populations” was reviewed, under the concept of a revolving fund. A Provincial Council integrated by mayors of the local towns, the MINFOF and the Project Director was created for its administration. Some US\$ 60,000 from the ITTO contribution was applied in micro-projects especially in 2006. The resource from the voluntary contribution of the forest concessionaires was to be also administered by this mechanism but under a separate bank account.

In July 2006, on the basis of the results of the studies carried on by the WWF, a technical meeting in the MINFOF decided to separate the proposed Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary in two different areas: (i) the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and, (ii) the Kom National Park, which received the new name of Complex Kom-Mengamé. The WWF also drafted a proposal to promote the formal establishment of the MGS and of the Kom National Park.

There was no CD meeting in 2007. The draft management plan for the MMGS was produced as well as some other reports. A CD was held in February 2008. The main new fact in 2008 has been the formal establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary on July 14th, 2008. The staff of the Project that were located in the Project area or near, including the Project Director, was moved to Yaoundé¹³. A final CD meeting was held in November 2009. It requested a new Project extension until June 2010. At that time US\$129,860 was still to spend.

Regarding ITTO budget execution the Project did not use US\$ 70,947 that had to be returned. Instead, the national contribution (US\$197,340) has been largely surpassed mostly due to the pay of eco-guards, Project Director and staff -excepting the Technical Advisor- over such a long time. The MINFOF also covered operational expenses such as several anti-poaching activities, financial audits, etc.

It is worth to mention that only the eco-guards remained in place since the end of 2009. The Project Director accumulated the function of Director (*Conservateur*) of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary but remained in both function located in Yaoundé.

It is only by mid-2010 that a new MGS *Conservateur* took office, however based in Sangmelina, at some 80 km from Oveng.

¹³ The four technical staff of the project and the eco-guards were recruited as public servants in January 2009, only the driver and the secretary were licensed. But, except the eco-guards, they are working in activities not related to the Project.

The above brief on the Project evolution demonstrates that the delays in Project execution were not as related to the lack of participation of Gabon as it can be believed. In 2004 and especially in 2005, after the mid-term evaluation, it became clear that the Cameroon part of the Project could stand alone.

3.1 Project results during execution

Table 5 shows a summary of the achievements and non-achievements of the Project during its execution period (2002-2008). To facilitate its lecture only the expected outputs and main activities are mentioned in this table. The outputs included in this table correspond to the changes proposed by the mid-term review and accepted by the Directors Committee such as the making of a management plan solely for the MGS.

Table 5. Achievements of the Project since initiation until its technical finalization		
Product/Activity	Achievements 2002-2008	Comments
Output 1. The ZPFM's management structure is in place		
• Staffing	Project Director, Technical Advisor, technical staff (biologist, accountant, social-economics affairs, secretary, GIS specialist, driver)	Staff has been in place since October 2003 or later. The Project Director and eco-guardians were the first in place.
• Headquarters (160 m ²) & herbarium	Not done	This small building was never built. The headquarters operated in a rented house.
• GIS	Done	It was installed and operative for a while. Products are unknown.
• 4 guard posts	Not done	The posts were never built.
• Equipment	A 4-wheel drive truck, 4 radios, SIG equipment, computers, camping material, electric generator (mostly purchased in 2003)	During the first two years the vehicle's Project has been provided by the Government. No equipment is left over.
Output 1.2 MGS's management goals are shared by local population and other stakeholders		
• Sensitization planning	The work to raise awareness and sensitize local policy makers as well as villagers has been intense over the period (2003-2008).	Over 200 meetings with villagers and others. However, much interference compromised the work that has not been continued.
• Seminars & workshops with local authorities and villagers		
• Socioeconomic research		
Output 3. Guidelines for management of production forests and others in the ZPFM are elaborated		
• Regulations for logging	Prepared in 2006	The regulations are quite good and, in theory, accepted by some logging enterprises. There is no overview nor evaluation of its results.
• Directives for participatory management in buffer zones	No specific document available. Directives are included in the management plan.	
Output 2.1 Trans-frontier cooperation is established		
• Coordination meetings between Cameroon and Gabon officers to establish	Most meetings, workshop and other actions planned were carried out (2003-2007). Two workshops were particularly important (Sangmelina, 2004 and Oyem, 2005) to elaborate an anti-poaching strategy.	However, the Gabonese side did not develop its part of the agreements or strategies nor the planned twin ITTO Project.
Output 2.2 Definition & launching of a Cameroon/Gabon strategy for the SGMM.		
• Draft strategy and national validation workshops	A draft was produced with Gabon's staff participation.	No validation workshops. Gabon's abstention to approve it.
Output 2.3 Illegal activities in the Sanctuary are prohibited and poaching is reduced		
• Building of 3 control posts	Not done	These posts could have been built in the Cameroon side.

• Capacitation of 30 eco-guards	Training was carried out for 15 Cameroon's eco-guards	Not for Gabonese guards.
Output 2.4 Trans-frontier cooperation is established		
• Multi-resources inventory	Done in 2006	The studies were not published or divulgated. All these reports were made under agreement with the WWF. They are of sufficient quality for a first management plan. Some reports are much more wildlife resources inventories or census than comprehensive ecological studies.
• Special studies about elephants and gorillas	Done in 2006	
• Ornithological study	Done in 2006	
• Study about non-timber products	Done in 2006	
• Study about aquatic biota	Done in 2006	
• Study on ecotourism potential	Done in 2006	
• Management plan for the MGS	Done as a draft only for Cameroons' side, in 2007. It was validated at local level in 2007.	Inconclusive due to the fact that the Kom sector status was not defined. It has never been approved.
• International workshop for management plan validation	Not done	

The ZPFM's management structure is in place (output 1.1)

The results regarding this output were poor. The infrastructure, headquarters in Oveng and the three posts, were never built. Considering that Oveng, the nearest large village to the Project area, had and still does not have any basic facility such as electricity or potable water, nor housing and, as a matter of facts, not even a Sunday market or a restaurant, it is easy to understand the high importance of constructing a small base for the Project to operate. The 4 guard posts strategically distributed were neither built, adding difficulties to the eco-guards service, already affected by the low quality of the roads, the high cost of the fuel and also the restrictions to use the vehicle and motorcycles initially available. However, during most execution of the Project there was no mobility for control activities, as a consequence of lack of maintenance and the use of the car for travels to Yaoundé and other cities.

A small house was rented and an electric generator was installed. This arrangement worked out from 2004 to 2008 and allowed to carry on the sensitization program, the GIS operation and other activities. The Project staff was appointed and gradually located in Oveng but their work has been hampered by poor logistics and family difficulties. Their contribution, in general, has been quite limited.

The eco-guards, mostly selected among local population, were in place and trained but, as mentioned, due to lack of posts and adequate mobility their actions related to poaching, unsustainable fishing and other prohibited activities has been insufficient. They were an asset regarding sensitization.

Since 2009 no one, except the guards remained in Oveng. Neither car nor motorcycle or radio was still operating.

MGS's management goals are shared by local population and other stakeholders (Output 1.2)

This output has received a concentrated effort of the Project, as the yearly technical report demonstrates. Some 200 meetings with variable formats were held repeatedly in each of the 34 villages located in the limits of the proposed MGS, with authorities and other local or regional actors. The program was based in a study of the socio-economic reality and in a plan that contains all elements usually applied to this task.

However the program was a motif of concerns even before its full application as expressed in the mid-term review, in 2004. The evaluators noticed that the approach was of the style "emitter-receptor" and not enough interactive as to promote real participation. In addition, it

emphasized the “carrot and stick” approach instead of a real comprehension of the shared interest in protecting an ecosystem that provides them most of their living.

These remarks by the mid-term evaluation team were probably not enough taken into account during the execution of this component. It has been evident during interviews that local people do not understand the benefits that the protection of a nearby patch of forest may bring to them. Instead, they know that they must not kill protected species such as elephants and gorillas unless facing penalties. Others will recite the verse “*we must protect nature for future generations*” despite they clearly do not see its practical meaning. It is neither evident that they comprehend the signification of a protected area.

It is also possible that there was an excessive emphasis in the offer of compensation benefits, in money or goods and services, to be provided by the Project. Curiously, except for the eventual damages to crops by elephants, gorilla and chimpanzee raids, there is nothing to compensate for the establishment of the Sanctuary as their traditional hunting area has been fully respected during demarcation in the side of the Sanctuary and because there are no limitations in the other side of the road where villagers live. Moreover, as there was nor is any effective control on hunting the fact is that they were not prejudiced at all by the establishment of the Sanctuary. Anyhow, local people continue asking “*what the utility of the Sanctuary is and what good it brings to us?*”

It must be added that any sensitization effort especially with population isolated from mainstream needs sustained efforts over long period of time. The Project sensitization effort has been relatively short and was abruptly interrupted for already six years.

There is evidence that the above mentioned villagers expectation for direct benefits has also been caused by external factors. One is attributed to the team of the J. Goodall Institute that has been promoting the possibility of large investment projects for the development of the region. It is not clear what was the project they were mentioning is but it could be a World Bank initiative in the region¹⁴. Also, the villagers and local authorities were strongly influenced by the campaign of the owner¹⁵ of the SOFOPETRA enterprise that used to buy local sympathies by simply distributing cash money as well as speaking loudly about heavy investments in ecotourism and public services. His actuation has been prejudicial since before Project initiation in the field but never stopped and it is again in full activity. His message is that the Government, especially the MINFOF, is unable to bring progress to the region due to incompetence and corruption. He recently promoted a regional journalistic campaign against the *Conservateur* of the MGS and his eco-guards with support from some local leaders that are suspected of complicity with ivory traffickers.

In conclusion, despite the sensitization has received a large part of the efforts of the Project it had little effect on the desired goal of developing true participation and sharing of objectives regarding the Sanctuary.

Illegal activities in the Sanctuary are prohibited and poaching is reduced (Output 2.3)

There is no evidence of a significant reduction, if any, neither in poaching nor in illegal fishing or extraction of timber and other products inside the MGS. There is no doubt that in the apex of the work of the Project (2004-2007) some dissuasive impact was produced but as

¹⁴ In 2010 the World Bank and the Cameroon Government showed some interest to include the Mengamé-Kom area in the Competitive Value Chains Project (US\$30 million). A study regarding the “*Cadre Fonctionnel du Complexe Sanctuaire a Gorilles de Mengamé-Parc Nationale Kom*” was paid by the Bank. However, it seems the Bank or the country decided not to include it in the project. This concentrated its tourism component in the Mount Cameroon and Campo Ma’an national parks and surroundings.

¹⁵ Mr. Nassam Bouhadir, a Lebanese citizen with residence in Cameroon.

soon as the lack of vehicles and fuel for the field work of the eco-guards became a limiting factor the situation returned to be “normal”.

Illegal activities continue almost unrestricted both in the established Sanctuary as well as in the proposed Kom National Park. The eco-guards have no means to avoid it. They have no vehicle of any kind, nor arm or other equipment (GPS, communication or camping, not even a machete). The only tool they have is their uniform. They realize sometimes truly heroic efforts walking long distances on foot or even entering into the forests. They have even once arrested armed poachers in such conditions¹⁶. However the efforts they do are proportionally insignificant to solve the problem. The eco-guards confirmed the killing of 14 gorillas and 7 elephants in 2013. That year some 300 ivory were detected by the police in the Oveng sector, meaning 150 elephants killed in Mengamé or in Minkebé. Cameroon is the common evacuation route for illegal wildlife products of that region and most of this traffic passes through Oveng and Sangmelina.

Poaching and overfishing are not the only problems. There is also illegal extraction of ebony (*Dyospirus crassiflora*) and bubinga (*Guibourtia tessmani*) that are processed inside the forest with chainsaw. The Chinese market is an avid consumer of these fine woods. The mission witnessed the seizure of a lot of bubinga.

Management plan of the MGS is elaborated (Output 2.4)

This has been the most expensive element of the Project and it has been well achieved through the collaboration of the WWF-Central African Regional Program (WWF-CARPO) based in Cameroun. Most field work was developed in the first trimester of 2006. In reading this section it is necessary to take into account that the area of the studies has been limited to the Cameroon side of the MMGS while a priori the budgeted costs were for a study covering the area in both countries¹⁷.

The evaluation of the wildlife potential has been a quite detailed census of the most conspicuous 26 species and revealed that at the moment of the field work the population of gorillas was 1,045 individuals. The elephants were represented by only 169 individuals. This has been a serious work and its report is plenty of valuable information for management. The bird census followed a similar methodology and revealed the existence of 193 species of which two were in the IUCN Red List of endangered species and 1.6% was species of very restricted distribution, almost endemic.

The fish study was a combination of biological and economic study. It detected 23 species but many more exist. The emphasis was placed on the utilization of the hydro-biological resources by the local population. As all other studies it is of a good quality and useful for management plan preparation. Another overall report on extraction activities, made a detailed description of the relationship of the local population with the non-timber forest resources complementing studies on wildlife and birds that were more biological in nature. It showed the dependency of people on these resources. It also demonstrated the already abusive trends of extraction, such as in the case of *Garcinia cola*, already very rare.

An important study referred to the guidelines for management of the periphery of the Sanctuary, especially those to apply to the forest concessions or forest management units located all around. It is a wise and reasonable proposal that if fully applied may allow an easy convivial between the Sanctuary, its buffer zone and the larger influence zone. As reported by

¹⁶ On June 20th 2005, five eco-guards on a two-week anti-poaching patrol rescued a male baby gorilla of about a year old from poachers. The patrol surprised the three poachers in their camp where they had smoked the mother gorilla. In their effort to catch the baby gorilla, the poachers had wounded its left arm.

¹⁷ As written in the Project Document it is implicit that the studies were planned to cover the entire MMGS.

interviewed people this set of rules has been well received by forest enterprises. However the study revealed concern about the expansion of agriculture and especially of permanent agriculture such as oil palm, that makes an exclusive use of the land and push more and more people over the forest. It proposed the establishment of agroforestry zones, a protection forest and also a communal forest among many other very sound measures. It is an essential piece of work for the future management plan of the ZPFM.

The ecotourism study was of a very acceptable quality, showing that the unquestioned tourism potential of the area was seriously hampered by the absence of tourism infrastructure and other elementary public services. The socio-economic study made in parallel was also of good quality and confirmed the previous analysis made for the planning of the awareness and participation campaign.

The drafting of the management plan was the central document to be produced to complete this output. It has been done with appropriateness. As per facts collected during the field research it became evident that the original proposal for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary had to be separated into two parts as consequence of the growing human occupation in the road that connect Oveng with Aboulou in the boundary with Gabon. This is why the management plan included separate planning for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park (Complex Kom-Mengamé). The management plan considered separate actions for each protected area. As a matter of facts it is a comprehensive document, carefully done following the parameters of modern management plans. It was a matter of ample discussions with all parties involved, following standard procedures for public consultation. The only gray areas were due to the uncertainties caused by the fact that neither Mengamé nor Kom were established at the moment the third and last draft was finished (2007)¹⁸.

Cooperation with Gabon for the joint management of the MMGS (Outputs 2.1, 2.2)

Efforts were developed to carry on this output. Visits of Cameroon officers to Gabon as well as two important joint workshops, one in each country (Sangmelina and Oyem) were realized and, at the level of the officers everything went well. A draft strategy of cooperation was developed and it contains every aspect that is relevant to ensure cooperation.

The draft parallel twin Gabonese Project, was submitted to ITTO but had no follow up and in general, after 2003 this country's authorities no more demonstrated any clear intention to establish the proposed Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary. Later on ITTO approved the Pre-Project PD 147/10 to prepare a project to give continuity to this initiative but it resulted in a quite different and larger Project (PD 663) dealing with ecological corridors in the TRIDOM that had not yet been approved by ITTO. Thus, it became impossible to develop joint studies and strategy for poaching control as well as joint eco-guards training or a joint management plan. All these actions were carried on solely in the Cameroon side.

3.2 Unexpected Project results

In Table 6 a list of unplanned achievements is mentioned. These were not considered as outputs at the moment of Project design. Some were achieved during Project execution but others are much more recent events.

¹⁸ Management plans must be done after establishment of the protected areas as before there are many key uncertainties such as size, limits and even category.

Table 6. Achievements not included as original Project's outputs or attained after its technical termination and their limitations	
Establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (2008)	A pre-condition of the Project was the establishment of a large protected area in the Cameroun side, under the name of Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary. It was decided to establish two separate protected areas: (i) the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (27,723 ha) and the Kom National Park (67,838 ha). However, until today only the first was established.
New draft management plan for the MGS (2014)	On the basis 2007 draft a new actualized and specific management plan for the MGS was prepared and validated at local and national level. It is waiting for approval by the MINFOF and expected for this year.
Documentation (draft decree) for the establishment of the Kom National Park (2009)	The decree is since 2009 in the Prime Minister's office. No official reason has been provided for the delay.
Regularization of the eco-guards as permanent MINFOF staff (2009-2014)	This has been an important step as previously they were contractual without any stability. Today 20 eco-guards serve in the ZPFM.
New <i>Conservateur</i> (Director) of the MGS (2010)	A new professional <i>Conservateur</i> is in place since 2010 but based in Sangmelina. There is no headquarters in Oveng.
GEF/UNDP TRIDOM Project provided a new 4-wheel drive truck for use in the ZPFM and limited funding (2012-2014) for poaching control.	This Project oriented to poaching control is near ending and had limited impact in the region. The vehicle provided is the only that is partially available to the MGS.
Approval of a Manual of Procedures for the financing of micro-Projects (2005)	This has been quite an extraordinary initiative approved by the Directors Committee of the Project in 2004 and ratified in 2006.
Establishment of a Provincial Commission for the selection of micro-projects to be financed (2006)	In 2008 the Provincial Commission approved 6 projects including chicken production, sheep management, production and distribution of plantain bananas in villages along the limits of the MGS.
Establishment and operation of a Special Revolving Fund and Account to manage the funds for micro-projects (2008)	The Directors Committee approved the use of around US\$60,000 for these projects aiming at improving living conditions and the economy of local villagers. With Project's ending this initiative was lost. Most projects failed due to lack of technical assistance.
Instauration of a 50 FCA F/ha/year voluntary contribution by forest concessionaires (2005)	Interesting initiative that was accepted by some forest enterprises to contribute to improve economy and quality of life of villagers around the MGS. This money was to be used trough the mayors of the villages. Around US\$ 42,000 were collected and used for small infrastructures such as wheels. This practice has been discontinued.
Demarcation of a portion of the MGS (2009)	The western portion of the Sanctuary (20 km) has been demarcated in the field with active participation and individual agreement of concerned villagers. This essential task has been interrupted and not continued over the remaining 21 km. The demarcation has included the opening of a path line but no permanent marks were used. Today these limits are again covered by vegetation.
Every member of the government and large sectors of the society are aware of the gorilla issue and of the MGS	The Project through its Directors Committee, its international and many national meetings has often been in the press and it contributed to inform and raise public awareness on the issue of transboundary conservation especially with regard to gorillas and elephants.
Headquarters of the MGS in Oveng may be built in 2014	A 150 million FCA F budget has been allocated for this infrastructure and a public bidding has already approved an enterprise.
Staff may receive equipment in 2015	The so much needed equipment for the eco-guards has been budgeted and may be purchased in 2015.

The first achievement of this kind is the official establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary that was supposed to be a pre-condition of the ITTO Project. As it will be

discussed ahead this achievement is not what was expected or needed. It is much smaller and per se is not a warrant of gorilla or elephants long term survival as a consequence of its reduced size (26,780 ha) and isolation. But it is anyhow a concrete achievement. Another unexpected related fact is the proposal to establish the Kom National Park in a portion of the initially planned large Mengamé sanctuary.

Since 2009, after years of work insecurity, the eco-guards of the ZPFM were gradually recognized as formal MINFOF officers. Pitifully many of those selected and trained by the Project resigned before the opportunity of a stable job was available or were later transferred to other locations. Today's eco-guards are mostly from other regions. They receive a salary going from US\$100 to US\$200 in function of their scholar degrees. Their experience is not considered for a differential pay. Also a new well qualified Sanctuary Director (*Conservateur*) has been appointed by the Ministry in 2010 and he is based at Sangmelina.

The TRIDOM program partially allocated a 4 wheel drive truck to the MGS that is used also for poaching control in a wide range including the entire ZPFM. This is the only vehicle "available" for the management of the MGS. In general terms the GRF/UNDP TRIDOM program has made very little contribution to the area of the ITTO Project.

The initiative to establish a revolving fund for micro-projects, including a manual of operations, a special provincial council and a specific ban account has been already mentioned. But it is again an originally unplanned action. It didn't work due to lack of appropriate funding and because it had no continuity after the end of the Project. But the initiative had its own merit and could have been very useful if maintained and improved. The ITTO financed-program provided small funds for the establishment of a few chicken farms, to improve the production of plantain, to breed moutons and for aquaculture. They did not went well due to the complex administrative procedures, the lack of supervision and follow up, the individualism of the villagers and, also, as a consequence of the lack of local market or transportation for the increased production obtained, as in the case of the plantain.

More interesting is the pioneer initiative at the Cameroon level to propose forest concessionaires in the zone of influence to make a voluntary contribution for small projects to ensure the good relations of villagers with their forest concessions and with the MGS.

Despite the logging enterprises already pay a series of royalties and taxes the idea was locally relatively well received and three out of 7 enterprises paid the suggested FCA F 50 /ha/year for a while and a significant amount of money was collected (CFA F13,900,000 in 2002 and CFA F 2,529,000 in 2004). The money has been used to the above mentioned mechanism but under a separate account and mostly for the provision of small public services in villages and towns. This good practice has also been abandoned but many parties consider it must be generalized around all protected areas.

In November 2009 the MINFOF decided to initiate the demarcation in place of the recently established MGS. They were able to demarcate only 20 km of the western limit of the Sanctuary with a 5 m wide path in the forest and painted red marks in the trees. It is interesting to point out that the demarcation was made with full participation and agreement of the villagers installed in the limit that were able to claim the use of that forest. As a result the demarcation was made at some 7 km in average from the road where the villages are located¹⁹. The work stopped by lack of funds and it was not concluded. As the marks were not perennial it is evident that this important effort is now lost. However, this modus

¹⁹ This demarcation may indicate that the MGM may consequently be finally much smaller than that gazetted area that had the road as limit.

operandi, hand to hand with villagers to demarcate a protected area has been a first in Cameroon.

The last event to report is the probable construction of a large MGS headquarters in Oveng. Its cost (FCA F150 millions) has been included in the 2014 budget, the public bidding process has been successfully achieved and the winning enterprise has already made the initial steps to build the center this year.

3.3 Assessment of achievements

3.3.1 Development objective

The development objective of the Project (“*to contribute to the development of an integrated approach for the protection of the forests with the conservation of the gorillas and the development of mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities*”) has not been achieved. The facts are:

- 1) The status of conservation of the gorilla and the elephant as well as of other important species and their ecosystem is significantly worse today than it was in 2000. Not only poaching -and illegal exploitation of forest resources- has not stopped but there are evidences it has increased. Also, as per declaration of the villagers, hunting for food has become much more difficult than in the past, requiring longer distances and time. This last situation is essentially a consequence of the population growth.
- 2) The key objective of the Project was the establishment and management of a protected area of a size that ensures conservation of viable populations of the target animals. The only protected area formally established has been the small Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (27,723 ha) in 2008 that is currently not demarcated neither protected due to absence of infrastructure and equipment. Its management plan is ready but it has not yet been approved by the MINFOF. A draft decree prepared in 2009 for the establishment of the proposed Kom National Park, the complement to the MGS, is still waiting for Government’s approval.
- 3) Transboundary cooperation with Gabon for the management of the proposed Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary has not been achieved despite efforts made. Gabon didn’t establish the protected area in Minkebé that must complement the MGS.
- 4) Two efforts -not planned in the Project description for the current phase- to develop mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities were made and had interesting potential but they were discontinued.

3.3.2 Specific objectives

- 1) The specific objective “*to initiate processes of community participation and awareness in order to conserve Mengamé Protection Forest Area (MPFA or ZPFM)*” has been formally achieved but its results were largely infructuous. Local population and authorities are aware of the existence of a protected area and also of the main rules regarding hunting and forest resources extractive activities. But they have no understanding of the mid and long term benefits of a nearby protected area and they only are interested in tangible immediate benefits that compensate the absence of Governmental assistance and public services. They are not cooperating with the conservation of nature efforts in the area.

As explained, no other products expected below this specific objective have been achieved. The infrastructure was never built. Staffing was achieved but had little impact of the outputs excepting sensitization. They did not remain in place. Eco-guards were appointed and trained. However, their effectivity to carry-on their duties have been extremely limited due to lack of means. The fact that there are still rangers in place must be rescued.

- 2) The specific objective “*To initiate a process for cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for the joint management of the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS or SGMM)*” has been carried out in all that correspond to the Cameroon side. Otherwise the objective of joint management for the MMGS has not been achieved.

The studies made were of good quality, containing excellent field information for the drafting of the management plan and also as baseline situation of the wildlife in the zone. They contributed to the revised objective of drafting a management plan only for the MGS. However this has not been approved nor implanted. The proposal to establish two separate protected areas (Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park) has been judicious.

3.4 Assessment of Project formulation

3.4.1 Appropriateness of the Project design

The Project was prepared in a short period of time due to the necessity of having it ready for the ITTC Session XXX, held in Yaoundé in 2001. However, it was essentially well designed and it covered very conveniently most aspects to be considered. Its scientific, environmental and political justification is impeccable. Its two specific objectives were reasonable and a priori achievable in the two-year execution period programmed with an extension of one year or so, as usual. Its strategy makes sense and there is nothing substantial to add to it.

However, there are several aspects in the Project design that may be discussed in order to explore an explanation for the poor results obtained. Some of them are more of a formal nature but had some implications. Other aspects are indeed substantial to partially explain the result.

Formal aspects

The formal aspects that could have been better explained or developed are:

- (i) The development objective.
- (ii) The activities and outputs of the specific objectives.
- (iii) The budget allocation.
- (iv) The expected situation at the end of the Project

The development objective, especially in the French version, is much more a collection of three specific objectives than a real development objective. In addition, the two specific objectives of the Project somehow exclude the matter of income generation for the villagers that is highlighted in the development objective (... *and the development of mechanisms to generate income opportunities for local communities*). This fact has been a source of criticisms by most of the interviewed persons during the evaluation mission. It is obvious for the evaluators that this aspect was the essence of a future Phase II but as that second phase never took place it looks as if the Project planned disproportionately high investments is

studies and almost “*nothing for people*”. Indeed, out of a budget of almost one million dollars only US\$22,500 (2.3%) was originally allocated to the output “*MMGS management goals are shared by local people and other stakeholders*”. This has been changed later on but the amount of money for this key output did not reach an amount proportional to the task.

The distribution of outputs and activities are not well related to the description of the specific objectives. There is no clear relation between the objective “*to initiate processes of community participation and awareness in order to conserve Mengamé Protection Forest Area*” and outputs such as “*put in place the MPFA management infrastructure*” including buildings, appointment of eco-guards, etc. Neither is an obvious relation between the objective “*to initiate a process for cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon for the joint management of the Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary*” and outputs such as the conduction of biological studies even if their referred to a possible joint management plan.

Many comments were made about the proportionally high cost of the studies -subcontracts- included in the Project. These studies were, beyond doubts, indispensable. However, they represented (outputs 1.3 and 2.4) 32.6% of the total cost of the Project and 41% of ITTO’s contribution. In addition this cost was planned to cover Mengamé and Minkebé but it was fully used to cover only Mengamé²⁰. This fact represents a cost/surface twice higher than estimated.

The expected situation at the end of the Project has been overly ambitious and probably unachievable even if everything in Project execution was going well and on time. Again, this desired situation would correspond better to the two phase’s program that was in the mind of those that designed the Project.

It is also possible to consider that the management structure of the Project was somehow excessive, including “four divisions” in addition to the Project Director and the Technical Advisor. To have 5 or 6 professionals in the field for this operation seems too many especially as all studies and technical documents were to be developed by the WWF with its own professional staff. As a matter of facts the staff was partially recruited only after two years of execution and they did not produce much nor quality work.

Substantial aspects

All previous comments are essentially formal and they do not explain the problems faced by the Project. The following set of observations probably had much more influence in the outputs:

- (i) The non-fulfillment of the implicit pre-Project conditions.
- (ii) The real difficulties to install the Project.
- (iii) The difficulties to appoint and keep in place the Project staff.
- (iv) The budget distribution and the real costs of each activity.
- (v) Compensations for wildlife damages in crops.
- (vi) Gabon’s participation.
- (vii) The second phase.

²⁰ This is a matter that is not yet clear. The text, both in the French and English versions of the Project document, indicates that the studies were to be developed for the entire MMGS, implying that they would refer to both countries and not only to the Cameroon side. However, this understanding was somehow lost in further project documents such as CD acts, POAs and annual reports as well as in the sub-contract with WWF.

- (viii) The assumptions in the logical framework. This last aspect will be discussed separately.

The most important single fact regarding Project design has been its unclear position with regard to what somehow has been considered as pre-conditions:

- (i) The formal establishment of the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary.
- (ii) The full willingness of Gabon to participate and collaborate in the effort to establish and jointly manage a new protected area²¹.

As seen both basic assumptions were not handled as conditions to sign Project Agreement nor as for first disbursement. The writing of the Project document seems to assume that the MGS would be already established when initiating its activities. This is why it does not even consider its establishment as an output. However, the MGS has been established only 8 years later (2008) when the Project activities ended, and on an area much smaller than initially planned. Many of the problems of staffing and equipment for the Project were consequences of regulatory restrictions to apply public funds out of established protected areas with approved management plans.

On the other hand it is comprehensible that the Project be approved by ITTO and initiated before the establishment of the MGS as it was obvious that Cameroon required of assistance to prepare its delimitation and other supportive studies. This may explain why the language of the Project document is dubious with respect to this important matter.

The other implicit pre-conditions has been the full participation and collaboration of the Government of Gabon with the execution of PD 66/01 and, especially, through the establishment of the Minkebé protected area for gorillas and a parallel twin project.

It seems today that the Project designers failed to assess the real difficulties to implant such an operation in the field. The limits of the proposed MGS are located in a remote area of forests, with difficult non-paved road access, especially during rainy season that are maintained only in function of the logging concessionaires needs. The 34 villages along the protected area border, including Oveng, are very small -often less than a dozen houses- and extremely poor. There are no public services except a few primary schools. No electricity, potable water and sewage, health posts, telephone or Internet are available. There are no houses for rent and it is only since one year ago that a rustic hotel -without electricity or water supply- is under construction. Worst, until today there is not even a typical Sunday market in Oveng nor stores or restaurants. There are only a few bars where women eventually bring food for sale. Under such conditions the installation of a headquarters for the Project became very difficult and the attraction and retention of professional staff even more. The costs of operations in such conditions are enormous as all purchase must be made in Sangmelina or Ebolowa. The mid-term review mission confirmed that 77% of the operations budget has been consumed only to operate the vehicle by July 2004.

In the same line it may have not been given enough attention to the extremely low educational level of the villagers, with a large portion of illiterates. This made the sensitization process much more complex and lengthy than initially considered. The population has been isolated and still has little contact with the main current. They have great difficulty to understand very elementary legal concepts and obviously they are unable to

²¹ This is clearly stated in the page 6 of the English original version of the PD 66/01 Rev. I (F).

understand the complex Cameroon's administration. It has been very difficult for them to understand that the MINFOF and the Project could not solve the long list of unsatisfied claims they have against the national government, including public services such as school and health. Each village has special characteristics and leadership, a situation that greatly difficult the process of sensitization and raising awareness. Village authorities are essentially traditional but they lack leadership to impose order or respect for decisions adopted. Differently from other regions people in the area is quite individualistic. Additionally, land tenure in the region is a complex undefined issue.

Due to the previous precarious conditions for work the recruitment of professional staff for the Project became a critical matter. The honorariums were low but the limiting factor has been the difficulty to keep their families in place. Few candidates were available and those that accepted the conditions were, in general, poorly qualified. No one to be appointed has been on place until two years after Project's beginning. Finally the team was completed but their action in the Project has been accidental, sporadic and of limited quality and productivity. Of course this can also be explained by the lack of working facilities, such as vehicles -only one car was available but this spent more time travelling out of the working zone that within it- or computers, etc. Additionally the mid-term review detected a series of deficiencies regarding staff control, information and motivation.

Another problem that has been reiterated as a negative factor is the budget estimates that were considered too low for the purchase of equipment and to conduct operations. The problem has been seriously aggravated by the US dollar devaluation that elevated dramatically the prices of goods in local money²². Additionally the funds -ITTO and Government- were almost systematically available late with regard to the previsions, delaying the actions. In almost every CD meeting comments were made about the "difficulty" to conciliate the local reality with the procedures required by ITTO to operate the budget.

A most commented aspect has been the lack of a budgetary provision and mechanism to compensate villagers for wildlife damages in their cultivated fields. Gorilla and elephants but several other animals may cause severe destruction in all kind of crops. It is never a matter of much money as the size of the fields is always very small but the absence of funds to cover them after a confirmation by eco-guards of the raid and losses has been a source of complains and unhappiness as well as a justification to kill those animals. Compensation has also been necessary when during demarcation a few patches of agriculture were found located far inside the Sanctuary.

There is no doubt that the apparent lack of response of the Government of Gabon had a negative impact on the initial two years of development of the Project in Cameroon. But it does not explain the accumulated retard as in 2004 it was implicitly decided to continue working essentially in Cameroon. Therefore this is a valid excuse only for aspects related to remaining bi-national activities such as those included in output 2.1, 2.2 and a few of those included in 2.3, such as the training of 15 Gabonese guards or joint patrols. Notwithstanding, even the building of the three "binational" field post for poaching control could perfectly be built as they would be fully useful if built in the Cameroon side of the rivers Kom and Ayina. Other activities previewed in the Project document, such as bi-national meetings to draft a common strategy and visits were effectively held. Otherwise, the fact that Gabon did not participate as expected in the Project does not justify or explain its poor results.

²² The US dollar value dropped from over 700 XAF to less than 450 XAF.

The second phase of this Project was indispensable to provide follow up to all activities initiated except the studies and, especially, to tackle the issue of poverty alleviation in the zone through sustainable economic activities that allow a better and truly participative relation of the local people with the new protected area. In 2004 the WWF drafted a project proposal for this second phase that was supposed to begin in 2004 or 2005. But it was not even submitted to ITTO as per recommendation of the CD. Its realization would have probably be the turning point for the success. But, the circumstances made it impossible.

Despite the Project document states that the PD 66/01 was to be the first phase of a program with at least two phases in Cameroon and another in Gabon, this fact has not been sufficiently highlighted to the attention of local authorities and people that often consider the Project failed to support local economic activities to compensate hunting limitations.

3.4.2 Critical analysis of the logical framework

The logical framework of the Project contains all the usual indicators, verification means and assumptions for objectives, outputs and activities. It may be said that the hypothesis did not consider enough the obstacles imposed by the isolation of the Project area, its social reality, the Project costs or the staffing difficulties. It may also be said that probably there was an excess of optimism about the time terms for achievements.

However, the most important aspect of the logical framework is the assumptions made. These essentially lie on political willingness of the concerned authorities of Cameroon and Gabon. Thirteen key objectives, outputs and activities depend directly on political willingness and almost all other depend indirectly on it. The most obvious direct dependency of political will was the establishment of the MGS and the Kom National Park, the participation of Gabon in the joint venture and the approval of the management plan. But political will much below expectations was also indirectly present in matters such as the building of the headquarters and the posts, the opportune liberation of budgeted funds, etc. However it worked relatively well for other aspects such as appointment of the Project Director, national staff recruitment, eco-guards appointment, high level participation in the CD meetings, etc.

The logical framework seems also to have underestimated the real dimension of the influence of the national bureaucracy on the success of the Project. The very heavy Cameroon public administration has been a standing alone issue. It hampered almost every aspect of the operation since its first year. The public budget is very rigid and must be prepared almost two year ahead to its disbursement, which if occur, is at fixed dates. Additionally, the Project has been linked to the Ministerial cabinet. Instead of being helpful this fact became a tremendous bottleneck as the Minister himself had to sign expenditures with the Project Director, including travel allowances. All these administrative problems, plus those that are attributed to ITTO's own complex procedures for disbursement, were extensively discussed in the mid-term review report. But they continued to impose the slow rhythm of Project execution and they are still a prevailing issue.

3.4.3 Risks to Project success and analysis of the validity of the assumptions made

Fourteen years after the Project design it is now evident that risks for Project success as well as the assumptions for Project success deserved a deeper analysis. The issues that are most noticeable with regard to the assumptions made are those related to:

- (i) Political willingness or support.
- (ii) Lengthy and highly complex administrative procedures.

- (iii) The practical difficulties and costs to implant a project in such a remote underdeveloped area.
- (iv) The socio-cultural reality of the villagers.

It seems evident that the “political willingness” to develop this Project in Gabon as well as in Cameroon has been grossly overestimated or, may be, misunderstood. The gap between the speeches in international meetings and the reality back home, when confronted with pairs and obstacles, may be huge. The lack of productive follow up of Gabon’s offers of collaboration to establish a gorilla sanctuary in Minkebé or to effectively cooperate with Cameroon in poaching control is an example that, in this specific case has been a key obstacle to fulfill a major Project objective. But this lack of political willingness has been evident at all levels, from some national authorities down to most local authorities. Most of the delays and lack of achievements are a direct consequence of this fact. It has rarely been rooted in any clear opposition to the Project or to the establishment of protected areas. It seems it has been often originated by sectorial or intra-sectorial rivalries with each one authority intending to confirm its self-importance simply by opposing or by placing additional obstacles to the processes. The most notorious consequence of this fact has been the delay in establishing the MGS and the non-establishment of the Kom National Park but it has also been the case in almost every action required.

The issue of “absence of political will” is very complex. It is not a fact common to every level nor to all actors in the Government and, additionally, it is compounded by an extremely rigid and complex bureaucracy that is frequently used as a pretext not to achieve on time what is necessary or expected. There is no doubt that in general the Project had support of the Forestry Sector and of the authorities of the MINEF and MINFOF. The proposal for the establishment of the MGS and of the Kom National Park were made and submitted to the Office of the First Minister since the proposal was ready in 2008. The MGS was immediately approved but the Kom decree -formally submitted in 2009- is still waiting for approval. Similarly the environmental and forestry authorities of Gabon were apparently all in favor of the idea of a Sanctuary in Minkebé coalescent with the MGS. But nothing happened.

In both cases the obstacles were created in other higher spheres of the governments. In general, the opposition arises in two type of motif. The first, as in the example of Kom seems to be conflicting interests for the use of the area and its surroundings. Some may be considering that the large infrastructures that must pass near the border (railway) of the proposed park may be hampered by the establishment of a park. It is also possible that there are mining interests over part of the proposed park’s area. Others suspect that ivory traffickers may be lobbying some policy makers to stop the initiative. This is the kind of issues that difficult the establishment of new protected areas everywhere.

The other types of limited political support are rooted in:

- (i) Lack of interest or comprehension of the relevance of the matter.
- (ii) Avoidance of new or more “problems” by concerned authorities and, of course,
- (iii) Conflicts of authority among sectors, agencies and individuals.

This last is most common at the local and regional levels but it also occur at the national scale, even among directorates of the MINFOF.

The results are many unnecessary delays, lack of cooperation among institutions including those related to poaching control, higher expenses and waste of time to get authorizations, etc. Recent examples of competition amid authorities have been the establishment of a large frontier market infrastructure in Abolou and, worst, the construction in 2014 by the Ministry

of Transportation of a new road cutting the Sanctuary in two parts, an action that is in contrast with legislation, common sense and science. Both actions were mildly opposed by the MINFOF.

The lack of political support has been permanently compounded by the inflexible application of extremely complex, difficult and time consuming administrative procedures or rules that, as mentioned, were often also used as excuse by authorities not to facilitate the Project development. This has been the case for the construction of the small base of the Project in Oveng that required an exception to the public bidding requisite. Small expenditures or actions, such as authorizing a field mission or the payment of a travel allowances or any minor purchase, even with ITTO funding, required the approval and signing of the Minister himself, previous careful checking by zealous subordinates. Of course such procedures caused any urgent action to be delayed for weeks and even months.

Also, the field reality has been significantly underestimated in Project design. Lack of acceptable roads and the long distances to towns, absence of lodgment, energy, water and sewage, school, health service, communication and even of food and very basic day to day supplies of all kind, made almost impossible to appoint and retain professional staff, which could not take their families with them. The costs of running the operations were consequently very high. The public bidding for the headquarters failed repeatedly because it was a relatively small building and the entrepreneurs considered that their costs in such a remote location would not compensate gains.

In the same line the educational level of the villagers is extremely low, with a large portion of illiterates, making the sensitization process much more complex and lengthy than initially considered. The population has been isolated and still has little contact with the main current. They have great difficulty to understand very elementary legal concepts and to understand the complex Cameroon's administration. They are spread over some 35 villages conformed by ten to rarely more than thirty houses. Each village has special characteristics and leadership, a situation that greatly difficult the process of sensitization and raising awareness.

3.4.4 Assessment of scientific intrinsic merit of the Project proposal

There are no doubts about the high scientific and environmental strategic merit of the Project proposal. The area was and still is a much needed piece of the international effort to conserve representative and viable samples of the dense forest ecosystems of Central Africa. The studies on flora and fauna developed by the Project in 2006 confirmed beyond doubts the ecological value of the area of the proposed MMGS in terms of biodiversity richness of every taxonomic group studied and on the relatively high population of most endangered or rare species. The studies also confirmed the imperious necessity of close transboundary cooperation to control poaching and other illegal activities.

3.4.5 Coherence with ITTO's policies, sectorial policies, international treaties, etc. and contributions to these instruments.

The Project, as designed, was perfectly coherent with the goal of achieving biodiversity conservation in ITTO producer members, ITTO's objectives and Libreville Action Plan or ITTO's Objectives 2000. It was as well on line with sectorial policies of Cameroon and the battery of international treaties and agreement that concern conservation of tropical forests, wildlife protection and environment that were signed by Cameroon and that are taken into

account by the ITTO. All these aspects were very well developed both in the Project document and in the mid-term evaluation report.

However, due to the lack of success of the Project its formal contribution to the ITTO 1994 Objectives, Libreville Action Plan or the Yokohama Action Plan 2002-2006 has been minimal. Nevertheless it is worth to state that, despite every problem, limitation and deficiency mentioned in this report there is no doubt that the mere existence of the MGS is an asset that contribute to each of these instruments. It is especially important for the TRIDOM as per the studies it has been ratified that the MGS contains an especially ecologically important portion of the biological context of Central African forests and also as a key piece in the control of wildlife trafficking. Of course, the still expected establishment of the Kom National Park and of a Minkebé protected area for gorillas will complement and magnify its impact and conservation value.

3.4.6 Could failures have been predicted during Project proposal?

It is easy to “predict” problems after they occur. As mentioned the Project was adequately designed. It certainly have been influenced by an excessive optimism regarding expected outputs and also with regard to the real logistic and social difficulties present in the Project site but, under normal circumstance this must have had as consequence, as is usual, a reasonable longer time of execution, may be four years instead of two. But nothing in 2000 or 2001 could suggest or predict an almost nine years-long execution period.

Even if the Project design included the elements that in opinion of the reviewers could have made it better, as seen in previous discussions, this would not necessarily avoid the delay. This, as said, neither can be attributed to the lack of participation of Gabon nor to the fact that the MGS was established late in the process. The central causes of the problem were essentially bureaucracy and political will issues and a mix of both.

3.5 Assessment of Project implementation

In its formal aspects the Project implementation went well. A Project Director was appointed on time. The Directors Committee was formed, the Consultative Council also. Annual Plans of Operations (POAs) and technical reports were regularly prepared and submitted to the CD. Each CD meeting was attended by high level personalities, often including the Minister in person. The Technical Advisor has also been appointed. Staff appointment was a lengthy process but finally they were all appointed. The WWF has been appointed and it was efficient at delivering its contribution.

3.5.1 Recipient country commitment, stakeholder involvement, assessment of ownership

The Cameroon Government through the MINEF and the MINFOF has been fully and seriously committed and involved in the Project. This is evidenced by several important facts:

- (i) The personal participation of the Minister or the Secretary General of the Ministry both in the CD as in the administration of the Project.
- (ii) The fulfillment in excess of Cameroon’s contribution to the budget of the Project.
- (iii) The rapid nomination of a Project Director and eco-guards
- (iv) The appointment of Project staff and their payment since 2003 up to the end of the Project.
- (v) The provision of a new 34 wheel drive truck at the launching of the Project.

There is full recognition in the Ministry about their own responsibility about the delays in execution that they also attribute to the same reasons already mentioned before. All

interviewed persons in the MINFOF are concerned and unhappy about the delay in establishing the Kom National Park as well as about the new road built in middle of the SGM.

Other stakeholders such as the villagers and local or regional authorities showed a different attitude with regard to the Project. Most of them did not help in any way and while most were indifferent a few showed open hostility to the concept. This reaction has been proportional to their frustration with regard to their expectative of benefits. It has also been a consequence of the constant and pernicious campaign against the Project and the MINFOF of the influential owner of SOFOPETRA that still consider the MGS must be conceded to him to develop a tourism venture in the area. Instead of searching an association with the MINFOF to carry on this idea that can be as beneficial for the MGS as for his business, his campaign is purely confrontational.

The forest concessionaires in the ZPMF were not against the establishment of the SGM and some of them were ready to contribute to the success of the Project through the pay of a significant amount of money per hectare per year, as three of them did. If this initiative would be continued it is probable that all forest enterprises would contribute.

3.5.2 Efficiency and effectiveness

It is obvious that this Project demonstrated a very low efficiency and an even lower effectiveness. Especially time and effort, but not even money was efficiently utilized with regard to the outputs expected. Despite its long duration and the evident lack of money to develop some activities the Project does not even spent all the available ITTO contribution to the budget. Instead the cost for Cameroon was higher than initially budgeted. Many outputs were not achieved and most of those achieved were not of the quality that was expected or their impact vanished with time, such as the sensitization effort. The only products of adequate quality were the studies. However, these were not published or divulgated and, the management plan that was built with the collected information is still not approved nor applied. Thus, not even this set of products can formally be considered to assess efficiency and effectiveness. The main output of the Project has been the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary covering a fraction of the proposed area that, curiously, was to be a pre-condition of Project approval or first disbursement.

3.5.3 Assessment of the financial and managerial aspects

As demonstrated at the moment of the mid-term review and as confirmed by the final audit report the budget has been managed fully in conformity with the norms of ITTO and the Project agreement as well as with the regulations of Cameroon. The CD authorized some budgetary modifications to facilitate the operations and to adapt to the changing reality. The Completion Report indicated a final positive balance amounting to US\$70,947.00 on ITTO contribution, at the Project completion, as of 31 December 2011.

Observation about the staff management made during the mid-term review gave place at the drafting of a Project's internal regulation for management of human resources.

Except the generator that is inoperative but still in place all equipment and material purchased with Project funds are irremediably deteriorated or lost.

3.5.4 Assessment of technical or scientific products

The technical products of this Project were of a good quality and adequately contributed to their objectives: (i) the delimitation of two protected areas, the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park, (ii) the management plans of both protected areas and of the

ZPFM and, (iii) the regulation for the guidelines for collaborative management of forests and other resources in the buffer zones.

It is important to outline that these studies demonstrated the need of establishment of two protected areas instead of one. The original proposal was a relatively large gorilla sanctuary covering as much as 122,000 ha over the limit with Gabon. But, the construction of a road linking Cameroon and Gabon (from Oveng to Djoum) crossing the proposed Sanctuary made it evident that it was not possible to establish a one single block protected area. After an exhaustive analysis of the situation it was decided to propose the small Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (27,223 ha) in the west and the larger Kom National Park (67,838 ha) in the east side.

3.5.5 Assessment of effects upon local communities

Except punctual and short term benefits such as the few demonstrative micro-projects on plantain cultivation, sheep's management, aquaculture, chicken farms or construction of wheels that were realized and the employment of some eco-guards, the effect of the Project on local communities as perceived by them has been minimal or nil. Contrarily, villagers and other local people consider that the Project has been noxious to them, limiting their options to hunt, to collect material into the forest and to open new shifting cultivation areas²³. They also argue that they are now harmless to repress the damages caused by gorillas and other species.

On the other side there is no doubt that in the mid and long term the Sanctuary, if well managed, may substantially benefit villagers and other local people. Tourism development and commerce, when roads will be paved and electricity and telecommunication and water supply will be provided, are a certainty. This, depending on its scale, will provide much wanted development in the area and benefits such as working opportunities in lodging, restaurants, guiding or as drivers and an expanded market for local crops. In addition, the strict protection of the Sanctuary will allow the maintenance of the stock of wildlife for legal hunting in the buffer zone.

3.6 Sustainability and post-Project strategy

This question will be discussed again in the overall assessment. The Project sustainability as well as its post-Project strategy depended on two conditions: (i) the legal establishment of the protected area and, (ii) the approval of the second phase of the Project. The first condition has been partially achieved as the MGS was created.

The mere fact that the MGS has been legally established provides a basis for long term sustainability. When established protected areas can be defended and usually survive. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, this affirmation is also being confirmed by facts such as the foreseen construction of headquarters, the drafting of a specific management plan to be approved soon, staffing, new budget provisions, etc.

4 The situation in Gabon

The Project PD 066/01 has been entirely developed in Cameroon territory. However, as planned, the studies were planned to also include the adjacent portion of the Minkebé forest, in Gabon. The management plan of the proposed Sanctuary as well as the strategy for cooperation and poaching control and the ranger's training had to be shared. Despite some

²³ As a matter of facts this is not true in anyway. The only restriction, when applied, has been for the hunting of prohibited species or for illegal cuts of precious woods.

coordination meetings and reciprocal visits only the strategy has been drafted but never approved nor applied.

A Gabonese project proposal to ITTO as complement to the PD 066/01 was expected in 2001 or 2002. It was submitted in 2002 but it did not prosper and it was abandoned.

The causes are unclear but may be attributed to several facts:

- (i) The reiterated -but justified- observations to the Gabon project proposal by the Panel of Experts may have discouraged the proponents.
- (ii) The long time elapsed between PD 66/01 approval (2001) and its effective initiation (2004) that may have also influenced negatively Gabon's participation.
- (iii) Gabon established in 2002 the large Minkebé National Park excluding the rectangle of land that is coalescent with Mengamé that was to be part of the MMGS,
- (iv) There are no provisions in the protected area legislation of both countries for joint or internationally shared management plans.

It is possible that after the creation of the Minkebé National Park some policy makers considered that there was already enough protected land in the region. However, the fact that the Gabonese Government excluded the rectangle adjacent to Mengamé when establishing the Minkebé National Park may mean that it was still expecting to create a Mengamé-Minkebé Gorilla Sanctuary. In terms of conservation it would be even better to include this area in the new National Park.

4.1 Protected areas in northern Gabon

The Minkebé National Park covers 757,000 ha. It has been recognized by the WWF as an area needing protection since 1989. It was established as a provisional reserve in 2000 but the Minkebé National Park was gazetted and established by the Gabonese government in August 2002. It is recognized as a critical site for conservation and has been proposed as a World Heritage Site.

Despite its status, this Park since short time after its establishment suffered serious and fast growing problems, especially elephant poaching and invasion by gold diggers. In 2011 the ANPN and the Gabonese military moved out 6,000 gold miners that established illegal gold camps inside the Park and its buffer zone. These camps had grown exponentially in size over the previous 2-3 years in response to soaring gold prices as well as the high production of the gold mines. In addition to gold mining and trading it was noted that severe elephant poaching and other illegal activities such as arms and drugs trafficking were associated with these camps and encouraged by traders.

A wave of elephant poaching is currently sweeping across Africa. Gabon, which represents just 13% of Africa's rain forests, contains probably over half the surviving forest elephants. However, the reports of ivory poaching are sharply increasing in Gabon as world black market prices soar. Ivory trade is a very lucrative criminal activity which is linked to a mafia type of organization. These criminal networks operate out of South Cameroon (Oveng, Djoum, Sangmelima, Mintom, Lele etc.), the western periphery of Minkebe (Minvoul, Oyem) and the Southern periphery of Minkebé (Makokou, Ovan). Up to 2005, ivory prices were stable in the TRIDOM area, varying between 10,000-12,000 FCFA/kg (\$16-20). But since 2005, prices have increased tenfold. Ivory from a single large elephant can now be sold for the equivalent of one

year's average salary of a Gabonese citizen and four years' salary for a Cameroonian citizen. At these prices the incentive for local people to engage in elephant poaching expeditions is huge²⁴.

4.2 The proposed PD 145/02 (F)

In 2002 the Government of Gabon submitted the PD 145/02 (F) "Zoning and Management of the Minkebé Protected Area (MPA) for the Protection of Transboundary Conservation Corridors between Gabon, Cameroon and Congo (Gabon)". This project, despite its title, was an exact replica of the PD 66/01 with the same specific objectives and expected outputs. This project has been unsuccessfully submitted in three occasions to the ITCC Expert Panel (sessions 23^d, 24th and 25th). In the 25th session the panel recognized once again the importance of this Project to contribute to the achievement of transboundary conservation between Gabon and Cameroon, where the Project PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F) has been -in theory- operational since September 2002. However, the Panel noted that that last version of the proposal was even less clear than the earlier version (Revision 1), which was reviewed by the Twenty-fourth Expert Panel. The proposal never came back for ITTO scrutiny. A possible explanation offered were divergences between the proponents (WWF) and the Gabonese government regarding project strategies for execution.

4.3 The Pre Project 147/10 Rev.1 (F)

Eight years later the Pre-Project 147/10 Rev.1 (F) "Zoning and management of the protected area of Minkebé (APM) attending the establishment of transboundary conservation corridors between Gabon, Cameroun and the Congo" was approved by ITTO. It has been fully developed from January to December 15th, 2011 and the Project report was submitted in January 2012. It was executed by the IUCN, based in Cameroon but with participation of the Directorate of Wildlife and Protected Areas of Gabon. Its total cost has been US\$139,279 of which ITTO provided US\$99,279; IUCN US\$30,000 and the Gabonese Government US\$10,000.

This Project's objective has been "*to contribute to the coordination effort for the development of biological corridors to link up protected areas in the TRIDOM landscape and the greater forest continuum of the Congo Basin*". Its single specific objective was "*to develop and implement within PNM buffet zones natural resources management strategies to effectively contribute to biodiversity conservation in the TRIDOM area*". And its main product has been the Project proposal PD 663/12 (F).

As its title demonstrates this Project has not been addressed exclusively to the Mengamé-Minkebé area. Instead it had a much wider goal that correspond to the entire TRIDOM territory including the proposal to establish ecological corridors linking the three very large protected areas of Dja National Park (Cameroon), Minkebé National Park (Gabon) and Odzala National Park (Congo), also including other smaller protected areas such as Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary, the proposed Kom National Park and the Nki and Boumba Bek national parks (in Cameroon).

This operation resulted in the Project proposal PD 663/12, submitted to ITTO in 2012.

4.4 The proposed PD 663/12 (F)

The PD 663/12 (F) "Zoning and Sustainable Management of the Buffer Zone of Minkebé National Park to Contribute to the Transboundary Conservation of the TRIDOM Area (Gabon)" has been reviewed by the 44th ITCC Expert Panel meeting in August 2012.

²⁴ In January 2013 the Wildlife Conservation Society announced that the Minkebé National Park has lost 11,100 elephants due to poaching for the ivory trade. A recent survey of areas within the park revealed that two thirds of its elephants have vanished since 2004.

The finality of this Project is to contribute to the planning and coordination efforts towards the sustainable management of natural resources in the production forests located in the buffer zone of the Minkébé National Park, which serves as corridor linking a number of TRIDOM conservation areas in Gabon (Ivindo National Park and Mwagna National Park), Cameroon (proposed Kom National Park, Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary, Ngoyla-Mintomforest and Dja Biosphere Reserve, and Congo (Djoua-Zadié linking the Odzala National Park with the Minkébé National Park). The main information contained in this document are derived from the implementation of Pre-Project PPD 147/10 Rev.1 (F)

It has been proposed that the executing agency be the IUCN, supporting the General Directorate of Wildlife and Protected Areas of Gabon. Its duration has been estimates in 36 months at a cost of US\$1,832,841. ITTO's expected contribution would be US\$1,332,841 while Gabon would contribute US\$ 400,000 and IUCN US\$100,000.

The Forty-fourth ITCC Expert Panel recognized the importance of zoning and sustainably managing the buffer zone of Minkebé National Park in relation to the transboundary conservation corridors to be established between Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon. However, the Panel noted that the Project proposal was more focused on Gabon and the transboundary aspects were not adequately developed, as required for an ITTO transboundary Project. The Panel made a long series of pertinent observations to the design of the operation and concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee. It was the view of the Panel that the Project proposal should be sent back to the proponent for a complete reformulation of the Project proposal in compliance with the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation, while ensuring the inclusion of transboundary aspects.

5. The situation of the Project today

Fourteen years have elapsed since Project design, seven years since Project's field work termination, five years since Project activities termination and 3 years since approval of the completion report. Therefore many facts that occurred since them, especially during the past five years, are a direct consequence of the Project but were not part of it. Some of the events post-Project are very important with regard to the initial goal of protecting the gorillas and the ecosystem in which they live. Table 7 present a summary of the situation as today.

5.1 As today, what has been finally achieved?

As today the concrete achievements of the Project and their limitations are:

- 15) The Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been established over 27,723 ha (21 to 40% smaller of what has been initially planned). It is not managed, not demarcated nor protected. However, as per evidence collected during the mission²⁵ it still contains gorillas and elephants and other valuable species and its forests are still relatively intact. If effective protection begins soon the area may easily recover and become a real asset for wildlife and in general for forest conservation as part of the TRIDOM concept.
- 16) There is a draft legal instrument for the establishment of the Kom National Park waiting for approval since 2009 in the Office of the Prime Minister. This area is still in good natural conditions and it is still essential for the conservation effort of a representative

²⁵ A large group of gorillas were seen in late 2013 from the Cameroon's police post in Aboulou in the beach in the Gabonese side of the River Kom. Many villagers cross the frontier in this place were a bridge will be built.

sample of the Cameroon portion of the Central African forest, as planned since 2000. In theory the MINFOF is providing some protection to the area through the eco-guards.

17) There is a well-trained *Conservateur* for the Sanctuary. However:

- a. He is based in Sangmelina.
- b. The only vehicle available to him pertains to the anti-poaching component of the GEF/UNDP TRIDOM program.
- c. His responsibilities additionally cover the proposed Kom National Park and the more than 513,000 ha of the ZPFM as well as the anti-poaching control of the mentioned program.

Table 7. Today's conservation situation in the ZPFM	
Protected area formally established is insufficient to achieve sustainable protection of the gorilla and other species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protected area established (Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary) much smaller than the area initially proposed to be preserved. • It may be more significant if the proposed Kom National Park is established. However both areas are separated by a road and adjacent multi-purposes areas.
Threats to the MGS sharply increased since 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new road (2014) has been constructed by the Government between Mebosso and the Kom River, cutting the MGS in two parts. This road, promoted by municipal authorities of a nearby town has been unsuccessfully opposed by the MINFOF. It is major risk to the Sanctuary as it will facilitate transboundary's poaching and fishing and will interrupt the wildlife movements. • A frontier market is being built in the proximity of Aboulou in the boundary with Gabon as a complement to a road that will be paved between the SGM and the proposed Kom National Park, attracting newcomers. • Population has had a significant growth in the surrounds of the MGS and the demand for forest resources had a proportional increase. • Most efforts of sensitization and conservation awareness achieved by the Project are being lost as local people perceive that law enforcement is minimal and that most offers and promises are not being fulfilled.
The MGS is not being managed nor well protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MGS management plan is ready but is not yet approved nor applied. • The staff of the MGS is insufficient in every aspect. There is only one professional based far away from the Sanctuary and the 20 guards are in charge of protecting more 520,000 ha (ZPMF) in addition to the Sanctuary. • There is no equipment of any kind for the work. Only one motorcycle is available for the 20 guards that must work on foot. The only vehicle (provided by TRIDOM) is not for the Sanctuary and it used for all kind of anti-poaching missions of TRIDOM's staff. The guards have nothing except their uniforms: No arms, not even a machete, no radio, GPS or camping equipment. And, of course, their salaries are minimal in relation with the civil servants status. No <i>perdiem</i> are allocated when in mission. Despite every limitation they often show heroic behavior in defense of the Sanctuary. • The Sanctuary is not demarcated. The incomplete demarcation done is lost as no permanent signs were built or placed. In addition there is not a single plate or sign announcing the existence of the MGS.
The Kom National Park has not been established and may not be established as threats increase around it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area of the proposed Kom National Park, in the original Project proposal, was to be a part of the MGS. To propose its protection separately and under another category was a consequence of the existence of the road between Akoabas and Aboulou, linking Cameroun with Gabon. The decree of creation is sitting in the First Minister's office since 2009. • Meanwhile several important threats are growingly present and real: new mining places in Cameroon, new proposed large agribusiness developments (oil palm and rubber plantations), a road Sangmelima (Cameroon)-Ouessou(Congo) and, especially, a railway linking that region of Cameroon and Congo with the coast may pass very near the northern border of the proposed park.
Gang professional poaching is increasing as well as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite lack of statistics there is general understanding that the situation is getting much worst and out of control. The demand and the prices paid for

corruption related to ivory and high value timber.	ivory and precious woods, in addition for other wildlife products is on the raise despite efforts such as TRIDOM and alike.
Efforts to coordinate and collaborate with Gabon on the issue of transboundary protection of gorilla and other species had been so far mostly unsuccessful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of reasons avoided the concretization of this key objective of the Project. Therefore, in the Gabonese side there is no coalescent protected area and there are no common and coordinated efforts for management or to control poaching. The existing Minkebé National Park has no common boundary with the Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary. The land in the side of Gabon is not protected.

- 18) Twenty relatively well trained eco-guards are located in strategic locations around the Sanctuary and also around Kom area and the entire ZPFM. However:
- a. They have no equipment of any kind except their uniforms: No vehicles, camping equipment, arms, communication nor GPS or photographic capacity to document their actions.
 - b. No proven accusations of corruption (complicity with ivory trafficking) against some of them are frequent.
- 19) Local people and villagers are aware of the situation of the endangered species, of the existence of the MGS, of the legal risks of hunting prohibited species and are informed other conservation initiatives in place. However:
- a. Their participation is almost inexistent and many of them are hostile to the initiative.
 - b. Their main objection is that they obtained no benefits from the Project.
 - c. The forest enterprises acting in the ZPFM were and probably continue to be much more positive with regard to the protected area proposal. They even made voluntary contributions. Pitifully, this initiative has not been continued.
- 20) There is good technical baseline information on the Project area thanks to the studies developed by the WWF. However these were not published, are little known and as they are eight years old some of the information is already outdated, especially with reference to the big game census made.
- 21) A management plan specific for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been prepared and was submitted in 2014 to an ample discussion with relevant stakeholders. It is supposed to be approved soon by the MINFOF.
- 22) The guidelines for the forest and buffer zone management are good and will be useful as soon as applied.
- 23) The construction of a relatively large headquarters for the MGS has been budgeted, the work has already been adjudicated in a public bidding and it is expected that the construction enterprise may deliver the building in 2014.
- 24) After the MGS management plan is approved it is expected that the next annual budget will allow funds to provide equipment and means to operate to the eco-guards and resources for management.

5.2 New realities: New threats and new opportunities

Progress is arriving to the village of Oveng and to the region of Mengamé and Kom. A road (N9) is being paved to link Sangmelina with the Congo Republic, passing not far from the northern limit of the proposed Kom National Park and easing the access to Oveng. A railway is also considered to be constructed to pass even nearer the northern limits of both areas (see Map 2). Additionally, the road N17B that goes from Sangmelina to the frontier, passing through Oveng down to Aboulou between Mengamé and Kom areas may also soon be paved or at least improved. And, the road between Ebolowa and the Gabon frontier (N2) that passes not far from the western limit of the MGS is already paved and getting more and more traffic.

This conjunct of roads, that are additional to the local forest roads that surround the north of Mengamé and Kom, will certainly tremendously increase the pressure over both areas.

It is common knowledge that the improvement of the N9 and especially the planned construction of a railway, in addition to promote regional integration, are related to the mining potential in the Congo Republic as well as in Cameroon. Large mineral deposits, including gold, were discovered in the area between the Dja National Park and the proposed Kom National Park and will be exploited by three large mining enterprises. But informal mining is already going on, bringing with them all those very well-known problems such as disease spread (especially AIDS), insecurity, slavery and infantile work and, of course, more corruption. Gold digging is often associated with poaching. Large scale agriculture has also been announced in the region, especially oil palm and rubber plantations.

Other facts are compounding the negative aspect of these events. The Ministry of Economy and Planning is actively building a relatively large facility in Aboulou to promote frontier market in expectation of the improvement of the road including the building of a bridge over the Kom River. Currently the international movement in this road is restricted to villagers that have relatives in both sides of the frontier, but when the road will be better it may greatly increase the problems both for the MGS and the future Kom National Park as it is located between both. This road has been the reason of the division of the initial proposal for a large protected area in two separate ones.

The most surprising recent event with regard to the officially established Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary has been the inopinate opening of a new road cutting it in two pieces. This road has been constructed in 2014, not long before the visit of the ex-post evaluation mission. The work was carried out by the Ministry of Public Works responding to a 2009 demand of the mayor of the little town of Mvangué that is not even near the Sanctuary. This initiative was supported by the Prime Minister's office. The justification given has been "to promote development through the transboundary commerce". However, this road goes from nowhere to nowhere as there is no inhabitants in the swampy Gabonese side nor anything to trade. Even more the distance of this insignificant town to this place is not much longer than to the two other existing roads (N2 and N17B) going to Gabon. The real motivation seems to be policy makers intending to "show work", corruption or facilitation of gang poaching activity. Anyhow, this absolutely illegal road²⁶ is currently the worst threat for the already very small and not managed MGS. The MINFOF has opposed it but not with the energy that would be expected in such a scandalous fact.

However, his situation creates new opportunities. Provided that the new road above mentioned can be closed and used exclusively by the MINFOF staff for control or tourism, the new roads that are being built or proposed will solve the main issue until today for the MGS development: Its isolation. The roads must bring gradually all facilities that are lacking to develop an ecotourism business in the region. As an example, a telephone communication tower started to operate in Oveng while the mission was there.

It must be reiterated that the region have a real tourism potential for Europeans, North Americans and Japanese or Koreans. It is relatively near Yaoundé (292 km) through roads that are currently half-asphalted and that will be improved and completed. The scenic is typical of tropical humid forests benefited by the fact that it is not a flat area but a hilly topography allowing viewing of beautiful scenic. To observe gorillas or elephants and other big game that are especially attractive for regular tourists will take some time but there are well known techniques to make it possible. Bird observation is easy in the rivers Kom and

²⁶ It is clearly in opposition to the national legislation regarding protected areas.

Ayina and it will continue to be so, provided that fisheries are better regulated. Local people, including most pygmies, have already lost their traditional customs but many aspects of their day to day way of live remain peculiar and interesting for visitors. Even a visit to the logging operation conducted under certification in the vicinity of the Sanctuary may be extremely interesting for visitors to understand that part of the reality of the region.

6. Overall assessment

The Project has not been successful. Its outputs were all late and extremely limited if compared with what was planned to achieve. The problems it intended to solve when designed (2000) are all much worse today. The gorilla and the elephants and the ecosystem that support these species are much more endangered today than 14 years ago. The small and still unprotected Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and, to some extent, a larger awareness about the site and its conservation requirements, are the only concrete results achieved.

However, it is also evident that today's situation would be even worse without this Project.

7. Lessons learned

- 1) Projects that include financing in protected areas must be conditioned to their previous legal establishment (gazettement).

It is not possible to have any precision on the date when a government will officially or formally establish a protected area. This depends heavily in participatory processes, public consultation and in the emission of a specific law, or on the final decision of very high level authorities often preceded by complex negotiations. The forestry or environmental authorities that negotiate international funding for new protected areas are, in general, fully in favor of the proposal that they usually themselves prepare or support. But these branches of the state are not necessarily politically influential. Therefore it is advisable not to develop projects that finance management or other development actions only on the basis of an offer or of even a formal compromise of establishment of new protected areas. Otherwise, the establishment of the protected area must be a condition of any project that intends to contribute to their management.

- 2) Projects exclusively oriented to assist in the preparation of the documentation necessary for the country to establish a protected area may be accepted.

If the project request aims at the establishment of new protected areas the ITTO financing must be strictly limited to that purpose, including scientific justification research, public consultation with affected population, delimitation studies and draft decree or resolution. In such a case nothing must be included in protection, sensitization, management or any other action not related to the legal establishment proposal.

It is highly risky, as PD 66/01 demonstrates, to finance hybrid projects.

- 3) Transboundary or bi-nationally managed protected areas, as well as international ecological corridors, are unquestionably necessary but their possibility of success is limited and very difficult to achieve.

When ITTO accepted the commitment of promoting transboundary biodiversity conservation it entered in the most difficult and complex aspect of nature conservation through protected areas in tropical developing countries. In addition to the well-known growing difficulties to establish new protected areas everywhere, in frontier areas several factors make it even more difficult and complex:

- (i) Different and sometimes conflictive legislations²⁷
- (ii) Different administration styles and rhythms.
- (iii) International suspicions, rivalries and even conflicts.
- (iv) Difficult practical and legal access to the areas in both sides of the frontier.
- (v) Relatively isolated local populations usually very poor that never got any attention from the national governments, a situation that is typical of international boundaries.
- (vi) Great incidence of all kind of illegal activities that is typical of international frontiers.
- (vii) Much higher costs of project execution due to isolation.
- (viii) High costs of frequent binational meetings due to international travelling that often must be done in capital cities.
- (ix) Useless diplomatic complications.

As a matter of facts there are very few success stories of the kind, if any²⁸. Otherwise, to invest in these projects requires a much more careful approach, longer time and higher costs than any other ITTO project made at a national level. In most cases undoubtedly more than a decade of sustained effort is necessary for such initiatives to make substantial progress towards their three goals: biodiversity conservation, community participation and development, and international peace and cooperation.

- 4) Projects related to protected areas with transboundary implications must not overlap actions in the neighbor country. Twin parallel projects are more appropriate.

The PD 66 had outputs for Cameroon and for Gabon (studies, management plan, ranger training) despite the Project was in theory Cameroon's Project. This is not realistic as it has been proven. Only Cameroon was responsible for Project's counterpart funding. As it has been made by ITTO in previous similar cases (for transboundary conservation in Peru and Ecuador) it is better to have two fully separated twin coordinated projects if possible approved simultaneously.

- 5) To have a well-controlled frontier does not require as pre-conditions bi-national protected areas nor joint management plans. This may be desirable. But two adjacent well managed protected areas will be as effective for poaching control. Even more, the collaboration at

²⁷ Among other examples, the legislation regarding gun control is much permissive in Gabon than in Cameroon providing conditions for arms trafficking from Gabon to Cameroon.

²⁸ The author of the report has had the opportunity to evaluate four ITTO transboundary conservation projects and several others promoted by other agencies. None has been really successful in the endeavor of establishing joint efforts for management. All presented the same difficulties mentioned above. Even the most successful one, the PD 2/00 Rev.2 (F) "Bi-national conservation and peace in the Condor Range region, Ecuador-Peru: Phase I (Ecuadorian component)" and the parallel PD 3/00 Rev.2 (F) "Bi-national conservation and peace in the Condor Range region, Ecuador-Peru: Phase I (Peruvian component)" were not successful in this respect. Despite today's good relations of these countries there is neither coordinated management nor any relation between the protected areas in both sides.

the level of protected area's local staff and rangers will come alone, without national authorities meetings or international agreements.

6) Careful attention must be given to the implications of logistics in remote or isolated areas

This Project is another example²⁹ of the consequences of not taking enough into consideration the reality of the locality where the project must be developed. If it is not possible to install qualified staff in place the project will probably be unsuccessful. Therefore, the error is not to consider the real cost of maintaining staff in the field and to provide them all necessary tools to work. In the project being examined only a small headquarters office has been included in the budget and the provision of vehicles and boats has been grossly underestimated considering the distances to cover for the work.

The assessment of the socio-economic and cultural reality of the region must be well known and taken into consideration in project design.

The sensitization effort to raise awareness among local people and villagers has not been successful mostly because it did not take into account the real situation of the population in the region. Extremely low level of education, installed deception with regard to the Government, special cultural aspects and extreme poverty condition were all underestimated factors. In addition the initial budget provision for this activity has been unrealistically small³⁰ and despite more money has been utilized for this purposes it has not been sufficient. Also raising awareness and keeping information on date must be a continuous process that in the case of the Project begun late and has been abruptly abandoned in 2008.

7) Activities related to economic incentive programs should form part of project design.

The inclusion since the first phase of this kind of projects of mechanisms to provide some tangible benefits or compensations to affected local population is essential. Revolving funds, as timidly intended in this Project -because it was not initially included as it was planned for the second phase- are an important tool to captivate attention and good wills of the villagers and provide an opportunity to promote the message of long term conservation. However, their administration is costly and it is indispensable they have supervision and continuity.

8) Mid-term evaluations are always very useful tools

This Project demonstrated once again the relevance of realizing mid-term evaluations or reviews, especially when it is not starting or it is significantly delayed. Almost nothing happened in this Project between 2002 and 2004. After the mid-term review the Project had a big push of activities in 2005 and 2006. If the mid-term review was held in late 2002 or in 2003, the results could have been much better. Mid-terms reviews made by ITTO's own staff, such as it was in this occasion, are cheap and efficient.

9) Flexibility on project deliverables should be allowed especially when currency fluctuations outside of the Project control significantly increase costs.

Unexpected exchange rates particularly affected the Project's implementation. Project budget design should anticipate this and accordingly make provisions. Ten percent of the

²⁹ Most if not all other transboundary conservation ITTO projects faced exactly the same problem that often has been capital to explain delays, over-costs and failures.

³⁰ Only US\$22,500 was assigned to Output 1.2 in the original Project budget.

total budget could be held in reserve as a contingency fund, only to utilize if such fluctuations require, and with specific ITTO authorization.

10) Economic sustainability for protected areas is almost a dream, but it is possible to be partially achieved.

As it is very well known almost no protected area in the world is self-sustained even if they generate massive tourism. They usually depend upon national or regional public budgets. However, their contributions to local economic development may be substantial, often much more than their annual costs or budgets. Tourism or eco-tourism potential is the most commonly mentioned alternative for protected areas direct or indirect financing. However, the inexorable condition to take advantage of this possibility is adequate tourism infrastructure (roads, public services, hotels, etc.) and a reasonable management of the protected area. These requirements may be taken in charge by governments, by private sector or by a combination of both. None of these conditions exists in the Project area. But they may progressively become a reality.

The voluntary contribution of a fee per hectare of managed forests in forest concessions has been an excellent initiative that, if continued, could bring a significant part of the resources needed to create better relationships between the protected area and the villagers and other local people, including for the management of the Sanctuary and of its influence zone (ZPFM). It required continuity and legal support from the MINFOF.

11) Political willingness or support and country's bureaucracy must be carefully evaluated and prudently considered in project design.

This Project in particular rested too much, directly and indirectly, on political willingness in the two countries, as shown in its logical framework. And, as demonstrated by the facts, the lack of political support has been the cause of almost every not achieved result. As mentioned before the absence of political support did not come, in general, from the Forestry or Environmental branches but from higher levels of government or from other sectors. Also, despite forestry is an important factor in the national economies of Cameroon and Gabon its political relevance is not proportional. And, conservation of biodiversity, wildlife management and protected areas are even less important matters including inside the Forestry Sector. Too often the speeches in international meetings are very enthusiastic and optimistic and offer more than what it is realistic to expect.

As political will is difficult to separate from bureaucracy this factor must also be taken into account when expecting to realize actions in brief periods of time. This Project, per example, disregarded the simple fact that to budget a cost must be done almost two years in advance to the date the expense is necessary. Public budgets in developing countries are always insufficient and excessively rigid. However, budget cuts may happen in any moment disrupting planning. All these facts are well known and the only answer possible, in addition to be prudent in expected outputs, is to plan longer execution periods. Two years is too short.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations regarding the project and project's follow up

It may seem contradictory, but the first and most important recommendation is not to abandon the idea of having a complex of protected areas in both sides of the limits of Cameroon and Gabon, taking into consideration new facts and concepts, such as the proposal

The worldwide biological importance of the area is such that no effort must be disregarded to save an ecologically viable sample of it. Moreover if considering the impacts of new massive being installed in and around the area. It is a world's obligation to save it.

The main recommendations are:

10) A follow up for the PD 66/01 in Cameroon is still necessary.

It could be a second phase or a new project that assists the country to effectively implant the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park if this is gazetted. Such a project must include the following elements³¹:

- a. Install and launch the management of the protected areas (MGS and Kom)
- b. Renewal and enhancement of the sensitization program.
- c. Management of the buffer zone of the protected areas.
- d. Develop a set of demonstrative sustainable economic activities with villagers that are compatible with protected areas including wildlife management.
- e. Actively promote investments to facilitate ecotourism in the area.

11) The conditions for such a new operations should be:

- a. The legal establishment of the Kom National Park
- b. The formal prohibition of use of the new illegal road opened inside the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary that must remain entirely under control of the MINFOF exclusively for service's use. A control must be established at its entrance.
- c. The official approval of the MGS management plan
- d. The demonstration of the budgetary provision of adequate counterpart funding.
- e. The installation of the protected areas authority in the Oveng headquarters that is to be built.

12) The establishment of the Minkebé complement (Gabon) for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary as originally planned is still highly desirable.

The previous recommendation is standing alone. However it would be ideal that finally the Minkebé coalescent protected area be established. If to do this requires technical assistance from ITTO we consider it is worth to be done. However the preconditions to approve such a project are similar to those mentioned for Cameroon, especially with regard to a legal instrument for the protection of the Minkebé area. Eventually it may be better to enlarge the existing Minkebé National Park to cover this area and to make it coalescent with the Mengame National Sanctuary.

³¹ As it was also proposed in the draft follow up project prepared in 2004 by the WWF.

13) Another much more ambitious Project is the intent to build ecological corridors within all protected areas included in the TRIDOM.

This can be achieved, as proposed in the PD 663/10, as an international project executed by an agreed international agency to be developed with participation of the three countries. However, it may be advisable to develop it through three coordinated national projects to warrant national ownership and support. It is important to remember that even accepting that the ideal is to complete all corridors; to make corridors in each country will already be a very important result.

8.2 Recommendation of a general nature

Most of the subjects were already discussed in the previous text. To fulfill the specific questions included in the term of reference they are now presented in a different arrangement.

1) The needs for similar projects in the future.

The lack of success of this operation is by no means an argument to justify not continuing ITTO's contribution to the conservation of biodiversity in tropical forests. Projects dealing with existing or new protected areas and especially with those that are located coinciding with international boundaries are everyday more important. Most of what remain as natural forests in tropical countries is precisely located in remote international frontier areas. Additionally the need of close collaboration among neighbor countries to jointly combat poaching, logging and other illegal extractive activities is evident. If, additionally the continuity of an ecosystem sample to be conserved overlap the boundaries it is logical that the coordinated establishment of protected areas in each country is highly desirable. Additionally, these coordinated actions also are part of the larger goal of establishing ecological corridors to maintain the genetic viability of species that migrates or that need very large areas to survive.

These are the superior reasons that justify the consultant's recommendation to consider a follow-up project to the PD 66/01 in Cameroon and of parallel coinciding initiatives in Gabon.

2) The objectives of such future projects.

The tropical forests biodiversity conservation objective of future similar projects must not be changed. The issues that affected the PD 66/01 do not modify the urgent need of such projects.

However, the objective of achieving bi-lateral or multi-lateral cooperation for the management of protected areas in international frontiers requires a different approach. It is definitively not advisable to develop a single national project including actions in two or more countries, as in the case of PD 66/01. Only coordination meetings may be included. The reasons not to have national projects handling activities in a neighbor country, as seen in the previous text, are multiple.

3) Innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at biodiversity conservation in TBCA.

There is no much room for innovation in such a well-known matter. However, based in the evaluation of several similar projects of ITTO and of other agencies we consider advisable to take into consideration the following suggestions:

- (vii) No project must be approved if the protected area to be managed -or improved in any way- is not previously duly legally established (gazetted). If projects are of a transboundary nature the same rule would be applicable to both sides.
- (viii) The only exception to the previous recommendation is when the project is limited to the realization of studies conducting to the establishment of new protected areas. In such a case the investments must be strictly limited to the studies and to the preparation of the legal requisites for approval
- (ix) ITTO's participation in truly international projects -directly administered by an international organization, as in the case of the GEF/UNP-TRIDOM- must be conditioned to the same previously mentioned requisites.
- (x) ITTO's long experience in natural forest management, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry and, especially, in community forest development can be more used in biodiversity conservation projects that pretend to manage protected areas buffer zones or ecological corridors. As a matter of facts this can be a very important contribution of ITTO to conservation efforts as buffer zones's population are at the origin of most management problems inside protected areas.

4) Appropriate target groups, e.g. countries, government, organizations, forestry sector, local communities.

The situation of nature conservation in Asian and, especially in African tropical forests is absolutely critical. It is much more serious than in Latin America. Therefore, priority must be given to these continents. Inside Africa there in no doubts that the Congo basin tropical humid forests have absolute priority.

Dealing with protected areas it is unavoidable to target governments. However, as it has been almost in every case with ITTO transboundary projects, the executing agencies were large international NGOs, especially the WWF and the IUCN. If the projects include buffer zones or deal with categories of protected areas that allow utilization of resources and human population inside, then the local communities become the obvious central target. However, as seen in the PD 66/01 much attention must be given to the forest users, as sound truly sustainable forest management is an excellent warrant for neighboring protected areas and even for endangered wildlife species in the managed forests.

5) The organizational arrangements of the project in relation to the transboundary aspects.

Transboundary issues must be discussed at two levels: (i) practical operational local level -in situ- reuniting protected areas managers or rangers or appropriate police officers of both countries, without intervention of diplomacy; (ii) overall planning or coordination binational meetings. These last are essentially to provide political support to protected areas managers when involved in eventual joint field operations, such as required to combat poaching.

Again, if so required by both countries studies may be carried out in adjacent areas of both countries but, in such an event, the project must be international in nature, conducted by an international organization under agreements with each country.

6) Follow-up and evaluation practices.

There is nothing new to add to this question that has not been mentioned earlier:

- (i) Mid-term evaluations are extremely useful in relatively large projects, especially if their progress is not as planned. It is also cost-effective.
- (ii) Not every large project that is unsuccessful requires an ex-post evaluation. The present ex-post evaluation only confirmed what was quite evident before making it.
- (iii) As so often stated an ex-post evaluation loose effectiveness in proportion to the time elapsed since project termination. The PD 66/01 has been evaluated five years after its effective termination. It would be impossible to make this evaluation without the participation, as national consultant, of the former Project Director who is probably the only available memory of most of the process.

ANNEX 1. Pictures related to the PD 66/01





One of the 34 small villages located in the road that contourn the Sanctuary.



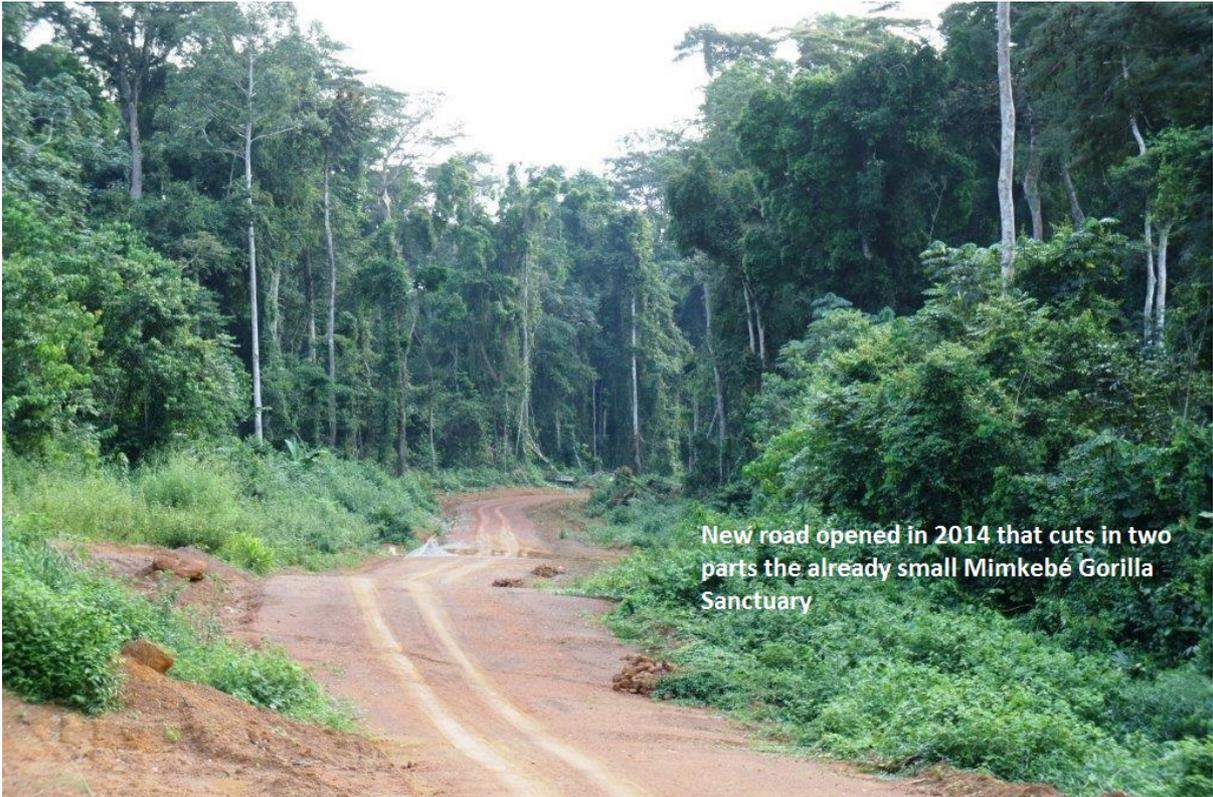
Village near the proposed Kom National Park



International market being built at Aboulou, near the gabonese border, in the road that separates The Sanctuary from the proposed park.



Kom River at Aboulou, where an international bridge will be built. In 2013 a large group of gorillas has been seen in the sand.



New road opened in 2014 that cuts in two parts the already small Mimkebé Gorilla Sanctuary



The Director of the Sanctuary and MINFOF officers discussing the issue of the new road in the Sanctuary



Two eco-guards in the main square of Oveng



Seizure of illegal logging of precious wood extracted from the Sanctuary



**Illegal processing of timber with chainsaw
near Qveng**



Left over of the PD 66/02 in
Oveng



Electricity generator purchased by the PD 66/01 still in place but out of orders since several years



End of a meeting in a Baka village

Annex 2: List of documents consulted

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8. Rapport d'activités semestriel du Projet PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F) n° 3, Août à Février 2004.
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11. Financement des microprojets générateurs de revenus au profit des communautés locales (Oveng, Mvangane, Djoum). Manuel de procédures. Décembre 2003.
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15. Procès Verbal de la Cinquieme réunion du Comité Directeur du Projet PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F),
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21. Termes de référence relatifs à (1) l'élaboration des directives de gestion participative de la zone transitoire d'utilisation des ressources, (2) l'élaboration des directives de gestion des forêts de production adjacentes à la ZPFM, (3) la conduite d'étude spéciale de planification de l'aménagement pour les produits forestiers non ligneux, (4) la réalisation d'une étude socio-économique dans l'espace opérationnel du projet, (5) la conduite d'une étude spéciale pour la planification d'aménagement pour les éléphants, (6) la conduite

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Publié le mardi 21 mai

Annex 3: Program of visits/List of interviewed persons

Mission program

Mercredi 2 Juillet 2014

Arrivée du Consultant International à Yaoundé

Jeudi 3 Juillet 2014

Rencontre avec l'Administration (Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune)

- 10h Séance de travail entre consultants
- 12h Rencontre avec le DFAP (Directeur de la Faune et des Aires Protégées, Agence d'exécution du projet)
- 14h Rencontre avec le DCP (Chef de Division de la Programmation et de la Coopération)
- 15h Rencontre avec le Secrétaire Général du Ministère (MINFOF).
- Merina Hotel

Vendredi 4 Juillet 2014

- 10h à 12h WWF CARPO
- 14h Rencontre avec l'Auditeur indépendant
- Ambassade du Gabon
- Autres rencontres
- Préparatif de voyage

Samedi 5 Juillet 2014

Descente de terrain, départ pour Oveng, Coucher à Oveng

Avec rencontre avec le Délégué Départemental du MINFOF à Sangmélina

Dimanche 6, Lundi 7, mardi 8 2014

Visites de terrain diverses

- Ecogardes
- La forêt
- Communautés rurales Fang et Baka
- Entreprises forestières

Mercredi 9 Juillet 2014

- Visite à Sangmelina (Délégué Départemental à Sangmelima) ;
- Retour à Yaoundé

Jeudi 10 Juillet 2014 (Yaoundé)

- Rencontre avec le DFAP (Directeur de la Faune et des Aires Protégées, Agence d'exécution du projet)
- Rencontre avec le DCP (Chef de Division de la Programmation et de la Coopération) ;
- Rencontre avec le Secrétaire Général du Ministère (MINFOF)

Interviewed persons

1. Monsieur KOULAGNA KOUTOU Denis, Secrétaire Général du Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune (MINFOF) ;

2. Monsieur LEKEALEM Joseph, Directeur de la Faune et des Aires Protégées au MINFOF ;
3. Madame EHETH Victorine, Chef de Division de la Coopération et la Programmation au MINFOF, Point focal OIBT ;
4. Monsieur ETOGA Gilles, Chef de programme TRIDOM de WWF au Sud-Est, en lieu et place de Dr NJIFORTI Hanson, Directeur National WWF en congé ;
5. Monsieur NTI MEFÉ Solomon, ex Sous Directeur de la Conservation à la DFAP, Chef de mission de la négociation des limites avec les populations locales en 2005, ex Délégué départemental du MINFOF du Dja et Lobo à Sangmelima de 2006 à 2014, Actuellement Délégué départemental du MINFOF du Wouri à Douala et riverain du futur Parc national de Kom ;;
6. Monsieur ZANG MBARGA Côme, Conservateur du Sanctuaire à Gorilles de Mengame ;
7. Monsieur le Délégué Départemental du MINFOF à Sangmélina
8. Monsieur le Sous-Préfet d'Oveng ;
9. Monsieur ZILLI ATONG, Chef de groupement Fang à Oveng ;
10. Monsieur BOUBA, Commandant de brigade de gendarmerie d'Aboulou ;
11. Monsieur ETO, Chef de poste de police des frontières à Aboulou ;
12. Monsieur Emame Paul, écogarde et riverain au Sanctuaire à Gorilles de Mengame ;
13. Monsieur ONGUE David, écogarde et riverain au Sanctuaire à Gorilles de Mengame ;
14. Monsieur le Délégué départemental du MINFOF du Dja et Lobo à Sangmélina.
15. Reunion avec tous les eco-gardes en place
16. Reunion avec villageois Baka
17. Reunion avec villageois de plusieurs villages le long de la limites du Sanctuaire et de Kom
18. Reunion avec le responsable de l'exploitation forestiere

Annex 4 : Terms of Reference

Ex-Post Evaluation of ITTO Project on Biodiversity Conservation / Conservation Areas

I. Background

ITTO is an intergovernmental organization established in 1986 to administer the provisions and operation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), particularly in the promotion of the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources through international cooperation, policy work and project activities.

The project that will be the subject of the Ex-post Evaluation is the following:

PD 66/01 Rev.1 (F): Establishment of the Mengame-Minkebe Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) at the Cameroon-Gabon Border

The background information of the project is provided in Annex to the Terms of Reference.

II. Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

A) Purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide a concise diagnosis of one project related to *Biodiversity Conservation / Conservation Areas*, through the establishment and management of a transboundary conservation area (TBCA), so as to point out the successful and unsuccessful outcomes, the reasons for successes and failures, and the contribution of the project towards the achievement of ITTO's Objective 2000, and to draw lessons that can be used to improve similar projects in the future. The evaluation should refer to the appropriate recommendations in the report on the Meta-Evaluation of previously evaluated ITTO projects [ITTC-JC(XLV/2)].

B) Scope of Work

a) Analyze and assess for each project:

1. The overall role and contribution of the project in light of sectoral policies, development programmes, priorities and requirements to achieve biodiversity conservation in the transboundary region concerned by the project implementation (Cameroon and Gabon).
2. The current status of biodiversity conservation within the project's area of influence, the effectiveness of the project's implementation and its effectiveness in promoting transboundary biodiversity conservation and sustainable management.
3. The contributions of the specific studies/surveys in various disciplines (biodiversity conservation and management, ecology, socio-economy, community participation, transboundary aspects, etc.) prepared by the project for the conservation and sustainable management in the project's area of influence.
4. The impact of project activities on the livelihoods of target populations in the area covered by the project implementation.
5. The effectiveness of dissemination of project results in both countries covered by the project implementation.
6. The overall post-project situation in the project's area of influence.
7. The unexpected effects and impacts, either harmful or beneficial, and the reasons for their occurrences.
8. The cost efficiency in the implementation of the project, including the technical, financial and managerial aspects, in relation to transboundary aspects.
9. Follow-up actions in order to enhance uptake of project results.
10. The project's relative success or failure, including a summary of the key lessons learnt; and the identification of any issues or problems that should be taken into account in designing and implementing similar projects in the future. The transboundary aspects

should be subject to a special assessment in both countries (Cameroon and Gabon), in relation to the failure to achieve the second objective of the project.

b) Provide a synthesis to:

1. assess the overall role and meaningful contribution of the project in achieving the biodiversity conservation in ITTO Producer Member countries taking into account ITTO's objectives, Libreville Action Plan, and Objective 2000.
2. assess the potential and actual contribution of the project to ITTO's TBCA work.
3. evaluate the overall impact on and relevance of the project for the environmental authorities, Executing Agency, the forest conservation sector and local communities being served and the countries concerned (Cameroon and Gabon).
4. evaluate the overall attainment of the objectives and assess the overall effectiveness of the project.
5. evaluate the overall appropriateness of the costs, cost structure and use of financial resources for the project implementation.

And make recommendations on:

1. the needs for similar projects in the future.
2. the objectives of such future projects.
3. innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at biodiversity conservation in TBCA.
4. appropriate target groups, e.g. countries, government, organizations, forestry sector, local communities.
5. the organizational arrangements of the project in relation to the transboundary aspects.
6. follow-up and evaluation practices.
7. supplemental, alternative activities, processes, procedures, and/or follow-up programmes in the field of biodiversity conservation in TBCA, if appropriate.

III. Approach

A) Composition of the evaluation team

The team will be composed of two following consultants who will work together: an international consultant as Team Leader and a local consultant. The assignment of specific tasks within the TOR will be left to the consultants based on their individual expertise. The Team Leader will be in charge of the final report and the presentation of the results at the Fiftieth Council Session in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2014.

B) Consultation during evaluation exercise

The team will maintain close liaison with ITTO and will carry out its work in close cooperation with the concerned project Executing Agency and Governments (Cameroon and Gabon). Although the team should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned all matters relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of ITTO.

C) Activities and report of the team

The work required in this evaluation will consist of:

1. Desk review of project-related documents and materials provided by ITTO.
2. Missions in Cameroon and Gabon. The evaluation team will visit the project's Executing Agency headquarters for a further desk review of project materials and to carry out evaluation work in connection with the Executing Agency. The mission shall also include a field visit to the project's area of influence in order to review field implementation and to evaluate the project results and impacts, and should include discussions with project stakeholders and target beneficiaries. Within a period of two weeks, a minimum of one week is required for Cameroon due to the field visit of the project area, while 2 to 3 days can be used for meetings in Libreville, capital city of Gabon.

3. Preparation of an Ex-post Evaluation Report for the project in English or French in accordance with the Scope of Work, and format and the checklist contained in the ITTO Manual for Project Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.
4. Preparation of an Overall Executive Summary [see b) Scope of Work] of the ex-post evaluation report focusing on the overall assessment of the project's relative success in contributing to ITTO's Objective 2000 and Libreville Action Plan, summarizing the key lessons learnt.
5. Presentation of the Overall Executive Summary at the Fiftieth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (November 2014, Yokohama, Japan).
6. Preparation of an article for possible publication in the ITTO Tropical Forest Update (TFU), in consultation with the editor, containing an overview of the projects and summarizing the lessons learned from the evaluation work. Appropriate high-resolution photographs should be provided.

In writing the Ex-post Evaluation reports, the team will have the opportunity to discuss its preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations with the representatives of the Executing Agency, Governments of Cameroon and Gabon, and ITTO Secretariat before the final version of the report is made. Responsibility for the final content of the reports, however, remains with the evaluation team.

D) Duration of the assignment

The duration of the assignment will be nine weeks for the international consultant as Team Leader, and four weeks for the local consultant (dealing particularly with Cameroon). Travel time for both countries (Cameroon and Gabon) to be visited will be approximately two weeks. The remaining time will be used for the preparation of the evaluation and report writing.

E) Proposed Work Schedule

- May – June 2014: Desk review
- July 2014: Missions in Cameroon and Gabon
- 07 Aug 2014: Submission of draft reports to ITTO Secretariat and to the Project Executing Agency, and Governments of Cameroon and Gabon, for comments and suggestions.
- 31 August 2014: Submission of both the full ex-post evaluation report and the overall executive summary to ITTO Secretariat.
- November 2014: Presentation of the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the ex-post evaluation of the project at the Joint Session of the Committees during the Fiftieth Council Session in Yokohama (Team Leader). Submission of the final version of the full ex-post evaluation report, taking into account the comments made by the delegates during the Joint Session of the Committees.

F) Proposed Consultants

- Dr. Marc Jean DOUROJEANNI, International Consultant (Cameroon & Gabon – 9 weeks)
- Mr. Etienne NKOMO, National Consultant (Cameroon – 4 weeks)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

MINISTERE DES FORETS ET
DE LA FAUNE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DIVISION DE LA COOPERATION
ET DE LA PROGRAMMATION

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N° _____ /L /MINFOF/SG/DCP/PPP/CEA1



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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF FORESTRY
AND WILDLIFE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

COOPERATION AND
PROGRAMME DIVISION

Yaoundé Le, 22 SEPT 2014
The

THE MINISTER

TO

Mr Emmaneul ZeMEKA
Executive Director, International Tropical
Timber Organisation (ITTO)
Pacifico-Yokohama 5F, 1-1-1, Minato-Mirai
Nishi-ku Yokohama 220-0012, JAPAN
Tel:(81-45)223-1110 Fax: (81-45)223-1111
Email: itto@itto.int

Subject: MINFOF Response to ITTO Ex-Post Evaluation

Sir,

I have the honour to forward our response to the Ex-post evaluation of the Project PD 66/01 Rev. 1 (F) "Mengamé-Minkebé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) in the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)" that was conducted from July 2-10, 2014.

Kindly accept, Sir, the expression of my sincere regards.

Attached:

- Response document (4pages)



Ngole Philip Ngwese

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

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MINISTRY OF FORESTRY
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PROGRAMME DIVISION

Management Response to ITTO Ex-Post Evaluation	
Project Title: Establishment of the Mengame-Minkebe Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) at the Cameroon-Gabon Border (Cameroon)	
Project ID: PD 066/01 Rev.1 (F)	
A) Overall Response to the Evaluation:	
<p>Generally, Cameroon being a bilingual country and mostly dominated by French, it would have been preferable, that a French version of this report be made available for a large broadcast and wider reading audience. Nevertheless the report is worth commending, as in a limited time the evaluator succeeded to present an in-depth analysis of the situation of the project years after completion. The report was well structured, and the section of lessons learned and recommendations were well highlighted.</p>	
Evaluation Report Recommendations*	B) Response to recommendations (e.g. 'accept', 'partially accept' or 'reject' – please provide a brief explanation)
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p><u>A follow up for the PD 66/01 in Cameroon is still necessary.</u> It could be a second phase or a new project that assists the country to effectively implant the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary and the Kom National Park if this is gazetted. Such a project must include the following elements :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Install and launch the management of the protected areas (MGS and Kom) b. Renewal and enhancement of the sensitization program. c. Management of the buffer zone of the protected areas. d. Develop a set of demonstrative sustainable economic activities with villagers that are compatible with protected areas including wildlife management. e. Actively promote investments to facilitate ecotourism in the area. 	<p><u>Accept:</u> reason being that there are still unfinished activities that undeniable will warrant a second phase of the project for their completion.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p><u>The conditions for such a new operations should be:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The legal establishment of the Kom National Park b. The formal prohibition of use of the new illegal road opened inside the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary that must remain entirely under control of the MINFOF exclusively for service's use. A control must be established at its entrance. c. The official approval of the MGS management plan d. The demonstration of the budgetary provision of adequate counterpart funding. e. The installation of the protected areas authority in the Oveng headquarters that is to be built. 	<p><u>Accept:</u> Since it is equally the view of MINFOF under the framework of the Protected Area Emergency Action Plan elaborated in 2012 after the elephant killing in Bouba-Njida National park, to secure all protected areas especially of trans-boundary origin, and allocate more funding.</p>

<p>Recommendation 3 <i>The establishment of the Minkebé complement (Gabon) for the Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary as originally planned is still highly desirable.</i></p> <p><i>The previous recommendation is standing alone. However it would be ideal that finally the Minkebé coalescent protected area be established. If to do this requires technical assistance from ITTO we consider it is worth to be done. However the preconditions to approve such a project are similar to those mentioned for Cameroon, especially with regard to a legal instrument for the protection of the Minkebé area. Eventually it may be better to enlarge the existing Minkebé National Park to cover this area and to make it coalescent with the Mengame National Sanctuary.</i></p>	<p><u>Accept:</u> <i>without corresponding protecting measures on the adjacent protected areas in Gabon, will lead to increase human pressure on the wildlife in Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary, as the minkebe might serve as a haven for poachers to penetrate the MGS.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 4 <i>Another much more ambitious Project is the intent to build ecological corridors within all protected areas included in the TRIDOM.</i></p> <p><i>This can be achieved, as proposed in the PD 663/10, as an international project executed by an agreed international agency to be developed with participation of the three countries. However, it may be advisable to develop it through three coordinated national projects to warrant national ownership and support. It is important to remember that even accepting that the ideal is to complete all corridors; to make corridors in each country will already be a very important result.</i></p>	<p><u>Accept:</u></p>
<p>Recommendation 5 <i>The needs for similar projects in the future.</i></p> <p><i>The lack of success of this operation is by no means an argument to justify not continuing ITTO's contribution to the conservation of biodiversity in tropical forests. Projects dealing with existing or new protected areas and especially with those that are located coinciding with international boundaries are everyday more important. Most of what remain as natural forests in tropical countries is precisely located in remote international frontier areas. Additionally the need of close collaboration among neighbor countries to jointly combat poaching, logging and other illegal extractive activities is evident. If, additionally the continuity of an ecosystem sample to be conserved overlap the boundaries it is logical that the coordinated establishment of protected areas in each country is highly desirable. Additionally, these coordinated actions also are part of the larger goal of establishing ecological corridors to maintain the genetic viability of species that migrates or that need very large areas to survive.</i></p> <p><i>These are the superior reasons that justify the consultant's recommendation to consider a follow-up project to the PD 66/01 in Cameroon and of parallel coinciding initiatives in Gabon.</i></p>	<p><u>Accept:</u> <i>Cameroon shared its boundary with six countries, five in the central Africa and one in west Africa. These boundaries are very enclave and porous and only project of international dimension can facilitate government action towards the protection of surrounding forest and biodiversity. More so, Government has taken certain international engagement relative to trans-boundary management of protected area under the banner of COMIFAC to increase its network of protected areas and strengthening sub regional cooperation in matters of biodiversity conservation.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 6 <i>The objectives of such future projects.</i></p>	<p><u>Accept</u></p>

<p>The tropical forests biodiversity conservation objective of future similar projects must not be changed. The issues that affected the PD 66/01 do not modify the urgent need of such projects.</p> <p>However, the objective of achieving bi-lateral or multi-lateral cooperation for the management of protected areas in international frontiers requires a different approach. It is definitively not advisable to develop a single national project including actions in two or more countries, as in the case of PD 66/01. Only coordination meetings may be included. The reasons not to have national projects handling activities in a neighbor country, as seen in the previous text, are multiple.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at biodiversity conservation in TBCA.</p> <p>There is no much room for innovation in such a well-known matter. However, based in the evaluation of several similar projects of ITTO and of other agencies we consider advisable to take into consideration the following suggestions:</p> <p>(i) No project must be approved if the protected area to be managed -or improved in any way- is not previously duly legally established (gazetted). If projects are of a trans-boundary nature the same rule would be applicable to both sides.</p> <p>(ii) The only exception to the previous recommendation is when the project is limited to the realization of studies conducting to the establishment of new protected areas. In such a case the investments must be strictly limited to the studies and to the preparation of the legal requisites for approval</p> <p>(iii) ITTO's participation in truly international projects -directly administered by an international organization, as in the case of the GEF/UNP-TRIDOM- must be conditioned to the same previously mentioned requisites.</p> <p>(iv) ITTO's long experience in natural forest management, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry and, especially, in community forest development can be more used in biodiversity conservation projects that pretend to manage protected areas buffer zones or ecological corridors. As a matter of facts this can be a very important contribution of ITTO to conservation efforts as buffer zones's population are at the origin of most management problems inside protected areas.</p>	<p><u>partially accept:</u> new protected are being earmarked every day in the tropics for gazette, and if ITTO has to only select protected areas with legal status or limit their action to studies, this will not have a great impact on the country, since most of the difficulty faced by tropical countries especially Cameroun is in the phase of securing and developing the initial management plan of these areas. More so this must equally goes alongside with some socio-economic incentives for the local population.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Appropriate target groups, e.g. countries, government, organizations, forestry sector, local communities.</p> <p>The situation of nature conservation in Asian and, especially in African tropical forests is absolutely critical. It is much more serious than in Latin America. Therefore, priority must be given to these continents. Inside Africa there in no doubts that the Congo basin tropical humid forests have absolute priority.</p> <p>Dealing with protected areas it is unavoidable to target governments. However, as it has been almost in every case with ITTO transboundary projects, the executing agencies were large international NGOs,</p>	<p><u>Accept:</u>Co-management should be the principle underlying protected area management in the tropics. Community based management approach should be the ideal.</p>

<p>especially the WWF and the IUCN. If the projects include buffer zones or deal with categories of protected areas that allow utilization of resources and human population inside, then the local communities become the obvious central target. However, as seen in the PD 66/01 much attention must be given to the forest users, as sound truly sustainable forest management is an excellent warrant for neighboring protected areas and even for endangered wildlife species in the managed forests.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 9 The organizational arrangements of the project in relation to the trans-boundary aspects.</p> <p>Trans-boundary issues must be discussed at two levels: (i) practical operational local level -in situ- reuniting protected areas managers or rangers or appropriate police officers of both countries, without intervention of diplomacy; (ii) overall planning or coordination binational meetings. These last are essentially to provide political support to protected areas managers when involved in eventual joint field operations, such as required to combat poaching.</p> <p>Again, if so required by both countries studies may be carried out in adjacent areas of both countries but, in such an event, the project must be international in nature, conducted by an international organization under agreements with each country.</p>	<p><u>partially accept</u>: this will equally depend on the nature of government or mode of governance of each country, whether centralized or unitary state or federal republic. In the former the local representatives must always consult the central government for any action. Hence organizational arrangements should be adapted to the country or national context.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>Follow-up and evaluation practices. There is nothing new to add to this question that has not been mentioned earlier:</p> <p>(i) Mid-term evaluations are extremely useful in relatively large projects, especially if their progress is not as planned. It is also cost-effective.</p> <p>(ii) Not every large project that is unsuccessful requires an ex-post evaluation. The present ex-post evaluation only confirmed what was quite evident before making it.</p> <p>(iii) As so often stated an ex-post evaluation loose effectiveness in proportion to the time elapsed since project termination. The PD 66/01 has been evaluated five years after its effective termination. It would be impossible to make this evaluation without the participation, as national consultant, of the former Project Director who is probably the only available memory of most of the process.</p>	<p><u>Accept</u></p>

Name, Title and Institution of Respondent: _____

Date, Signature: _____