

**THE IMPACTS OF MINERAL EXPLOITATION AND ASSOCIATED  
TRADE ON WILDLIFE IN THE DJA-BOUMBA MINING AREA**

**EAST CAMEROON**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BIOLOGICAL  
AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEYS**

**By**

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## **1. Introduction**

Three feedback meetings were held in Kongo village on January 17 -18, 2011, in Achip village on January 19 -20, 2011, and in Melen village on January 21- 22, 2011 order to present the principal findings of the baseline research on the impacts of mineral exploitation and associated trade on wildlife in the Dja-Boumba mining area. The meetings were also an integral part of the evaluation process as required by the project guidelines.

### **1.1 Kongo Village Meeting**

The first feedback meeting on the project was held on January 17 – 18, 2011 at the village hall in Kongo. The meeting was held under the patronage of the chief of the village, His Majesty **Alama Beye**. The meeting, scheduled for 12h.30 started at 3h.30 was chaired by the project coordinator, **Makazi Linus**. Sixty people attended the meeting.

#### **1.1.1 Opening speech by Makazi Linus**

**Mr. Makazi** thanked the local administrative authorities, local NGOs, Community Based Organisations and all other participants for the interest they showed in the project and the effort to integrate mining and wildlife for sustainable development. The groups which carried out the baseline study were introduced, and **Mr. Makazi** reminded the assistance that they had been assisted by the communities in the study.

**Mr. Makazi** then explained the aim of the meeting, mainly to sound out the opinions and ideas of the various stakeholders in order to develop an appropriate means of sustainable wildlife management. Written questions as well as those that would be asked during the meeting were welcomed.

The order of the meeting was then explained:

- Presentation of the project;
- Presentation of the results of the field inventory and the socio-economic survey;
- Presentation of The RUFFORD Small Grant Foundation;
- Questions and answers.

Prior to handing over to the technical director of Rainbow Environment Consult (REC) Sarl, Mr. Makazi encouraged the participants their ask questions and proposals orally for participatory response by the term.

## **1.2 Presentation of the project**

The presentation was made by **Mr. Aubin Tchinda**, the technical director of Rainbow Environment Consult (REC) Sarl who first welcomed the Nzime and Baka ethnic groups and reminded the public that this feedback meeting was to present to them the rate at which wildlife resources were disappearing in the area and also to raise the awareness of the Kongo communities on the way forwards on the sustainable wildlife management.

The outcome of this project resulted from the environmental and social impacts assessment carried out by REC in 2004, 2006, and 2008. It was discovered that

the rate of unsustainable harvesting of wildlife by the influx of immigrants will lead to the depletion on fauna resources, resulting in an empty forest syndrome.

The proposal was submitted to Rufford Small Grant Foundation where we secured the project finance and initiated a comprehensive data collection and analysis in 2010.

One of the aims of the meeting was to encourage the local communities to organise themselves so that they extract maximum benefit from this project through capacity building, training and empowerment.

The integration of wildlife management with industrial mining project will be realized by the local population and evaluated by the local communities as well. When one talks of sustainable development, it can only be achieved if the people own the project.

### **1.2.1 Presentation of the biological and the socio-economic surveys**

The biological research and the socioeconomic findings were presented by Mr. Makazi Linus. The presentation briefly presented mammals, their status, IKA and spatial distribution and the perceptions of the local population on the impacts of mining on wildlife and trade.

### **1.2.2 Mammals**

Sixteen medium and large sized mammals were present in the study area. Their conservation statuses were shown as follows:

- **IUCN Status**

The species identified as threatened by IUCN are assigned a category indicating the degree of threat as follows:

- EN = Endangered; threatened species with extinction, the risk of extinction is very high in the short term.
- VU = Vulnerable; high risk of extinction in the medium term
- LRcd = Lower risk but conservation dependent; sufficient evaluation of the documented species have proved that it cannot be classify in any of the above categories.
- LRnt = Lower risk, but near threatened; the Species coming up very close to qualifying as threatened depending on conservation measures.
- DD = Data Deficient; A taxon is Data Deficient when there is inadequate information to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of its risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status

- **Convention of International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices I, II, III.**

- **Cameroon Legislation applicable in Law No. 0648 of 18 December 2006, Articles 2(1) and 3(1) laying down forestry and fauna regulations:** defines the following three levels of protection for animals:

- Class A: Totally protected species; hunting not allowed.
- Class B: Partially protected species but can be hunted with license or special authorisation.
- Class C: Not in A or B but hunting is regulated.

- **Indices of animal presence:**

- FP = Footprint, N = Nest, P = Pellets, FT = Feeding trails,
- D = Digging, T=Trace, DO = Direct observations, VO = Vocalisation,

Of the Sixteen medium and large-sized mammals recorded in the study area, four were listed in the 2008 IUCN Red Data Book and four species listed in the IUCN Red List of threatened species. Four species were listed in class A and two in class B of the Cameroon wildlife legislation (MINFOF, 2006/2010). Two, seven and one were listed in level I, II and III of CITES and two were data deficient.

As far as primates were concerned, the presence of chimpanzees and gorillas were directly and indirectly observed. However, 9 gorillas nests, 3 feedings trails and 2 tracks, with an IKA (kilometre abundance index = 0.4/km) were observed, but 50% of the nest were very old (3 months). IKA gradients of gorilla signs (feedings trails, tracks) were relatively low towards the south.

A total of 96 Chimpanzee nests were recorded in the study area with 45.5 % of the nests being very old (between 2- 3 months). There were direct observation of 25 chimpanzees on transect (T7) at the southern part of the study area. GPS 33N 373483; 367117, but a high concentration of activity signs were recorded in the northern part of the study area. Chimpanzee densities were estimated at 0.03 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>.

The most common monkeys were the putty nose guenon (IKA = 2.2 groups/km) followed by the moustached monkey (0.71 groups/km), crowned guenons (0.3groups/km) and the black colobus (0.25 groups/km).

Four species of duikers, blue duiker, bay duiker, black fronted duiker, and yellow backed duiker were recorded in the study area. The (IKA) for the red duikers as a group were estimated at 0.2 individuals/km.

The (IKA) of blue duiker in the study area was calculated at 0.08 individuals/km. The low frequency of tracks and pellets and information from local hunters indicates that the ungulate population of Nkamouna forest has reached a critical stage.

IKA of the only one species of wild pig registered during the survey period was 0.3 individuals/km, while that of Sitatunga was 0.08 individuals/km.

One leopard was heard and tracks seen during the inventory in FMU10039. This northern part of the study area contains steep hills, rocks and caves that provide an ideal habitat for leopards.

Faeces and tracks of the giant pangolin were recorded on the transect once (n=1). The long tailed pangolin was also recorded once in the study area.

The brush tailed porcupines were common in the entire Nkamouna forest. Trail and feeding signs were frequently observed during the survey. The brush tailed porcupine was among the most frequently hunted animals in the study area.

The area is suitable habitat for elephant, bongo and buffalo and prior to 1995, these animals were known to use the area. With the increased human presence from logging and mineral exploitation activities, no sighting or evidence of the presence of these species have been identified through fieldwork. It was however mentioned during the socioeconomic survey that these animals were present in

the area but due to poaching and various trade in wildlife, they have become rare or extinct.

### **1.2.3 Human pressure on wildlife**

We recorded 416 signs of human presence on all the transects. The mining zone was highly exposed to human pressure as Baka pygmies, Nzime and non-indigenous people exploit the forest for wild meat and other forest resources. The study area was highly disturbed with 9.2 human signs/km of transect.

### **1.2.4 Perceptions of the local communities**

The mining project was seen as a potential danger that could destroy their wildlife resources to extinction. Of the 119 interviewees, 95.8% considered wildlife to be threatened. The respondents revealed that roads construction, infrastructure development in the virgin forest, cutting of huge grids called transects through the forest for drilling, commercial activities and hunting of wildlife represent the greatest threats. A mean number of 862.7 animals were killed per year in the three villages. The value exceeds the maximum production rate of wildlife in the tropical forest. If this over harvesting of wildlife continuous, mammals population will be lost in the foreseeable future.

The presence of animal parts in every household interviewed showed the high rate of commercial trade in wildlife in the study area.

The coordinator concluded that the communities have to develop a strategy of conserving their wildlife for the future generation.

### 1.2.5 Presentation of The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

**Mr. Nforbah Ernest**, the project sociologist expressed his pleasure at rediscovering the people he had encountered during the baseline surveys. The Rufford is a charity organisation whose aim is to fund people whose work makes a pragmatic, substantial and long-lasting contribution to nature conservation that bring about change to the local communities. For example this project must build the capacity and train local population on how to sustainably manage their wildlife for the future generation.

Criteria and guidelines were given on how to apply and the population were advised to explore the website for more information. [www.ruffordsmallgrants.org](http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org)

### 1.3 Questions and Answers session

This second part of the meeting took place on Wednesday 18 January 2011 at 1h.30. **Mr. Makazi** called for reactions from the public as regards the presentations.

This session enabled the noting of questions, preoccupations and propositions of the various participants and allowed clarification of some of the issues raised.

The following questions were asked:

- **Mr. Langa Serges**, the coordinator of the old hunters club Association: Congratulation for the work done and my intervention aim to enrich this work. What measures need to be put in place for our association to develop ecotourism potentials?

- **Mr. Manza Ludoick**, a field guide and forestry prospector: Bushmeat is part of local culture, how are we going to build capacity for alternative sources of protein?
- **Mr. Maakoh Vincent**, a student in Technical High School Lomie: Explained that the unsustainable exploitation of wildlife by the local communities is due to lack of awareness. Will the awareness programme you have started by long term?
- **Piekel Dieudonne**, a councillor in Kongo village: He congratulated the term for their excellence work towards the integration of mining and wildlife for sustainable development. How can the village have copies of the reports on the studies carried out in the village, in order to develop a library for the area?
- **Mrs Ndjila Agnes**, a councillor: The exploitation and logging by Geovic and PALLISCO means that we are prevented from harvesting other non timber forest products which we depend on as a source of income. How are we going to survive?
- **Mr. Avid Saffano**, head master of Government School Kongo: What is the work of international organisations in the region?

The following replies were given to the questions:

**Mr. Makazi:** From experience in many other countries promotion of ecotourism is one way to create alternative income for the local inhabitants, who depend on hunting. It is necessary to develop a tourism management plan as follows:

- Selection of sites of special touristic interest for wildlife view;
- Establishment of camping places for tourists at these sites;
- Selection and basic training of potentials guides, who could be recommended to tourists for wildlife viewing, explanation of traditional use of the forest, demonstration of medicinal plants etc. This will involved the coordinator and other members of your organisation to develop a funding mechanism for the implementation of the above activities.
- Construction of an information centre for tourists, parts of which should have exhibition such as posters showing birds and mammals inhabiting the region, information on biology of these animals, exhibition of food plants used by gorilla, chimpanzee and elephant, explanation of animals -plants interactions and hunting methods.

**Madam Akpweh Marceline:** the forestry officer, we are conscious of the fact that wildlife has important livelihood aspects and serves multiple roles. The programme has building capacity, training and awareness raising in its time table. The local communities have to be well trained to guarantee that success in producing substitute protein sources will reduce hunting pressure.

**Mr. Nforbah Ernest:** The project will work in a participatory, consultative manner with the local communities, schools and local NGOs to develop a

sustainable long term awareness programme through workshops, conferences and seminars. When the project will be handed over to the local communities, they must sort funds to continue the programme.

- Copies of the reports will be given to the chiefs of villages and other local NGOs who are interested in the project.

**Mr. Aubin Tchinda:** The ongoing review of the 1996 forestry laws in Cameroon will give consideration to local communities to own community forestry. Each community or village could own a community forestry which will be managed by them. As such they will be able to harvest all the non timber forest products of their choice. The community will need to set up a non-timber forest products cooperative which will provide an alternative source of income.

The International Non Governmental Organisations support the Government of Cameroon to protect the biodiversity of the country. They also carry out research to provide long term data on the biology of plant and animal species for the sustainable management of natural resources. They function as a very effective deterrent against poaching.

**Mr. Makazi** concluded the replies of the questions by explaining that the next phase of the project will be the capacity building/training of forestry guards, local hunters, local NGOs and community based organisations and continuous awareness raising in schools, among the local population and other stakeholders in the study area .

The chief of the village then spoke of his honour in presiding the meeting. He requested Rainbow Environment Consult management do their utmost to ensure

that the goal of the project is achieved. He noted that the villagers were highly aware and plan to be actively implicated in the success of the project. He concluded that he wish the future generation to see all the wildlife species in the area.

He requested those present at the meeting to transmit the information to those who were absent at the meeting for one reason or the other.

## **2. Achip Village Meeting**

The second baseline study feedback meeting was held in Achip village hall on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 2011. The meeting was held under the patronage of the chief of the village, His Majesty **Mankangla Philippe**. The meeting started at 2h.30 and was chaired by Mr. Makazi Linus. Forty five people attended the meeting. The attendance and timing of the meeting was influenced by the beginning of the farming season.

### **2.1 Opening Speech**

**Mr. Makazi** welcomed the villagers, other stakeholders and introduced the term. The term used the same schedule of the previous meeting in Kongo village. The first part of the meeting consisted of:

- Presentation of the project;
- Presentation of the results of the field inventory and the socio-economic survey;
- Presentation of The RUFFORD Small Grant Foundation;

**Mr. Nforbah Ernest** concluded by reminding the audience that sustainable development meant implementing development activities now while ensuring satisfaction of the needs of future generations, and this is what the project planned to achieve with the help of the local communities.

The questions and answers session was adjourned for the next day.

## **2.2 Questions and Answers session**

The following day at 3h.30, the moderator called for questions from the public.

He reminded the attendees that the response to their preoccupations will be given instantly.

The following questions were asked:

**Madam Etoetsine Genevieve**, the coordinator of a local Non Governmental Organization (NGO) in Lomie: I thank Rainbow Environmental Consult (REC) for the information revealed in this meeting and suggest that it should be disclosed to all the local communities surrounding the mining area. The information should also be put on the company website.

My main concern is to know whether you have discussed this vital information with the mining companies and what are their reactions?

**Mr. Ogbua Jean Bertin**, farmer/subsistent hunter: How will fauna and other natural resources be managed in the area in 25 years, when most of the immigrants are not here to receive this sensitization message?

**Mr. Mbandjo Basile**, elite of the area and a business man: REC should develop a policy of developing Non Timber Forest Products gardens such as cane, bush mango and moabi because these products are use as condiments and also to derive income.

**Mr. Mampie Herve**, student: Given the principle of disclosure and participation can you confirm that the local populations have supported this project since its elaboration?

**Rev. Dieudonne Ndjankoum**, Rev. Father Catholic Church Achip: How will the trainees in the workshops and capacity building programme be selected?

**Madam Andouh Colette**, farmer: The project requires you to develop a monitoring programme for the exploitation of faunal resources. How is that going to be done and when?

**Mr. Tienzo Moliere**, farmer: The regulatory measures being used by the forestry guards and international Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) operating in the region were mainly repressive and have met with little or no success. What do say about that?

**Mr. Makazi**: The information will be discussed in all the mining villages according to our programme. The RUFFORDS Small Grants Foundation website contains all this information and the website can easily be accessed at any time. We are still trying to create a web site for the organisation.

We work in collaboration with GeoAid, an NGO created to manage the Geovic's social activities and it will surely use this report as its databank during the

implementation of its livelihoods programme. GeoAid has appreciated the report and promised to use the data when necessary.

The local immigrants will meet a public education and awareness programs in place, so that they would be aware of the problems, potential solutions and long term benefits of protecting wildlife species in their neighbouring environment.

Plants in garden plots have the same properties as the same species growing in the wild. The development of non timber forest products gardens will depend on the local communities to acquire community forest. The development of NFTP's will then be incorporated into the management plan of the community forest.

**Mr. Nforbah Ernest:** The project is transparent in its management and committed to its objectives which tallies with community development activities. The satisfactory turn out of the participants is an indicator that the project is accepted by the population of the area.

The workshop participants will be selected in collaboration with the chiefs of the villages and the local project facilitators in the area. The participants will include hunters, farmers, pupils, students, commercial, forestry guards and other stakeholders in the project area.

**Mr. Aubin Tchinda,** the ecological monitoring programme will be developed by the workshop participants and this will take place in February, 2011.

The workshops and conferences will assist in building awareness of forestry guards, local communities and NGOs on communication strategy and dialogues concerning ways in which uncooperative methods can be countered.

The second evaluation feedback meeting in Achip finished at about 6h30 with satisfaction of the participants.

### **3. Melen Village Meeting**

Three feedback meeting was held in Melen village on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2011 in the chief's premises. The meeting was held under the patronage of the chief of the village, His Majesty **Beye Manen**. The meeting started at 4h.00 and was moderated by **Mr. Nforbah Ernest**. Seventy people attended the meeting. The participants included the chief of forestry post and four forestry guards from Lomie Sub Division of the East region of Cameroon.

The term followed the same procedure as in the previous meetings. Due to time constraint the questions and answers session was adjoined for the next day. The forestry chief term promised to participate in the meeting the following day, which they did.

#### **3.1 Questions and answers session**

The next day, the moderator immediately called for reactions from the public.

He reminded the attendees that all their questions will be probably responded to while those that were not present during the meeting could still be bring their questions later.

The following questions were asked:

**Madam Ze Philomena**, subsistent farmer: Congratulations for the wonderful presentation on the status of our natural resources. My desire is to see the local women being empowered by this project. I will like to know when this will be done and I wish to be among the selection.

**Mr. Nanga Emon**, forestry chief and coordinator of an initiative group: The area is threatened by extinction of wildlife species due to unsustainable hunting, the programme is very educative and we hope that this programme will be long term and will involve both the formal and informal sectors.

**Mr. Bibeh Basile**, farmer: How will your project alleviate poverty?

**Mr. Beye Moris**, coordinator of a Community Based Organisation: There is the need for a global study as the mining project also impacts forest concessions. Have you asked the opinion of Pallisco during the implementation of your programme?

**His majesty Pepe Eboh Anice**, the assistant chief of Ngoyla: We will transmit the information to the villages. I have retained that wildlife has been abusively harvested in the area, and the wildlife is for our children. Could you tell us when you will instore your project in Ngoyla and Messok? So that our children should be prepared to work participatorily with your project.

**Mr. Makazi Linus**: From the knowledge of other rural projects gender equity is always taken into consideration and this project will do same as regard the

empowering of the rural women. From the socio economic interviews we infer that women were willing to have good capacity building and training on the sustainable management of natural resources, since most of them were involved in the commercialization of these products, especially bushmeat. The capacity building and training programme will start immediately after the presentation of research findings exercise. You have to contact the chief of your village and the local village project facilitators for the selection.

The project clearly spelled out that there will be capacity building/training of the formal and the informal sectors.

Poverty is an indicator of lack of development and impacts many aspects of life such as health, transport, education and availability of resources. Alleviating poverty does not mean giving money to the local communities to drink and enjoy themselves. Our aim is to ensure that fauna resources which have been the community buffer in time of hardship do not suffer the most from declining.

Rainbow Environmental Consult encourages constructive dialogue between different stakeholders of the society. As such no stakeholder is left in the project area. Sustainable development can only be achieved through multidiscipline approach of various stakeholders.

There is greater hope to extend the project to your area, so soon as possible. This will depend on how we acquire funding from our donors. We are however, satisfied that the sensitization programme is spreading in and around the mining areas.

The technical director of REC concluded that the capacity building and training programme will take place in February 2011.

The forestry chief of post spoke of his honor in closing the meeting on behalf of all the chiefs in the mining area. He requested that Rainbow's management do their utmost to ensure that the project integrate wildlife and mining for sustainable development to the area. He noted that the local elites and populations were highly aware and plan to be actively implicated in the success of the project.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Despite the preoccupations of the local populations as mentioned above it is clear from the biological and the socio-economic surveys carried out in the study area and from statements made by participants in the feedback meetings that, there is strong desire for the project to proceed. The concern raised by the mention of the analysis of the no-project alternative is a further indication of the support for the project to be implemented. The capacity building and training workshop was to follow suit.