

# LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SCOPING MISSION ASSESSMENT – GABON

November 2011

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government

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## Acronyms

AFD	French Agency for Development (Agence Française de Développement)
AGEOS	Agence Gabonaise d'Etudes et d'Observation Spatiales
ANGT	Agence Nationale de Grands Travaux
ANPN	Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux
BEAC	Bank of Central African States
CENAREST	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Agreement
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GOG	Government of Gabon
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
LEDS	Low Emission Development Strategy
MINEF	Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture
MINERH	Ministère de l'Energie et des Ressources Hydrauliques
MRV	Monitoring, reporting, and verification
NC	National Communication
NCCC	National Council on Climate Change
NREL	National Renewable Energy Lab
ONFI	Office National des Forêts, International
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
SEEG	Société d'Electricité et d'Eaux Gabon
UNFCCC	U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USFS	U.S. Forest Service

## **EC-LEDS Gabon Scoping Team Members**

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Dr. Etienne Massard and the Conseil Climat graciously facilitated discussions with multiple organizations and agencies on the development and climate changes activities in Gabon.

### *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux*

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### *Office Nationale des Forets, International (ONFI)*

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### *Carbon Quatre*

Marie-Veronique Gauduchon, Hubert Kieken

### *Pre-Scoping Team*

Sadie Cox and Jason Ko conducted a pre-scoping trip to Gabon in March 2011 and wrote a nearly exhaustive report detailing the economic and environmental context in Gabon. Their work made our jobs easier, and allowed us to advance in the development of a cooperative Gabon-France-USA LEDS work program and Gabon-USA MOU of Cooperation.

Furthermore, the EC-LEDS Gabon Scoping Team would like to thank the following organizations for providing insight on development and implementation of climate change activities in Gabon: Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN), Bechtel, Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture (MINEF), Ministère des Mines, du Pétrole, des Hydrocarbures, de l'Energie, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Promotion des Energies Nouvelles, Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances, du Budget et de la Privatisation, Société d'Electricité et d'Eaux Gabon (SEEG)

## Executive Summary

- A 6-person team representing three USG agencies and a national laboratory (State, USAID, USFS, NREL) traveled to Libreville from May 8-16th, 2011 for a scoping mission to initiate and lay the groundwork to negotiate and implement the EC-LEDS program in Gabon.
- Gabon is one of five EC-LEDS Phase 1 countries. Gabon has submitted a letter formally expressing their interest in partnering with the U.S. on the Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (EC-LEDS) program.
- Working with the interministerial National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), the team made significant progress towards the establishment of a mutually agreed work plan with the Government of Gabon; including a draft work plan covering “phase I” of our cooperation, which has been defined as the period between July and December 2011. This period will also include scoping and assessment of possible opportunities for collaboration in Phase II of the partnership, which will begin January 2012 and extend through at least December 2012.
- The U.S. delegation visit coincided with the visit of a French delegation that has been working with the Government of Gabon on a number of climate change and LEDS-related activities, including updating Gabon’s greenhouse gas inventory and the development of Gabon’s second National Communication.
- The Government of Gabon was explicit in its desire for close collaboration and cooperation among the three governments on the development of *Plan Climat* (its low emissions development strategy and framework, which integrates both mitigation and adaptation to climate change); substantial progress was made in establishing this partnership and identifying areas for cooperation.
- The USG team attended the second meeting of the NCCC, presided by President Bongo-Ondimba. In attendance were most, if not all, foreign Ambassadors, all the Ministers and department heads of the Government of Gabon, and invited experts including civil society and the private sector. The meeting launched the development of Gabon’s low emissions development strategy, called *Plan Climat*. Ambassador Benjaminson and John Poulsen presented an overview of the EC-LEDS program, while the French Ambassador described the nature for debt swap. President Bongo-Ondimba expressed his country’s desire to be an international model for sustainable development and low emissions growth and his strong support for the development of *Plan Climat* as part of *Gabon Emergent*, his presidential economic and environmental development strategy. He also directed his government to work with the NCCC as part of his Emerging Gabon policy.

- The scoping team met with government counterparts via the Presidency, as well as key ministries, donors and private industry over the course of the week. The team worked closely with the Embassy/Gabon team, including the Ambassador, who is deeply engaged in promoting the EC-LEDS agenda in country.
- USAID/Washington and the in-country LEDES coordinator will work with Embassy/Gabon and the Government of Gabon to finalize the bi-lateral MOU of Cooperation for collaboration on Gabon's low carbon development planning process under the framework of *Plan Climat*.
- The Government of Gabon is extremely interested in moving aggressively to position Gabon as an international model and leader in the low emissions development space. However, several challenges must be overcome. If Gabon is successful in even part of its ambitious climate change agenda it will serve as a vital leader in Africa and for the world on the viability of low emissions development.
- There is significant opportunity for the USG to engage and provide capacity building and technical expertise on the development of Gabon's *Plan Climat*. Moreover, the Gabon-driven cooperative arrangement on LEDES between Gabon, France and the US presents a new approach to country-led development that could serve as a model for effective multi-country cooperative practices.

## Section 1: Introduction & Background

### 1.1 Low Emissions Development Strategy

Developing countries seeking to improve the standard of living of their citizens must grow their economies while decreasing net greenhouse gas emissions over the long-term. At the same time, their economies and societies must be able to withstand the vagaries of a changing climate (“climate-resilient”). Realizing this goal will require resources, behavior change, and creativity from a community of nations, donors, governments, businesses and households over a long period of time. The creation and implementation of country-driven, analytically rigorous Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) will enable countries to transition to low carbon economic development resulting in sustained growth in employment and investment, increased financial flows through carbon markets, reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and other social, economic, and environmental benefits. Gabon was selected as a country to pilot LEDS in coordination with the Government of Gabon (GOG). The objective of the scoping team report is to *provide information on the advances made toward the development of a technical work plan for LEDS support to the country*. This information will assist efforts to finalize the work plan for Gabon, determining the specific technical, institutional and capacity needs for the development and implementation of a domestic low emission development strategy, and perhaps facilitate efforts in other countries.

This scoping team report comes on the heels of a very comprehensive pre-scoping team report that was based on an exhaustive literature review and interviews of organizations and agencies working in Gabon. Therefore, this report provides a very brief country overview; other information on the economic and environmental context of Gabon can be found in the pre-scoping report. This report *focuses on the process of developing a LEDS work plan and the progress made during the scoping mission*.

### 1.2 Country Overview

Gabon has an abundance of natural resources, including oil, minerals, and forests. The country's exceptionally rich biodiversity, high forest cover and low rate of deforestation, offer tremendous opportunities for ecotourism development, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation through reduced emissions and carbon absorption. At the same time, the GOG is intent on rapid economic development and diversifying the economy away from the dominant but declining oil sector through investments in several major infrastructure projects in the short to medium term, and through investments in sectors such as mining, forestry, power, tourism, agriculture, and transportation. Future investments in infrastructure and economic diversification could marginally increase Gabon's GHG emissions, but the GOG at the most senior levels is committed to sustainable development and minimizing the country's carbon footprint, to the extent reasonably practicable.

Gabonese President Bongo Ondimba is committed to transforming the development paradigm for Gabon by rooting out the corruption that characterized his father Omar Bongo's 41-year tenure as president. He is dedicated to reducing poverty and delivering real improvements in quality of life and government services for the Gabonese people through major investments in infrastructure and a more diversified economy, while at the same time seeking to adhere to principles of sustainable and green development. It should be noted that GHG emissions in Gabon are extremely low, but opportunities to address potential future emissions related to economic development through technological leapfrogging are significant.<sup>1</sup>

With a rich forest cover that can serve as a carbon sink and mitigate climate change, tremendous water resources for untapped hydroelectric power, and a government that is deeply engaged in multilateral climate negotiations and committed to climate-resilient and climate-conscious development at the most senior levels, the country presents many opportunities for technical assistance in developing low carbon growth and low emissions strategies from the USG and international donor community. However, there is widespread agreement that the country has very limited in-country technical capacity and scientific expertise to address these issues without substantial assistance from development partners.

Gabon is an upper middle-income country, with the World Bank estimating GDP per capita at about \$7,320 in 2008. At the same time, there is a fairly large gap between wealthy and poor Gabonese, with economic observers often noting that two thirds of the population lives in poverty. More than half of Gabon's total population of 1.4 million lives in Libreville. The country's overall population density is very low, at about 5 persons per square kilometer, with about 86% of the total population being urban and largely concentrated in three cities: Libreville, Port-Gentil, and Franceville.<sup>2</sup>

Like many other Sub-Saharan African states, Gabon is ranked low (156th out of 182 countries) on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, but ranks higher than any of the other Central African states. Likewise, Gabon is ranked 110th out of 178 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, higher than any other Central African state except Sao Tome and Principe.

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<sup>1</sup> GHG emissions estimates for Gabon are presented in the country's First National Communication (Annex I). However, more recent figures will soon be available as part of the Second National Communication scheduled to be released in April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Population figures for Gabon and Libreville vary by source, but there is general agreement that as much as 60% of the total population lives in Libreville. The World Bank's African Economic Outlook estimated the total population at 1.4 million in 2008. UN Data estimated the total population at 1,448 million in 2008; Libreville's population at 576,000 as of 2007; and an overall population density of 5.4 persons per square kilometer in 2008. The 2010 Oxford Business Group Gabon Report estimated the total population at 1.4 million and noted that almost 60% of the total population lived in Libreville. The CIA World Factbook estimates Gabon's current total population at 1,576,665 (that figure is substantially higher than any other estimate that we have seen), and notes that the population of Libreville in 2009 was 619,000. Population questions were controversial during the 2009 Presidential Election campaign, with some questioning the high number of registered voters in the Franceville region. GOG officials have stated publicly that as many as 400,000 of the total population of about 1.4 million are non-Gabonese foreigners.

Gabon remains heavily forested thanks to a combination of factors. Early oil discoveries and production beginning in the 1950s (and reaching large-scale commercial exploitation levels in the 1970s), generated significant revenue and likely reduced pressure to derive income from logging and the development of a downstream wood processing industry. In addition, in consultation with environmental NGOs and advocates, former President Oumar Bongo committed in 2002 to set aside a significant volume of land (13% of the country's total surface area) to be designated as national parks and protected areas.

Gabon reached peak oil in 1997, and production has since declined modestly. However, Gabon is still the fourth largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, hydrocarbons still account for about half of total GDP, and oil production remains the dominant economic sector on the basis of revenue. President Bongo Ondimba's administration is intent on diversification and making the economy less dependent on oil. The Gabonese Presidential Administration has ambitious plans to develop the mining, forestry, power, tourism, agriculture, and transportation sectors, among others. The country's mineral wealth includes manganese (Gabon is consistently ranked as one of the world's top five manganese producers), iron, gold, and some rare earth minerals. The large forest reserves present many opportunities for selective and sustainable logging.

### 1.3 Gabon Political Context for LEDS

During the 2009 presidential campaign, Ali Bongo Ondimba proposed a strategic vision, "Emerging Gabon," to guide Gabon's future development. Bongo's vision seeks economic growth through diversification and reducing the country's dependency on oil revenue, improving the business and investment climate, and increasing private sector investment in the economy. The strategic vision is based on three pillars, including industrial development (*Gabon Industrie*), development of the services sector (*Gabon Service*), and environmental sustainability (*Gabon Vert*). The *Gabon Industrie* pillar is intended to move the country from an exporter of raw commodities such as oil, wood, and minerals, to a producer of refined, processed, and value-added products. *Gabon Service* is meant to improve the human capital base by seeking to position Gabon as a regional leader in financial services, IT, and jobs linked to green economic development. The *Gabon Vert* pillar aims to develop a green economy based on the country's rich biodiversity, and to provide increased funding and support for ecotourism infrastructure, protection of national parks, landscapes, and wildlife, and increasing the capacity of environmental professionals.

In accordance with the President's vision, the most senior levels of the GOG are committed to low emissions development and have welcomed the offer of U.S. support in developing effective strategies. Gabon has been one of the leading voices in formulating the Africa Group position for multilateral climate negotiations over the past two years, and has been a particularly strong advocate on REDD+ and forest conservation issues. Gabon participated in the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in May 2010 and became a founding member of the REDD Plus Partnership launched at the conference. President Bongo Ondimba was also

part of the small group of heads of state that helped craft the Copenhagen Climate Change Accord in the final hours of the UNFCCC COP 15 in December 2009.

During a June 2010 visit to Gabon, U.S. Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change Dr. Jonathan Pershing met with the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and participated in the inaugural meeting of the inter-ministerial National Climate Council. During Dr. Pershing's visit, the President and other senior officials emphasized their commitment to environmental protection and their desire to implement climate change considerations into the GOG's development planning.

#### **1.4 National Council on Climate Change and *Plan Climat***

President Bongo-Ondimba created the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) by presidential decree, appointing his Special Advisor on Climate Change, Dr. Etienne Massard, as head of the Council. The interministerial Council is tasked with writing a national climate plan (*Plan Climat*) to outline a climate resilient, low carbon, and green development strategy for Gabon. This plan will integrate climate planning into the country's development strategy, taking into account all sectors of the economy. The GOG is taking a comprehensive approach to integrating all aspects of economic and social development into its climate change planning processes. In addition to developing a long-range strategic plan, the GOG intends to integrate climate change planning and norms into the government's planning and implementation processes, including infrastructure development and planning, its oil and gas and forestry practices, and its land use planning practices. The goal is to complete the first version of the *Plan Climat* by November so that it can be presented at the 17th UNFCCC COP in Durban in December 2011.

The GOG is extremely interested in moving aggressively to position Gabon as an international model and leader in the low emissions development space. However, the NCCC will face several challenges in realizing its goal:

1. Data on greenhouse gas emissions, land use and land change, and forest stocks are insufficient and not centrally stored. The existing data needs to be compiled and synthesized in a consistent manner.
2. Gabon is largely beginning the development of its low emissions development strategy from scratch. Therefore, it is attempting to accomplish in a very short time period what other countries have taken years or decades to accomplish. In particular, the Climate Council must address the following issues:
  - a. Reduce gas flaring, the principal source of emissions in Gabon;
  - b. Develop a national land-use plan, which currently does not exist;
  - c. Establish a long-term forest carbon monitoring system and forest inventory system;
  - d. Understand and mitigate emissions from infrastructure and energy use.
3. Capacity within the government and private sector is a key challenge. Most educated Gabonese work outside of the country and the local pool of climate change and development expertise is considered quite limited. Some key areas related to climate change planning where capacity needs to be built includes carbon

accounting, forest monitoring, land-use analysis and modeling, and economic data management and modeling.

4. The foundation for the *Plan Climat* will be Gabon's Second National Communication (2NC), which has not yet been completed. It is largely recognized that the first NC was poorly done and based on few rigorous data, and therefore producing the second NC requires starting from zero.
5. Gabon has large bureaucracy with an established mode of operation, posing challenges to quick implementation of the President's development reform agenda. Several ministries have or are developing their own sectoral plans, which could lessen their motivation to engage in the development and implementation of the *Plan Climat*.

The GOG has taken steps to overcome some of these challenges. During the May 11, 2011 meeting of the NCCC, President Bongo-Ondimba emphasized his policy of low emissions development and instructed his government to work with the council. To assemble nationally available data and to complete a rigorous 2NC, the NCCC engaged the French Office of National Forests, International (ONFI) and Carbon 4 to assist in updating Gabon's greenhouse gas inventory and on the writing and analysis of the 2NC.

## 1.5 US-Gabon Cooperation on LEDS

USG engagement in the government's planning process is extremely timely as the GOG is just beginning its strategic planning process to develop and implement its low emissions development strategy. The U.S. delegation visit coincided with a visit by a French delegation of ONFI and Carbone 4, who were continuing their work on a number of climate change and LEDS-related activities, including updating Gabon's greenhouse gas inventory and on the development of its 2NC. French activities are funded through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) from funds from a debt for nature swap with Gabon.

During the scoping mission, the US team attended the second meeting of the NCCC, over which President Bongo-Ondimba presided (the first meeting was held on the occasion of Jonathan Pershing's visit in 2010). In attendance were most, if not all, foreign Ambassadors, all the Ministers and department heads of the Government of Gabon, and invited experts including civil society and the private sector. Dr. Massard spoke about the importance of integrating climate change into the government's sectoral plans. Ambassador Benjaminson and John Poulsen presented an overview of the EC-LEDS program, while the French Ambassador described the nature for debt swap. President Bongo-Ondimba expressed his country's desire to be an international model for sustainable development and low emissions growth and his strong support for the development of *Plan Climat* as part of *Gabon Emergent*, his presidential economic and environmental development strategy. He also directed his government to work with the NCCC as part of his Emerging Gabon policy.

During the visit, the GOG was explicit in its desire for close collaboration and cooperation among the three governments (Gabon, US, and France) on the development of the *Plan*

*Climat*, and substantial progress was made in establishing this partnership and identifying areas for cooperation. The Gabon, French, U.S. cooperative arrangement on LEDS presents a new approach to country-led development and could serve as an important model for effective multi-country cooperative practices.

The US team met with government counterparts via the Presidency, as well as key donors and private industry over the course of the week. The scoping team worked closely with the Embassy/Gabon team, including the Ambassador, who is deeply engaged in promoting the EC-LEDS agenda in country. The team held meetings with the Ministry of Forestry (MINEF), the National Parks Service (ANPN), the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MINERH), the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), the French delegation and other key public and private stakeholders (Appendix 1).

There is significant opportunity for the USG to engage and provide capacity building and technical expertise on the development of *Plan Climat*. If Gabon is successful in even part of its ambitious climate change agenda it will serve as a vital leader in Africa and for the world on the viability of low emissions development.

## **1.6 Areas of Cooperation and Future Work Plan**

The team made significant progress towards the establishment of a mutually agreed work plan with the Government of Gabon. Together, Gabon, France and the US outlined a work plan for LEDS activities that included activities to be jointly undertaken. The outline recognizes two distinct phases: pre-Durban activities and post-Durban activities. The activities listed in the outline will be developed into a Letter of Cooperation and later refined into a specific, detailed work plan. The process of consultation will include expert visits from the US to design targeted activities together with GOG counterparts and partners, including the GOF.

### *Potential Areas of Cooperation*

The actions the USG and the GOG intend to take are those they consider to have the most important impact on low emission development. Possible areas of cooperation may include:

#### a. National Council on Climate Change

The GOG has created an inter-ministerial working group, the NCCC, which brings together technical experts for each area involved. The USG has already provided and may continue to provide a Technical Assistant to assist the National Council on Climate Change in its activities on Climate Change and coordinate the technical exchanges between the USG and the GOG.

#### b. National Communication

As part of the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), non-Annex I Parties must submit reports on a national level regarding greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). To this end, the USG intends to work with the GOG to:

- Provide technical assistance and contribute to the achievement and voluntary review of the Third National Communication of Gabon;

#### c. National inventory system for greenhouse gas emissions

Planning low emission development is based on today's knowledge of past and current emissions. As part of this component, the USG intends to work with the GOG to help develop a system of national GHG inventory in order for the GOG to conduct rigorous and precise annual inventories. As part of this process, the USG may provide assistance in the development of specific emission factors.

#### d. Evaluation and analysis of economic issues

To achieve low emission development, it is necessary to have detailed knowledge of the consequences of various development projects that are to be carried out in Gabon, at least on an economic level. Thus, the USG and the GOG intend to work together to:

- Conduct carbon footprint analyses of the Gabonese public sector to estimate its energy efficiency potential and identify the best opportunities for energy efficiency demonstration projects (in terms of reducing the emissions rate);
- Reinforce the capacity of the National Council on Climate Change to carry out analyses of the carbon footprint of infrastructure and economic development projects;
- Reinforce the capacity of the National Council on Climate Change to develop a model and an inter-sectoral analysis designed to identify the paths to economic growth through reduced emissions – in comparison to current routes.

#### e. Measuring and monitoring forest carbon

Because of its vast forest area and its mostly intact tropical forests, Gabon is a potential carbon sink. The USG and the GOG intend to collaborate to develop a detailed work plan, which may include:

- Reviewing the GOG's current technical approach to estimate forest carbon and identify the areas in need of improvement;
- Comparing and monitoring methodologies as well as measurement and follow-up approaches for the quantities of forest carbon in Gabon.

#### f. Land use

One of the basic components of a strategy for low emission development is to establish a plan for land use. Possible areas of cooperation in this area could include:

- Evaluating and selecting criteria allowing decisions to be made regarding land use;
- Acquiring data, if available, or assisting in data collection, to assess the criteria for land use;
- Assisting in devising a National system for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV).

The USG and GOG intend to further define the areas of work outlined above through specific work plans for each project. The USG intends to facilitate its participation in this cooperation through the EC-LEDS program and the SilvaCarbon program, which will coordinate activities with the U.S. Embassy in Gabon. The National Council on Climate Change is the coordinating body of Gabon for the low emission development strategy. Through the NCCC, the GOG intends to collaborate and work with the USG to:

- Decide on a methodology to develop detailed work plans for each area of study;
- Identify the persons within the GOG and the USG whose responsibility it will be to complete the work plans and implement the tasks they contain.

*The areas of work outlined above will be defined in greater detail through project-specific work plans developed between the USG and the NCCC and appropriate government agencies and ministries.*

## Annex I – Scoping Mission Itinerary and Meeting Notes

### **Sunday, May 8**

Arrival

### **Monday, May 9**

Morning

*In briefing with Embassy*  
Ambassador Benjaminson  
Dolores Canavan  
Eric Chehoski

Mid-morning

*Agence Française de Développement*  
Aurelie Ahmim-Richard

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is currently assisting Gabon through two streams of financing. The first stream is a 500,000 € contract between the Office National des Forêts (ONF) and the National Climate Council to support the development of the *Plan Climat*. Phase 1 of this project focuses on revising Gabon's National Communication and evaluating its sectorial policies. As this phase is completed at the end of July 2011, Phase 2 will begin to support Gabon in the reduction of GHG emissions. Phase 2 will include work on the *Plan Climat*, a comprehensive plan to integrate consideration of climate change in all sectorial activities in the country. The specific activities to be completed during this period are still being defined. This project implemented by ONF and its partners shares many of the same goals as EC-LEDS; it is also the financing stream that will contribute to the Gabon-France-US cooperation that was outlined during the scoping mission.

AFD is also assisting Gabon through a 60 million € debt swap. This financing will support sustainable forest development until 2019. Although not all of the money has been allocated to projects, several have already been outlined, including: (1) 9 million € for the construction of a satellite reception station (AGEOS); (2) a feasibility study on CDM projects; (3) 1.5 million € for an industrialization project; (4) 1 million € for feasibility study of individual projects; (5) 10 million € for the improved management of national parks in the vicinity of Libreville; (6) 10-15 million € to establish a trust fund for national parks; and (7) a project to enhance the capacity to monitor and control logging.

Afternoon

*National Climate Council*  
UNFI, Carbone Quatre  
Etienne Massard, Presidential Advisor on Climate  
Nicolas Mensah Zekpa,  
Jean-Baptiste Routier, ONFI  
Maden Le Crom, ONFI  
Hubert Kieken, Carbone Quatre  
Marie-Veronique Gauduchon, Carbone Quatre  
Oubakar Mambimba Ndoungui, Climate Council  
Jean-Remy Oyaya, Climate Council

### **Tuesday, May 10**

Morning *Agence National des Parcs Nationaux*  
Lee White, Executive Secretary of ANPN  
Natacha Bengone, ANPN

Mid-morning *Plan Climat Secretariat*  
Etienne Massard

Afternoon *US Embassy*  
Ambassador Benjaminson  
Dolores Canavan  
Eric Chehoski

Preparation for 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the National Climate Council.

**Wednesday, May 11:**

Morning *2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the National Climate Council*  
President Bongo-Ondimba  
Heads of Gabon's Government and Ministries  
Diplomatic Corps

The National Climate Council meeting was held to launch the development of Gabon's low emissions development strategy, called *Plan Climat*. In attendance were most, if not all, foreign Ambassadors, all the Ministers and department heads of the Government of Gabon, and invited experts including civil society and the private sector. Dr. Massard spoke about the importance of integrating climate change into the government's sectoral plans. Ambassador Benjaminson and John Poulsen presented an overview of the EC-LEDS program, while the French Ambassador described the nature for debt swap. President Bongo-Ondimba expressed his country's desire to be an international model for sustainable development and low emissions growth and his strong support for the development of *Plan Climat* as part of *Gabon Emergent*, his presidential economic and environmental development strategy. He also directed his government to work with the National Climate Council as part of his Emerging Gabon policy.

Afternoon *National Climate Council*  
Etienne Massard  
Christophe Sannier  
ONFI, Carbon Quatre  
Jean-Baptiste Routier, ONFI  
Hubert Kieken, Carbone Quatre  
Marie-Veronique Gauduchon, Carbone Quatre

**Thursday, May 12:**

Morning *Bechtel Limited*  
Bruce Bitner  
Chris Hartsel  
Etienne Massard

## Lee White

Bruce Bitner described three main areas of Bechtel engagement in Gabon:

1. Prepare national infrastructure plan: Bechtel has worked on this for more than a year. The definition of infrastructure has evolved beyond standard areas (roads, rail) to include other projects to benefit citizens, consistent with the *Gabon Emergent* vision. A series of projects will fall out of the plan; these need to be developed in a sustainable and consistent way.
2. Establish a Gabonese implementing agency: A new planning and engineering team has been established (ANGT—Agence National de Grand Travail). A Bechtel employee is the acting director general of the ANGT.
3. Project execution support: A main focus is the soccer stadium for the Africa Cup.

Chris Hartsel worked with the current president of Gabon 25 years ago on guidelines for Libreville's development. He noted that they are not now charged to do a sustainable plan, but that they are considering aspects of sustainability. One element of their current planning is transportation, especially alternative ways of linking major cities in Gabon using various modes (rail, road, maritime, air, etc.).

On the subject of collaboration between the LEDS effort and Bechtel, Bruce identified three topics: specific projects, data sharing and standards (norms, international standards). He said Bechtel has some talented sustainability experts on staff, and that human capacity development is part of Bechtel's mandate, citing its appearance in *Gabon Emergent*. Etienne Massard further noted the priority for people to be trained, noting the small number of Gabonese (him) at this meeting.

The meeting concluded with Bechtel offering to entertain the LEDS team's specific requests for cooperation. This offer has not yet been followed up on pending identification of Gabon's and the LEDS team's interests for the interaction with Bechtel, especially in light of the developing collaboration with the French team.

Afternoon                      *Agence National des Parcs Nationaux*  
Lee White  
Natacha Bengone

There are 150 permanent plots in Gabon, but this is an opportunistic dataset, and the data are stored out of the country in the Afritrion database managed by Leeds University. There are plans to have full country coverage by LiDAR in the coming years. ANPN has a carbon unit of 7-8 people. To date, the Moore and Packard foundations funded the work to identify the existing plots and data.

Currently, cross-ministry collaboration is a major challenge to making progress on forest monitoring and carbon. The President will direct all Agencies to work together on a national land use plan. Gabon does not want to move forward on a REDD+ strategy until the broader *Plan Climat* is complete, as the forests are just one aspect of climate planning. REDD has killed COMIFAC and UN REDD in DRC has resulted in competition among Central African countries.

It is difficult to get data out of OSFAC. Japan gave ANPN \$7 million for equipment, but this is a one-time donation. FAO has put a \$30M proposal to CBFF for forest inventories.

ANPN and the Government of Gabon are very interested in support for a permanent inventory team

to complete regular updates. There are also needs for assistance in (1) analyses of existing development policies and their carbon impacts (French assistance program); (2) possible scenarios and the best approaches for a country like Gabon; (3) an MRV system with standardized tools; (4) forest monitoring with SPOT; (5) NOAA tool for remote sensing gasses as a way to implement "polluter pays"; and (6) sending Gabonese to US universities to build expertise in radar.

Afternoon                      *Société d'Electricité et d'Eau du Gabon* (Caitlin)  
Jean-Pierre Lasseni Duboze

The French company SEEG has a 20-year contract (begun 1997) to manage the production, transportation, and transmission of electricity and water for the majority of the Gabonese territory—the Ministry of Energy is responsible for rural areas. SEEG does not have a monopoly on electricity production in the country but recognizes the need for increased hydropower development in the country and for updated equipment. Currently the government pays a “social access” price for usage up to 15 cubic meters of water/month and 120 kWh/month—if an individual exceeds this quota for 3 consecutive months, they will be permanently cut off from this subsidy. This policy may be under review, given a recent IMF review. SEEG recognizes that there may be a tension between promoting energy efficiency and the economic growth message of Gabon Emergent. Targeting energy efficiency in the government may be a good first step to set the example of energy efficiency in Gabon.

### **Friday, May 13:**

Morning:                      *Ministry of Forest and Water* (Tim)  
Ministre Christian Magnagna  
Advisors to the Minister  
Ambassador Benjaminson  
Dolores Canavan  
Eric Chehoski  
Etienne Massard  
Lee White

The Minister affirmed, referencing the President’s Direction at the Second Meeting of the National Climate council the previous Wednesday, that as the Ministry responsible for the management of the greatest percentage of the national forest estate, he and his Ministry were committed to working with other relevant and implicated Ministries to assist in the development of a national climate plan as well as within the Ministry addressing the opportunities for mitigation, both sequestration and avoided deforestation, and planning management in view of a changing climate.

Beginning with a brief history of forest industry in Gabon and noting a growth in the sector over time even as other national revenue sources (oil) came on line dwarfing the sector as a percentage of GDP, the Minister then discussed the transformation of the sector as the November 2009 ban on export of raw logs came into effect. Impacts have included new relationships as firms have strived to be more horizontally or vertically integrated. Some firms have been unwilling or unable to adapt and have either closed shop or have been sold. There have been new entrants into the sector. Primary processing of timber has increased significantly.

The Minister discussed the importance of solid forest inventory data, noting the challenges of integrating the data across various scales and land uses. Data is generated by the Inventory services of the Ministry, by the raw and summarized data presented by forest concessions as part of their management plan submission and approval process, by inventory activities undertaken by institutions such as ForAfri and CIRAD, and national scale satellite imagery and analyses.

Morning                      *Direction Generale des Eaux et Forets (Tim)*  
Pierre Ngouavoura, DG Water and Forests  
Maden Le Crom

The enabling legislation is the Forestry Code of 2001 as revised. Support is provided by the World Bank and the African Development Bank. Gabon is working toward establishing by 2013 with the European Union a Voluntary Partnership Agreement under the terms of the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Agreement. The informal sector providing local construction and fuelwood/charcoal needs is inadequately understood and regulated. About 25% of the Forest Concessions are operating under approved Management Plans, another 50% have Plans in process and the residual have not initiated. In addition to timber data, the Management Plans include socio-economic and biodiversity analysis, note and protect fragile sites, and discuss species to be harvested, size limits and residual treatments. The Service validates the plans against International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) criteria. There is no national forest land zoning although, particularly in the coastal zone, on a case-by-case basis land use conflicts have been resolved.

Afternoon                    *Field Trip to Nkok (Olam industrial site/AGEOS satellite station)*  
Etienne Massard  
Frederic Huynh  
Christophe Sannier

We toured the Nkok Special Economic Zone, which is under construction by Olam International. The site will house several industries, including sawmills for wood processing, an airport, a tax agency, and the AGEOS satellite reception station. To attract companies to the Special Economic Zone, industries that implant there will benefit from tax breaks and other benefits.

**Saturday, May 14:**

Morning                      *Plan Climat*  
Etienne Massard  
Lee White  
Jean-Baptiste Routier  
Hubert Kieken  
Maden Le Crom

Discussed process of cooperation between Gabon, France and the US, and potential work activities.

Afternoon                    *Field Trip to Mondah Forest*  
Lee White  
Jean-Baptiste Routier

Hubert Kieken  
Maden Le Crom

Took a hike in Mondah forest about 30 km from Libreville. This is the site of some forest plots and is a potential site for a new protected area.

**Sunday, May 15:**

Evening *US Ambassador's Reception*

**Monday, May 16:**

Morning *Plan Climat*  
Etienne Massard  
Nicolas Mensah Zekpa  
Olivier Rech

Morning *Ministere de l'Energie*  
General Director, Ministry of Energy  
Delores Canavan  
Nicolas Mensah Zekpa  
Okie Etoumbi, Chargé d'Etudes, Ministère de l'Energie

The DG emphasized that the problem of energy capacity came at the same time as the creation of the 11 National Parks. He agrees that hydropower is necessary for future capacity development, as so far the Ministry has found itself unable to apply the development strategy (electricity without pollution) that was validated by the President. The country has potential for 5,000 megawatts of hydropower, but currently the energy mix is 50% hydro 50% non-hydro, and the power provided is less than 400 megawatts. The Ministry's objective is to develop flow through dams, rather than reservoirs and in 2008 they received authorization from the state to develop 2 large hydropower sites. The MoE may work with the Trans-African project on building capacity in these areas. The MoE's focus right now is not energy efficiency—it is energy generation. The Gabonese population does not understand energy efficiency. He agrees that the business climate of Gabon is not good, and that enforcing education scholarship contracts is key to the development of Gabon. Generally he is very unfavorable to work that Olam, AECOM, and Bechtel are doing, due to lack of good planning and information exchange.



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