

**Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment**

**CARPE II**

**Technical Report**

**Presented to**

**U.S. Agency for International Development**

**For the period**

**July 1, 2001-December 31, 2001**

**Agreement Award Number AOT-A-00-00-00237-00**

**Leader Award Number Lag-A-00-99-00048-00**

**Submitted by**

**Tony Mokombo**

**Senior Program Officer**

**WWF- West and Central Africa, and Madagascar**

**Endangered Spaces Program**

**July 31, 2002**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During this reporting period, major changes have taken place at the field level. The management of the WWF-Central African Regional Program office (CARPO), based in Gabon was transferred to WWF-International on July 1, 02, and this regional office headquarters has moved to Yaoundé Cameroon.

Despite all these changes, the total USAID/CARPE grant amounting \$1,101,420.06 has enable WWF-US to focus on key Biodiversity conservation activities within its three main projects in the subregion:

1. The Dzanga-Sangha Integrated Conservation and Development Project, in Central African Republic (CAR): CARPE II funds has allowed the project:
  - a) target all important anti-poaching activities, increase the guard numbers (13 new guards and 3 BaAka trackers), resulting in 205 patrols for a total of 1720 days-- from forest through Trinational river patrols-- and the amount of elephant meat seized during reporting period declined from 50% to 15%.
  - b) expand and improved its monitoring of commercial exploitation (logging and safari hunting) with an emphasis on their impact on wildlife populations;
  - c) mentor two senior staff members, and the reinforcement of the training capacity of conservation personnel.
2. The Gamba Protected Areas Complex, in the Republic of Gabon, which has a new Technical Advisor who started job in mid-June 2002, Mr. Bas HUIJBREGTS. The project has completed the survey on oils industries direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity in the project zone, and
3. The Minkebe Project in Gabon as well, where according to the project priority CARPE II fund is going to be used to conduct a socio-economic study rather than the first activity: The participatory mapping exercise with the Innovative Resource Management Organization.

This report will be structured according to the four CARPE themes:

1. Biodiversity Conservation
2. Community Natural Resource Management
3. Project Coordination
4. Studies

We will close this report on WWF contribution to CARPE II activities

## **THEME 1: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**

### **1. DZANGA-SANGHA AND GAMBA BUSHMEAT CONTROL**

#### **Expected Result:**

“Comparative evaluation of the conservation payoffs and economic cost of curbing bushmeat hunting within logging concessions and within protected areas.”

#### **1.1. DZANGA-SANGHA BUSHMEAT CONTROL**

The Dzanga-Sangha bushmeat control is going to be called from now and on the Dzanga-Sangha Commercial Exploitation Control. The main goal be to work with the commercial sector – logging and safari hunting companies - operating in Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve to establish controls and permanent monitoring of timber exploitation, associated bushmeat hunting and trade, and sports hunting, in order to assure their long-term sustainability.

#### **Objective:**

Work closely with the “Societe de Bois de Bayanga” to establish and monitor controls on bushmeat hunting, trade and transport in the logging concession.

Establish and implement, in partnership with the regional representative of the Water and Forests Ministry (*Division Forestière de Nola*), a system of timber exploitation control and monitoring focusing on SBB and possibly a second logging company, SESAM.

Participate and collaborate in all decisions and monitoring efforts related to the safari hunting companies operating within the boundaries of the Special Reserve.

#### **Activities planned:**

Develop and implement a system to monitor all concession-related hunting and resulting bushmeat trade and transport

Establish a working relationship with *PARPAF* (Support Project to the Development of Forestry Management Plans) in the context of activities with SBB (and possibly SESAM)

Monitor timber exploitation by SBB according to the dictates enumerated in their *Cahier de Charge*

Collaborate with safari hunting companies on monitoring of key species (bongo) as well as on anti-poaching with the resulting information used to determine annual hunting quotas

## **Progress and lessons learned:**

During the last 6 months the Head of Commercial Exploitation (REC – Responsable d'exploitation commerciale) (a post funded through CARPE II), has worked actively with both the safari hunting and logging sectors. Activities accomplished by the REC during the last semester are enumerated below.

### a) SESAM (Société d'exploitation en Sangha-Mbaere) Logging Company

*January 2002:* Control of sectors 167 and 163 of SESAM's logging concession in collaboration with Ministry representatives. The control focused on verifying if the "cahier de charge" was being implemented; actual physical control of logging exploitation; and an analysis of the productivity of logging and the sawmill.

Problems noted included:

- Absence of company insignia on certain logs
- Insufficient delimitation of different forestry units
- Delayed evacuation of logs (12,000m<sup>3</sup>) from parks
- Roads and paths left open after completing logging

*March 2002:* Reconnaissance of the portion of SESAM's concession located in the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve in collaboration with the National Director of the DSP and a wildlife guard. Information gained during this mission included:

- The location of illegal hunting camps
- The location of illegal diamond camps
- Roads left open by SESAM that should be closed off

### b) SBB (Société des Bois de Bayanga) Logging Company

*January 2002:* Control of sector 166 (southern portion of Reserve near Salcapa) in collaboration with Ministry representatives. As with SESAM the control focused on verifying if the "cahier de charge" was being applied; actual physical control of exploitation; and an analysis of the productivity of logging and the sawmill.

Problems noted included:

- Absence of company insignia on certain logs
- Insufficient delimitation of forestry units/sectors
- Poor choice of "seed/mother" trees
- "Seed" trees not marked in the forest
- No map available with the location and an inventory of "seed" trees
- Roads and paths left open after completing logging
- Unnecessary destruction of forest when removing logs from forest (insufficient secondary paths, destructive use of skidder, insufficient equipment for evacuating logs)

*March 2002:* Second control of the southern portion of Reserve near Salcapa by REC and project staff. The problems noted were similar to the first control:

- Absence of company insignia on certain logs
- “Seed” trees are marked, difficult to locate and when located often malformed or of a species not exploited by SBB
- Forestry units/sectors are poorly marked
- Unnecessary destruction of forest when removing logs

*May 2002:* In collaboration with anti-poaching staff, the REC conducted a mission in the forest directly north of the Dzanga sector of the National Park to confirm reports of hunting by SBB employees as well as to insure that exploitation was not occurring within the 2-kilometer pre-park buffer zone. No evidence of hunting was found and all exploitation was outside the pre-park. However, prospecting transects had crossed into the pre-park area where the pre-park had not yet been marked by project personnel.

c) **Aouk-Sangha Safari (Safari Hunting) Company**

*March 2002:* Camp visited by REC. Camp watchmen had cleared illegally around the camp for cultivation purposes.

*April-June 2002:* Numerous formal and informal meetings with the Director of Aouk-Sangha with discussions focusing on:

- Monitoring of hunting results. Aouk-Sangha fills out data collection sheets as well as providing the low mandibles of bongo for age classification use (tooth erosion) for every client
- The frequency and impact of illegal hunting within the boundaries of the Aouk-Sangha concession.
- The possible excision of a portion of the Aouk-Sangha concession – the 2-kilometer pre-park area. The Director of the company is in opposition as several key clearings are located in this area. The PDS will submit their recommendations to the Ministry for a final decision.
- The right to organize “daily hunts” outside of Aouk-Sangha’s concession in the southern portion of the Reserve. Permission was granted and it is expected that Aouk-Sangha will apply for the same rights during the next hunting season and/or ask that the sector be permanently attributed as an extension of their existing concession.

In general working relations with Aouk-Sangha were good aside from disagreement in regards to the pre-park zone.

d) **National Safari (Safari Hunting) Company**

*March 2002:* Camp, located in the village of Menkongo, visited by REC.

Although the REC and National Director tried to contact the Director of National Safari on numerous occasions, all attempts failed aside from two unplanned, brief meetings. At each of these meetings, the Director of National Safari promised, albeit falsely, to visit project headquarters for a formal meeting.

#### Safari (Safari Hunting) Company

Safari did not hunt in their concession during the 2002-hunting season.

#### **Activities planned for the next semester:**

- Implement a program of formal administrative and technical meetings with SBB (as agreed upon during a meeting with SBB in early July 2002)
- Formalize a schedule of quarterly controls of SBB in collaboration with the regional representative of the Ministry of Forests
- Continue to follow and contribute to any developments vis-a-vis the Cellule de Berberati (responsible for the development of forestry management plans) and SBB
- Prepare a technical document for the next quota determination meeting (August or September 2002), outlining DSP's recommendation on quotas and concession limits. The REC will also need to address National Safari's refusal to contact and collaborate with the Project, and the Wildlife Department's decision to increase National Safari's bongo quota in mid-season without first consulting the Administration of the DSP. Finally, there are certain discrepancies concerning the surface area of the different concessions within or overlapping the Reserve boundaries.
- Organize a visit to the Ngotto/ECOFAC (European Union)s site where a conservation project is successfully collaborating with a logging company, IFB
- Explore the possibility of an exchange visit to Kabo and Pokola, Congo where a Trinationnal partner is successfully collaborating with a timber company on the control of wildlife exploitation within their concession.
- Organize a visit to the European-run community-based wildlife management project in the north of CAR, where local communities collaborate directly with safari hunting companies

#### **Activity 1.1.2: SUPPORT TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT OF THE DZANGA-SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS**

**Goal:**

Provide support for on going management costs for Dzanga-Sangha law enforcement unit.

**Result:**

A reduction in poaching and other illegal activity related to natural resource exploitation, particularly of wildlife

**Activities Planned:**

Develop and implement an anti-poaching strategy that includes:

- Ensuring maximum coverage of the protected areas
- Establishing permanent posts and patrols to control illegal imports and exports
- Promoting collaboration with the private sector – SBB, safari camps to counter poaching and illicit trafficking
- Collaborating with legal hunters to counter local and outside threats
- Applying stringent dissuasive penalties for poaching related offenses

**Progress and lessons learned:**

CARPE II financed most anti-poaching related activities during the last six months. Anti-poaching activities continue to focus on sectors deemed important for tourism or ecological reasons – Dzanga saline (elephants) and Bai Hokou (site of gorilla tracking program) – or known sites of intensive poaching (close to the poaching village of Babongo). Preliminary analysis of recent ecological monitoring data shows that elephant populations may have increased where wildlife guard presence has been permanent and intensive (Dzanga saline).

The numbers and results of anti-poaching patrols are outlined in the following tables.

**Numbers of different types of anti-poaching activities: 2002**

Type of activity	Last semester of 2001 # of controls	1st Semester of 2002	Total # of days 2002
• Forest patrol	102	115	582
• River patrol – national	10	3	11
• Mobile patrols	12	11	42
• “Ambushes”	11	15	84
• Punctual patrols – river & land (short-term or house searches)	23	15	34
• Barrier (Yobé)	26	26	182

• River Patrol – Trinational	6	6	31
• Binational forest patrol	0	1	10
• Ecol. monitoring - assistance	23	21	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1062 patrol days</b>

**Impact of anti-poaching activities on a quarterly basis from January 2001 through June 2002**

Quarter	# of guards / trackers	# of patrols	# patrol days	Contraband confiscated					
				Wire snares	Bushmeat (kg)	Arms	Ammunition	Ivory	Other
Jan – March 2001	26	59		1187	331 (199 kg of elephant)	5	62	2	4 shovels (diamond mining)
April – June 2001	42	75	373	1614 + 1 roll	721 (493 kg of elephant)	7	75	2	12 shovels (diamond mining)
July-Sept. 2001	44	96	475	5586 + 12 rolls	441 (66 kg of elephant)	11	191	8	2 shovels
Oct-Dec 2001	44	114	584	3544 + 11 rolls	275 (46 kg of elephant)	4	122	3	3 shovels
Jan-Mar 2002	43	104	530	1239 + 31.5 rolls	611 603 kg elephant)	5	332	6	1 dugout
Apr-June 2002	41	109	532	1329 + 3 rolls	183 (10 kg elephant, 65 kg gorilla)	9	109	0	-

Elephant meat continues to represent an important proportion of confiscated bushmeat. The existence of elephant hunting – whether for meat or ivory – is also reinforced by the periodic discovery of new carcasses in the forests (a system of monitoring is in place where GPS points of all carcasses are recorded), the confiscation of elephant tusks as well as weapons capable of killing large game (8 of 14 arms seized during the last six months).

Human pressure – from the interior as well as the exterior – of the Reserve continues to threaten the wildlife populations of the Reserve. More efficient anti-poaching is but one means of reducing poaching. Parallel activities should concentrate on education, alternative protein sources, and insuring that the Central African legal system prosecutes wildlife offenders according to existing legal text.

Additional activities which reinforced anti-poaching efforts during the last six-months included:

- Continued work on the delimitation of the 2 kilometer pre-park zone with 20 plus kilometers cut and large trees marked with paint
- Continued support to and collaboration with two hunters groups: 1) legal holders of firearms; and 2) a group composed of hunters (legal and/or illegal – their status is not asked) representing Reserve-based villages.

### **Activities planned for the next semester**

- The completion of the field marking of the pre-park buffer zone of both sectors of the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park.
- Testing the possibility of the creation of a permanent secondary post close to the northern boundary (Libwe) of the Dzanga sector of the National Park.
- Bi-national patrols on the Cameroon-CAR international boundary and possibly the Congo-CAR boundary where illegal diamond mining is problematic.
- Continued anti-poaching missions nationally, bi-nationally and tri-nationally.
- The completion of a Strategic Plan (*Plan Directeur*) to guide future conservation activities with a particularly emphasis on anti-poaching

### **Activity 1.1.3: SUPPORT TO KONGANA REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER**

#### **Goal:**

Provide curriculum support to the Kongana Regional Training Center in Dzanga-Sangha

#### **Results:**

Capacity-building for the internal team of PDS trainers

Improved performance of conservation personnel

#### **Activities:**

Identify and appoint a francophone trainer of trainers for improvement in the existing training curricula including the following subjects:

- Para-military training
- Anti-poaching strategies
- Forest ecology
- Community relations/conflict resolution
- Penal codes
- Topography (map, compass, GPS)
- Personal hygiene/first aid

Assure the periodic re-training of existing wildlife guards

Promotion of Kongana as a regional training center

### **Progress and lessons learned:**

The identification of a qualified individual capable of running a “trainer-of-trainers” in French continues to be the biggest stumbling block to the successful commencement of this activity. However during a recent internal evaluation of the project, the evaluators highlighted the need to insure the re-training of wildlife guards as soon as possible. In the next six-months, every effort will be made to identify a trainer and organize a retraining of existing wildlife guards.

The time the Kongana training center was used was in February/March 2001 for the training of 13 new wildlife guards and three BaAka trackers. As a result of past evaluations of training sessions, which trainees perceived as being too theoretical, an effort was made to develop a more practical curriculum tailored to the needs of the DSP’s anti-poaching staff. In the past, external trainers had been used but during the February/March training project personnel developed and taught the curriculum. This met with modest success; however following a subsequent evaluation it was apparent that new and existing guards still needed further training in fundamental subjects and that project trainers required training support as well.

### **Activities planned for next semester:**

- Identify a trainer.
- Organize and implement the training of trainers, followed by an in-house retraining of wildlife guards.

## **1. 2. GAMBA BUSHMEAT CONTROL**

**Objective:**

Compile lessons learned on controlling bushmeat and environmental degradation with Oil Company in Gamba Complex.

**Progress:**

A survey on oil industries direct and indirect impacts has been completed and the report on " Compatibility of Oil Exploitation with Biodiversity Conservation in Central Africa: the case of the Gamba Complex / Gabon" is available upon request.

**1.2.1 GAMBA ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

**Result:**

Progressive development of a cadre of future forest resource management and biodiversity conservation leaders.

**Objective:**

Provide support to local NGO in the Gamba Complex to carry out Environmental Awareness Programs.

**Progress:**

The training, environmental education and awareness raising aspects of the project have lead to good results within the Gamba local population. This year the project has gained credibility in his actions and the creation of strong events such as "Environmental Celebration event". This has lead the project to be seen and known as a landscape regulation institution rather than a repression organization.

The awareness raising about anti-poaching activities within the Gamba Complex through collaboration between WWF, the Ministry of Water and Forest and the local NGO has tremendously evolved and therefore needs a lot of efforts in order to implement the developed strategies. A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Local Radio Station (Radio Mandji) to produce shows and carry out interviews on the protection of the wildlife, the importance of preserving the Gamba heritage. This communication system, that has been operational since a year ago, has allowed a great awareness raising within and around the Complex, and getting across difficult ideas, especially environmental issues.

Recommendations are made within the Management Plan for a better coordination and direction of the brigades, which remains the only solution for a better management and credible awareness raising. The lack of legislation and the non-application of sanction hinders a lot WWF efforts in the project area.

### **1.3. CONGO BASIN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Result:**

Progressive development of a cadre of future forest resource management and biodiversity conservation leaders.

#### **Objective:**

Provide on site, on the job mentoring for 5 senior level conservation counterparts (2 in Dzanga-Sangha, 2 in Minkebe and 1 in Gamba) in protected area management and biodiversity conservation.

#### **Progress:**

##### **a) Dzanga-Sangha progress**

#### **Activities Planned:**

Identify and provide capacity building support to five senior level conservation counterparts (**2-3** from Dzanga-Sangha...) in the areas of:

- Leadership and Management
- Strategy and Planning
- Campaigning and Advocacy, and
- Computers and Communication

Capacity building in the case of Dzanga-Sangha will take place in the context of diverse activities including:

- Daily interaction among conservation leaders and technical advisors
- Exchange visits between sub-regional conservation projects
- Participation in short-term training courses, conservation-related workshops and seminars

#### **Progress and lessons learned:**

Mentoring continues to be an on-going day-to-day activity provided at different levels within the hierarchy of the DSP. CARPE II money supported a Technical Advisor (TA) to the Conservation Department who worked daily with the Warden and his Assistant responsible for anti-poaching (Responsable de la lutte anti-braconnage - RLAB) on activities including: the development of training curriculum; anti-poaching deployment strategies nationally and trinationally; logistics; road maintenance; and support of an informant network. The last TA departed in May 2002 and WWF is presently recruiting a replacement.

WWF's Principal Technical Advisor (PTA), as a member of the tripartite Direction (National Director and two PTAs – WWF and GTZ) provides regular technical backstopping to the National Director as well as other senior staff on issues as diverse as: ecological monitoring, mapping and data collection through the use of GPS units and GIS systems; relations with economic operators (logging and safari hunting); the development of tourist activities with a particular emphasis on gorilla tourism; strategic planning; finance and administration; promoting and monitoring Trinational collaboration; etc. GTZ's PTA provides additional technical and administrative support to the National Director and other key personnel.

The guiding principle behind the work of the TA and PTA is to, with time, transfer more and more responsibility to their host-country counterparts as well as to assure the protection and maintenance of the ecosystems and biodiversity of the DS protected areas.

Specific accomplishments during the last 6 months, which relate to Leadership Development were limited by include:

- The Warden's participation in the second meeting of the Central African World Heritage Fund Initiative (CAWHFI) in Paris, France in February 2002. CAWHFI is a collaborative effort between UNESCO, FAO, and four international NGOs (CI, JGI, WCS and WWF) to promote World Heritage sites in the central Africa region by reinforcing the management of transboundary protected areas, with a particular focus on illegal hunting and bushmeat commerce as well as application of legal texts.
- The participation of the Warden in a MIKE (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) training meeting in Cameroon in early May. The results of this meeting are unknown as the Warden has yet to produce a report.

The continued absence of the National Director in Bangui and elsewhere has prevented efforts to develop his leadership capacities. Equally problematic, the National Director and Warden both seem to be less and less interested in the day-to-day activities of the project resulting. Until their performance and interest levels improve, leadership funds will be used to develop the capacity of more motivated staff members including the Conservation Department's second-in-command (RLAB) who is responsible for all anti-poaching activities.

#### **Activities Planned for next semester:**

- Identify a GIS training program (WWF-Cameroon, ArcView) for the Conservation Department's second-in-command and possibly a second staff member with elementary GIS skills.
- Organize an exchange visit to one or more national or sub-regional conservation projects including: the European-financed project at Ngotto, CAR which has just started using an advance version of Cybertracker technology (hand-held computer unit with GPS facilitating data collection in the field and analysis in the laboratory); and the WCS-led conservation project in Kobo, Congo with a reportedly strong anti-poaching program as

well as a unique collaborative relationship with a logging company in regards to bushmeat use and control.

### **b) Gamba Protected Area Complex progress**

Due to language barrier and the level of most of the field staff in Gamba, a request has been submitted to USAID to reinvest the funds allocated for this activity in biodiversity conservation, which is pending for response. The Technical advisor strongly supports the idea of training the future national project director in conservation leadership. This will empower him to set a vision for the program. Since the departure of the former warden to Canada for studies in biology conservation, the Government of Gabon has not yet assigned someone to replace him.

### **c) Minkebe Reserve Leadership Current State**

As stated in the Leadership Conservation Development project under CARPE II, this project activities' objective is to provide scholarships to 2 Minkebe staff to attend the WWF Conservation Leadership College. In order to participate in the WWF College staff need to be of African nationality, have good English language skills and access to the World Wide Web. Unfortunately, none of the Minkebe staff meet these requirements, especially the *English language skills are the main constraints*. In light of all this and the international travel restriction from the USAID, the project managers have proposed to use the funds to support its conservation strategies under the Minkebe-Dja transborder initiative, whose objectives will be:

1. To strengthen the Gabonese part of the Minkebe Ddi corridor;
2. To arrange co-management agreements with gold-mining communities, in particular the gold-miners of the Minkebe camp (which has links with South-Ddi) but also with goldminers in the Mebaga area (Southwest Minkebe).

Recently, the project has strengthened its infrastructure in the Northeast of Minkebe (Gabonese part of the Minkebe – Dja corridor) with the construction of a base camp on the mouth of the Nouna river (see map in annex). This base camp will serve operations on the Sing, Nouna and Upper-Ivindo rivers. The construction of the camp has been funded for a major part by a grant of \$66,000 from the 'Projet Forêt et Environnement' (World Bank / Government of Gabon).

**The intervention zone.** The Northeast of Minkebe is a remote zone, which is used by fishermen, gold-miners and ivory hunters. The main conservation problem in the zone is the on-going elephant hunting. Most of the elephant hunting is cross-border in nature (BaAka pygmies from Cameroon and Congo crossing into Gabon) though another part, more easy to control, is Gabonese in origin with ivory transiting to Makokou. The construction of a base camp will finish by the end of July 2002. Also the project intends to increase its operations on the Ivindo, Nouna and Sing rivers, so as to diminish ivory hunting in the area and build the foundations of a set of rules regarding access to the Nouna and Sing (and Upper-Ivindo) rivers.

Under Carpe II funding a mission went to the Upper-Ivindo in June 2002 and observed an increase in ivory poaching (compared to the December 2000 missions) as well as an influx of BaAka pygmies from Congo-Brazzaville, apparently linked to some violence in the forests of the Souanké District. The team also observed renewed use of hunting trails coming in from Cameroon, and mainly used for elephant poaching.

The following activities will take place during FY03, in complementarity with the already programmed activities under “Minkebe-Dja”:

**a) Reconnaissance of the Sing river;**

The Sing is a tributary of the Ivindo River and not well known by the project. A team will travel by pirogue up to the headwaters of the Sing to assess current use of the river (by fishermen, gold-miners and ivory hunters if the case). The information will help to understand human use of the Sing and help to put in place a conservation strategy (in first instance with the objective to stop elephant hunting on the Sing).

**b) Identification of and awareness raising among the users of the Sing, Nouna, and Upper-Ivindo rivers;**

Until now, the project has no clear idea of who (= villages of origin) uses the Sing, Nouna and Upper-Ivindo for fishing so as to define the key groups to which we have to communicate our strategy and with whom we have to build ‘codes of conduct’ on these rivers. Awareness will be raised regarding the project’s actions in this remote corner which focus on reducing elephant hunting.

**c) Surveillance on Sing, Nouna and Upper-Ivindo rivers (targeting ivory poaching);**

Pirogues leaving and entering the Upper-Ivindo, surveillance teams for ivory, rifles and ammunition will control Sing and Nouna. These teams will use the Nouna base camp as a logistic base. If we can have a high enough surveillance pressure we expect ivory hunting diminishing rapidly along these rivers (in particular Nouna and Sing as they are the only way of access to the forest they drain). At least one mobile mission a month should be programmed, to have a dissuasive presence.

**d) Renewed reconnaissance of gold-mining camps on Sing-Nouna ridge;**

Small gold-camps exist on the ridge between the Nouna and Sing. These camps will once again be visited to assess their activities (in particular potential links with ivory poaching).

**e) Joint mission in South Cameroon with MINEF Cameroon, WWF-Cameroon and ECOFAC Cameroon to raise awareness for transborder conservation in the Minkebe-Dja corridor**

Cross-border elephant hunting is a very serious problem in North Minkebe. Baka based in Cameroon and working for Cameroonesse patrons hunt probably hundreds of elephants a year in the extreme north of Minkebe. A mission composed of MINEF Gabon, MINEF Cameroon, WWF-Minkebe and WWF-Southeast Cameroon as well as ECOFAC – Cameroon will once again visit the area Oveng-Djoum-Mintom-Lele. The purpose of the visit is to discuss with authorities and key villages the importance of this region in the

framework of the emerging Minkebe-Dja-Odzala transborder conservation complex and the Yaoundé Summit, and to ask assistance to combat the rampant elephant poaching in the Minkebe-Dja corridor. Also during this mission, the Cameroonian logging concessions just north of Minkebe will be visited to appraise the use of logging roads for transport of bushmeat, hunters, ivory and arms. Minkebe's successful approach of strict control in logging concessions will be promoted ('Bordamur' Model).

*Please note that all these missions also include an awareness-raising component.*

**Indicative calendar (FY03)**

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reconnaissance Sing												
Identification users Sing, Nouna, Upper-Ivindo												
Surveillance on Upper-Ivindo River System												
Reconnaissance gold-camps Sing-Nouna ridge forest												
Joint Mission in South-Dja (Cameroon)												

Note that operations in this remote part are expensive because all travel is by motorized dugout (high fuel costs).

**Expected conservation results:**

- Reduction of elephant poaching in the Upper-Ivindo river system (Sing, Nouna and Upper-Ivindo river);
- Identification of the users (in particular Bakwele fishermen and Baka pygmies) of the Sing, Nouna and Upper-Ivindo rivers (fishermen and goldminers);
- Update on gold-mining activity on the Sing-Nouna ridge;
- Increased awareness and motivation for transborder conservation in South Cameroon and Gabon;

**Implementation:**

The activities will be implemented through the Makokou base of the WWF-Minkebe Project. This base has already extensive experience in the Upper-Ivindo area (including recent experience through two missions in the framework of CARPE 'Minkebe-Dja'). A Commander of Water and Forest Ministry, Sosthène Ndong Obiang, who is assisted by two national water and forest technicians (Patrick Koumbi and Moro Symphorien) as well as 3 field agents (ecoguards and one outboard man), manages the base. The national WWF project anthropologist, Gustave Mabaza, who specializes in gold-mining issues, will assist with the -



## **THEME II: COMMUNITY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **I. MINKEBE-DJA COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY MAPPING:**

#### **Expected Results:**

Assessment of the long-term impact of participatory mapping exercise as a tool for enhancing community capacity to negotiate greater control over forest resources, and for mobilizing community interest in resource conservation.

#### **Main Objective:**

Test Community Participatory mapping in two villages in Cameroon north of Minkebe Reserve in the Minkebe-Dja corridor.

This main objective is divided into two sub-objectives:

#### ***Objective 1.***

Work toward collaborative river-management using participatory mapping exercise with Mvadhi-Mayibouth communities in the Upper-Invindo.

This objective is linked to the management of Minkebe reserve and its periphery and increased understanding of river-use in the transborder area in particular Djoua and Katangoua rivers.

#### ***Objective 2.***

In collaboration with the MINEF Cameroon, WWF-Cameroon Program Office, ECOFAC-Dja, the Minkebe project will carry out socio-economic surveys in Mintm-Lele-Mbala-Ngoila-Zoulabot II. This will contribute to fulfill the data gaps in order to develop a full GEF proposal for transborder conservation in Minkebe-Dja-Odzala interzone.

#### **Progress:**

*Presently the Minkebe-Dja corridor is receiving a lot of attention:*

- WWF-Cameroon and Conservation International are investigating the feasibility of a conservation concession in the 8000 km<sup>2</sup> of forest in the Minkebe-Dja corridor. Field reconnaissance is being organized by these organizations in the Cameroones part of the corridor.
- CAWHFI : Minkebe-Dja is one of the focal areas of the CAWHFI initiative. Funding should arrive by the 2003 to enhance conservation of the corridor and

- Minkebe-Dja-Odzala transborder initiative (GEF/UNDP, executed by WWF in partnership with ECOFAC) is rapidly developing. By the end of the year a full project should be ready, to be financed by GEF and other donors and which aims to realize a coherent complex of conservation areas, linking in a spatial and organizational manner the existing protected areas of Dja, Nki, Minkebe and Odzala.

During the second semester of 2001, the Minkebe Project had contacts with *Michael Brown (IRM)*, who visited the Minkebe Project site, to investigate timeliness and feasibility of community participatory mapping north of the Minkebe Reserve in the Minkebe-Dja Corridor. For the moment, we have not planned in practice this mapping exercise at the village level, given that presently attention is on building a sound macro-framework for conservation, not on the village level but at the regional landscape level over tens of thousands of km<sup>2</sup>.

*More concentration on Northeast Minkebe as the Gabonese part of the Minkebe – Dja corridor*

Given the field activity being realized in the Cameroon part of the Minkebe-Dja corridor (by CI, WWF-CPO, ECOFAC) we suggest that with CARPE II funding we increase understanding of the socio-economic dynamics of Northeast Minkebe. This part of Gabon is essentially influenced by Cameroon, which uses the area for bushmeat hunting, ivory hunting and some goldmining. The Minkebe Project has executed reconnaissance missions in this remote area in 1998 and 1999, which indicated a high level of elephant hunting (mostly by Baka pygmy based in Cameroon), large foot trails leading from Cameroon (Yen, Ayina river) to the Minkebe gold-mining camp) and small scale goldmining activity serving as a base for ivory hunters. Subsequently some anti-poaching work was realized in 2000 and 2001 (mostly related to the small gold-camps ‘Bemvé’ which served as a cover-up for ivory smugglers).

It is the aim of the project, with CARPE II funding, to increase its understanding of the dynamics in the extreme northeast of Minkebe Forest and so to contribute to the current negotiations and reflections regarding the Minkebe-Dja transborder conservation process and to provide information and knowledge complementary to data-collection and field activity in Cameroon. These efforts, under de Minkebe-Dja corridor umbrella, should lead to successful and sustainable conservation of the Minkebe Dja transborder forest.

**Activities to be carried out in the Minkebe-Dja context**

**1. Human use of the forest between Minkebe gold camp and Cameroon (in period April – June 2002)**

There exists a foot-trail, well maintained, which links villages in South Cameroon (Yen, Opwong, on the Oveng – Djoum road) to the Minkebe gold-mining camp. This trail allows people from Cameroon to visit the Minkebe goldmining camp and sell produce (like clothes) and labour as well as bring out ivory and gold. Minkebe’s reconnaissance team discovered the trail in 1998 but was never followed by our teams. The objective of the reconnaissance linked to this trail is to understand current use of this trail(s) as well as other large trails coming from Cameroon and leading into Minkebe Forest. It will allow for a better understanding of the

actors operating in this forest, mapping of these trails and devise anti-poaching strategies. A first mission is planned in April or May. The information will be used for the establishment of a conservation strategy for Northeast Minkebe and South Cameroon. Finally, the information and learning linked to this mission will help the project to update its knowledge and strategies regarding Baka pygmy use of Northern Minkebe.

## **2. Socio-economic reconnaissance of the use of extreme Northeast Minkebe by hunters and gold-miners.**

In the extreme northeast of Minkebe ( the forest close to Lélé and Alati villages in Cameroon) small gold-camps existed which were mainly used as a cover-up for ivory smuggling. As such these camps were evacuated by the Minkebe Project in January 2001. Now it is time to revisit the area, to assess current use of the area and update the conservation strategy, in collaboration with Cameroon (and Congo-Brazzaville). Minkebe Project financed a MIKE mission in this part which indicated around 1,4 elephants / km<sup>2</sup> in the area. The mission will investigate current actors and poaching activity in the area as well as trading links. The information will be provided also to our Cameroon colleagues working on the other side of the border. The mission will provide the project also more information on Baka pygmy presence and use of forest in this zone. Finally, note that the zone has a large bai 'ebata' which is widely used by elephants and which was, before the arrival of the Minkebe Project, visited by white sportshunters crossing illegally into Gabon from Cameroon.

## **3. Elephant abundance assessment and poaching activity in North Minkebe**

We propose a mission in the zone to assess elephant abundance in North-Minkebe, in the area along the Ayina river. This data can then serve as baseline data along which to measure elephant conservation success in the Minkebe Dja corridor. The mission can be conducted by Minkebe's MIKE person, who is currently following training in Garoua wildlife school on a Russel Train Grant, and who will be available for fieldwork during 6 weeks in June-July.

## **II. GAMBA SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **Result:**

Evaluation of the costs, opportunities and challenges to using community resource management contracts as a tool for incorporating communities in forest resource management.

### **Objective:**

Assess lessons learned at the Gamba Protected Area Complex to identify community options for intervention points in sustainable natural resource management.

**Progress:**

The management plan for the Gamba Complex has been completed and is actually in circulation within the Ministry of Water and Forest, Ministry of foreign affairs, and for comments and approval.

**THEME: PROJECT COORDINATION****Result:**

Enhanced collaboration with CARPE and partners activities, synthesis dissemination of WWF/CARPE results.

**Objective:**

Provide support for field activities, CARPE Meetings, Travel for collaboration among field projects; dedicate half time of WWF position to CARPE Coordination, communication, and synthesis.

**Progress:**

There has been a major change in the leadership of the CARPO. Over the past six year WWF-US had subcontracted with WWF-International to manage the Central Africa region, which it did by developing the CARPO regional off. On July 1, 2002, WWF-US has transferred the Management of the CARPO office to WWF-International and our colleague and friend Laurent got promoted the Central Africa Regional Representative based in Cameroon.. The last two weeks of April and the entire May 2002, the WWF-US Program Director , Dr. Richard Carroll and Tony Mokombo, the Senior Program Office were in the field making appropriate contact announcing this change of management leadership.

It was also an opportunity to learn about the CARPE regional Facilitation activities. Nico has been very proactive in the region promoting CARPE Activities. The Central African Republic Primer Minister even received Nico and Antoine in his Cabinet during their trip to this country.

**THEME: STUDIES**

## 1. Survey Team Training:

**Result:**

Assessment of the consequences of civil unrest on the conservation status and level of resource exploitation in previously intact, protected and non-protected, large blocks of forest.

**Objective:**

Train and support rapid survey team to survey biodiversity and conservation status of selected forest zones in areas of unrest.

**Progress:**

Some of the funds allocated for this activity were used to carry out a capacity building assessment in the Congo Basin. The findings of this survey were used in proposal that was submitted to the MacArthur Foundation, who has graciously accepted to finance the project. Report is available up on request.

## CONCLUSION

CARPE II funding to the Dzanga-Sangha Project (DSP) facilitates anti-poaching activities, some capacity building of senior staff (to be improved upon), and through the recruitment of a staff member responsible for collaborating with the private economic sectors has provided a means to potentially reduce the negative impact of logging on the flora and fauna of the Reserve, and the National Park. Improved collaboration with the logging sector is of particular importance as they are probably the primary reason for the recent increase in human population (23% between 2000 and 2001). Without working with companies such as SBB to control and develop alternatives to bushmeat exploitation, the pressure on wildlife populations will continue to grow.

The DSP project Administration continues to be vigilant against the threat of potential logging in the pre-park area sector of the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park. This is particularly unsettling for tourist activities in vicinity of the Dzanga Bai. Other threats focus on the Community Hunting Zone where economic exploitation has been prohibited since the creation of the National Park and Reserve. A text revision to the text governing Reserve use and management was submitted to the Forestry Ministry in November 2001. It clearly bans all commercial use of the area. As of January 2002, the Ministre Délégué of the Forestry Ministry has accepted this text.

In Gamba, The Technical Advisor, Jean Bourgeois has left WWF for a new adventure and has been replaced by Bas HUIJBREGTS who had been a tremendous instrument in the Minkebe project. He knows very well the project area and brings in his talent and experience from the Minkebe project.

The Gamba project has put more emphasis on eco-tourism, as an alternative to bushmeat issues, which could allow the local population to earn some income through income generating activities. The world environmental day celebrated every June 5 of each year has been an opportunity for the Gamba Protected Area managers to draw the attention of the Gabonese on the why to protect their invaluable wealth inheritance.

In Minkebe, The project managers and their partners from the Ministry of Water and forest and ECOFAC have identified the socioeconomic survey as a priority to be tackled first, and have postponed the collaboration with IRM for the implementation of the Minkebe-Dja Transborder mapping exercise until 2002. Following is the plan for next year.

About Biodiversity Conservation Leadership development, due to the persistent problem of language barrier coupled with the educational level of some of the motivated field staff to attend high level education, the Minkebe and Gamba project managers have requested authorization to use the funds for key conservation activities. This request is still pending for response from USAID.

Meanwhile, the Dzanga-Sangha Project's two senior staff members began their training since the last quarter of 2001, when the computers were purchased for their daily use. The Warden

had the opportunities to represent the project at the Central African World Heritage Fund Initiative (CAWHFI) in Paris, France, in February 2002. He also participated in the Monitoring and Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) in Cameroon Early May 2002. This participation has enlarged his horizon on conservation issues and opportunities.

The continued absence of the National Director, who is the first potential leadership candidate, in Bangui, has hindered all efforts to develop his leadership capacities in conservation.

Despite all mentoring efforts, both the National Director and the Warden do not seem to be more and more interested in the day-to-day mentoring activities—probably preferring a formal training settings, which requires travel outside of the country. Anyway, until their performance and interest levels improve, the leadership funds will be used to develop the capacity of more motivated staff members, including the Conservation Department’s second-in-command (RLAB) who is Responsible of all anti-poaching activities.

The decision of transferring the CARPE Management Team to Kinshasa coupled with the transfer of the CARPO management from WWF-US to WWF-International and the transfer of the CARPO office from Libreville, Gabon, to Yaoundé, Cameroon, have not been well taken by the Gabonese authorities. Despite all the explanation of the long decision process, they seemed not convinced.

## **WWF CONTRIBUTION TO THE FULFILLMENT OF CARPE II ACTIVITIES**

CARPE II money has contributed in one fashion or another to all WWF-led activities at Dzanga-Sangha the following is a partial summary of activities and achievements during the last six-months.

### **A. Dzanga-Sangha: Activities in support of CARPE II-financed anti-poaching have included:**

➤ **Road maintenance**, on going

➤ **Delimitation of Park Boundaries**

Since the conception of the Dzanga-Sangha Project, the local population has cited the lack of well-defined park and pre-park limits (2- kilometer buffer zone) as a reason for their illegal forays into the National Park, particularly the Dzanga sector. In collaboration with villagers, the Project has begun the delimitation of the pre-park area, cutting a 2 meter transect and ringing trees with bright paint. A key border, the north to south pre-park limit of the Dzanga sector has been designated as priority (due to the threat of imminent logging, hunting pressure from neighboring villages as well as its proximity to a key tourist attraction, Dzanga Bai) and 10 kilometers of cutting and marking have been completed.

➤ **Hunters Working Group**

The Project continues to support and collaborate with a group of hunters (and illegal trappers) representing all villages in the Reserve. In November 2001, at a sixth meeting the Project presented information and explanations on laws pertaining to natural resource use in the Reserve and National Park. Texts presented pertain to questions submitted by representatives prior to the meeting. Due to the success of this meeting, a similar presentation will be organized for project staff, targeting anti-poaching staff, as legal texts are often equally confusing for them.

➤ **Regulation of the Safari Hunting Industry**

In August 2001, the Principal Technical Advisor and Warden participated in the annual meeting for quota determination (2002) for the safari hunting industry. For the second year in a row, the Wildlife Department administration accepted a global bongo quota of 15 for the Reserve, down from a previous high of 33 bongos. Project staff will continue to collaborate with Trinational scientists on how to better monitor and estimate bongo populations and thus assure a “sustainable” quota based on best available scientific information.

➤ **GORILLA HABITUATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: Population health concerns for western lowland gorilla eco-tourism in the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park, ongoing.**

**The upstart of the gorilla tracking program for tourists**

After almost four years of continuous following of a gorilla family, the Munye, the Primate Habituation Program team welcomed its first tourists in November 2001. As of December 31, 2001, 31 tourists have participated in the pilot “gorilla tracking program” (vision is an aim but not guaranteed) project with almost all actually seeing the gorillas and returning highly satisfied. The project, as well as the national government and the international conservation community as one are closely monitoring this activity, if not the only, example of western lowland gorilla tourism.

Revenue generated through this tourist activity will not only contributes to local community development but will be re-channeled into the habituation program with the goal of reducing donor support over time. At the completion of the six-month pilot phase, project staff members will re-evaluate this activity including pricing policy and publicity with the aim of attracting greater numbers of tourists to Dzanga-Sangha.

**B. Gamba**

The management plan has been finalized and proposals are being pulled together for fund raising purposes.