

**PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON
(PSMNR-SWP)**

A Development program of the Republic of Cameroon, co-financed by the Federal
Republic of Germany through KFW, in cooperation with GTZ and DED

*Report of a field mission, for the establishment of a Council Forest
(CF) in the Nguti Council Area- Team B*

1.0. Introduction

As a follow up of an action plan taken during a meeting in Nguti (to sensitize stakeholders on the importance of establishing and managing council forest (CF) within Nguti municipality) held within the framework of the PSMNR-SWP result three in March 2007, a field mission to further ground trod and investigate the proposed CF area, was undertaken between the 25th of June to the 2nd of July 2007 to finalized a tentative map for the elaboration of the technical note for the council forest.

2.0. Objectives of the mission

- Sensitization concerned villages on council forest creation, management and feasible benefits.
- Collection of relevant socio-economic information
- Agree on and identify proposed boundaries and the collection of relevant GPS points.

3.0. Methodology

The team was comprised of Mr J. P. Kebou (Provincial Chief of Service Forestry SWP), Ekwo Helen Ebika (local facilitator), Mor-Achankap Bakia (MINFOF Buea), Mr. Nemba Denis (Representative of the chief of forestry and wildlife post Nguti).

Before meeting the various villages, letters for notification were dispatched by the Mayor of Nguti council, facilitated by the Provincial Chief of Service for Forestry.

The villages visited included **Mboka, Ekenge, Ofrikpabi, Ediango, Betock, Manyemen and Ebanga.**

within each village, sensitization meetings were organized and issues discussed based on the agenda below;

- Introduction of the team and villagers.
- Objective of the mission by Bakia.
- Presentation of the PSMNR-SWP results with more emphasis on result 3 by Bakia.
- Forest management in Cameroon by Kebou.
- Stages in the acquisition of council forest by Kebou.
- Advantages of council forest and benefit by Bakia and Kebou.
- Discussions, clarifications and questions/answers session.
- Plan for field visit to verify accepted boundaries.
- Closing.

At the end of village meeting, field visits were executed to collect GPS boundary points for Mboka and Ofrikpabi villages, facilitated by local guides. It's worth noting here that field trips for this team were suspended after visiting the above villages and comparing the GPS information with team A (Frank, Besong and Boya). Based on the tentative map, the position of Osirayib was actualized, corrected and the corridor left between the villages in the hinterland and those along the road was less than 1km (too small to maintain the boundary). Thus, a new boundary was proposed by the villagers and GPS points collected by team A (on the western part of the CF).

Based on this correction, only village meetings and collection of relevant socio-economic data were collected for the rest of the villages (Ekenge, Ediango, Betock, Manyemen and Ebanga).

4.0. Outcome of the Mission

4.1. *Forest management and concept of CF*

- Meetings were successfully organized in all the villages with an average of about 35 participants per village, mostly family heads/notables, youths and few women.
- Though the idea was still new to most of them, villages around the area are aware of forest management as all of the villages are involved in community forest management (REPACIG and MBACOF).
- After the meetings, villagers applauded the idea of council forest and expressed lots of interest except Ebanga village that vehemently rejected the idea. She complained of council embezzlement of royalties from previous exploitation. Also, most villages expressed some degree of fear for the council authorities, and benefit sharing as per village input.

- It was made clear to them that based on the map, they fall under villages that don't have direct impact (direct impact villages were Baro, Osirayip, Sikam and Ayong that contributed most or all of the CF area).
- Villagers were further assured that MINFOF and partners will agree on better management strategies, as stipulated in the 1994 forestry law.

NB: Indigenes of Ediango, Betock, Manyemen and Ebanga villages (members of REPACIG) complained they were not properly informed on the management of community forest and frowned at the management on the basis that it is a one man affair. They declared there are not part of community forest, calling on the forestry officials to assist them reclaim their land.

4.2. Advantages of CF

Unlike in community forest that is difficult for a single community to manage and FMU were only taxes accrued are being given to the said council, CF offers opportunity for the council to manage a forest portion and use resulting finances for development. As an institution, a council will be better placed to manage a forest both technically and financially that a communities in community forest. Thus the team clearly explained the various stages involved in the creation and management of CF and the involvement of different stakeholders; GoC, PSMNR, Nguti council and villagers. The villages were convinced CF is a better strategy for managing forest and were ready to collaborate in future activities.

4.3. Proposed boundaries

The fact that farming is the preoccupation of all the inhabitants in the area, much land was reserved after the last farms for future farm extension resulting in no reserve land for the CF. This resulted in all the CF area being situated within the area covered by team A based on the GPS observations after the third day of work.

4.4. Socio-economic information

Mboka, Ekenge, Ofrikpabi and Ediango fall under the Bassosi tribe and Betock, Manyemen and Ebanga are Upper Balong. Other tribes residing in this area included the bayangs, oroko, bakundu, Balondo Nigerians etc, but constitute less than 15 percent of the entire population.

All the villages have resident population less than 350 inhabitants per village with the exception of Manyemen with close to 5000 inhabitants.

The population of this area is increasing with more youths resettling in the village for farming. Major Agricultural crops include cocoa, coffee, oranges and palms. Animal

rearing is less significant with few household keeping a few pigs, goat and fowls for local consumption during ceremonies.

Hunting is rampant in this area as Manyemen is a major bush meat market. Common hunting species include duiker, porcupine, cane rat, deer, antelopes and bush pigs. NTFP collection is very high with species like eru, bush mango, bitter cola, monkey cola, kola nuts, rattan, cashew nut afrostryax, Njangsa, bush pepper, njabe oil etc exploited around and far in the CF area.

The road network linking these villages is of good state and tarred. Pipe borne water is available in all the villages.

There are two well equipped hospitals situated 9 km apart (Manyemen and Nguti) and two major markets that serve all the villages. 3 government secondary schools at Nguti, two primary schools at Manyemen to serve Manyemen, Betoeh and Ebanga, one school at Ediango, one school at Mboka, and one school at Ekenge to serve Ofrikpabi and Ekenge.

5.0. Conclusion

Though it was the first time for most of the villages to be informed about the Nguti CF, generally the idea was highly appreciated by all and sundry. They expressed their willingness to collaborate with PSMNR-SW and the Nguti council.

Nevertheless the Nguti council need to be properly coached to take up her responsibility with respect to CF issues as villages complained of being neglected and kept off important scenarios by council authorities.