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SOUTH WEST PROVINCE

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PRELIMINARY TECHNICAL NOTE FOR THE GAZETTEMET
OF NGUTI COUNCIL FOREST

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**The Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural
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1. Introduction

1.1 Context of council forestry in Cameroon and in SWP

The *forestry law 94/01 of 20 January 1994* provides for the establishment of council forest as part of the permanent forest estate. A council forest has to be gazetted on behalf of the council. The gazettelement shall serve for the establishment of a land certificate for the council concerned. A management plan shall be drawn up for the council forest and approved by the services in charge of forests. Forest products of all kinds resulting from the exploitation of council forests shall be the sole property of the council concerned.

Whereas in the “zoning plan” of the southern part of Cameroon (phase I-IV) of the year 1995, 14 council forests with a total area of 364.000 ha were foreseen, in SWP which is covered by *zoning plan phase V* of the year 2001, no council forest had been planned.

Nevertheless even in the southern part of Cameroon the potentialities of the council forest as a form of decentralized forest management has been developed only to a small degree due mainly to inadequate knowledge, technical and financial means by the councils.

With the adoption of the *decentralization laws of 2004* and the ongoing process to strengthen the role of the council in the development of their area and the management of natural resources, the option of council forest continuously attracts more attention from the councils.

1.2. Presentation of PSMNR-SWP

The *Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Cameroon, South West Province (PSMNR-SWP)* is a development programme of the Republic of Cameroon, co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through KFW, in cooperation with GTZ and DED. The service in charge for the implementation and operation of the programme is the *Provincial Delegation of MINFOF for the South West Province*. The programme purpose is «*sustainable forest and wildlife management by affected stakeholders for their benefit, with special emphasis on the poorer segments of the local populations*».

The programme is intervening in the three TOUs; Mt. Cameroon, Korup-Ndongere, and Takamanda-Mone (in creation). The programme is supporting MINFOF in the creation and management of three National parks: Mt.Cameroon NP, Korup NP, Takamanda NP. It is establishing Village Development Plans (VDP) and investing in a package of livelihood improvement measures and income generating micro-projects, mainly on the basis of natural resource management, in the peripheral villages of theses NPs.

The two results of the programme directed to council forest creation and management are:

- Establishment of regional land use and zoning plans, including decentralized forms of forest management.

- Elaboration of a pilot management plan for a council forest

1.3 Justification for creating and managing the Nguti Council Forest.

The creation and management of the Nguti Council Forest is justified for the following main reasons:

- **Encourage decentralized forest management**

The Forestry law as well as the programme philosophy seeks to empower local institutions in the sustainable management of their forest resources for their benefits through the creation and management of council or community forests. Community forest management has been experienced in South West Province for some years now but the concept of council forest management has not been tried. The establishment and management of the Nguti Council Forest would be a worthwhile experience whose lessons could be replicated to other areas of the province and beyond.

- **A sustained source of income for development**

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper highlights the need to identify and harness sustained sources of income for development. A council forest managed within a rotation of thirty (30) years can provide an annual yearly financial impetus necessary for the development of the municipality. The management of the council forest can also create the much needed employment for some youths, foster economic activities in enclave rural areas, and improve organizational skills in the council and the concerned villages.

- **Contributes to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection**

The southern part of the proposed protection forest “Nkwende Hills” unlike the northern part is in its complete extension flat land, and presents from a physical point of view, no characteristics of a fragile ecosystem which a protection forest is supposed to protect. Moreover this southern section is illegally exploited at the detriment of the municipality and further exposing the fragile northern section to ecological destruction. Therefore sustainably managing this southern sector as a council forest will not only contribute to the development of the council area but will also assure long-term preservation of the about 28,000 ha important northern sector of the proposed Nkwende Hills.

Also, the situation of the council forest just adjacent to the Korup National park will be contributing positively to the sustainable management of resources within the park’s peripheral zone and consequently the park resources.

- **Development aspiration of the Nguti Municipality**

At the end of a sensitization workshop organised early this year within the framework of the program and bringing together village chiefs, councilors, Mayor and collaborators of the Nguti Council etc, the participants unanimously resolve to create and manage a council forest in their municipality. In line with objective 2 of the Cameroon Forestry Policy, there is a need to support this desire. This approach will also enhance the contribution of the council and villages in combating illegal exploitation of forest resources especially timber.

1.4. Activities carried out so far by PSMNR-SWP to support the creation and management of the Nguti Council Forest.

Potential areas for the creation of a council forests were identified in august 2006. On request of council, a workshop was organised in Nguti bringing together the management of the council, councillors chiefs and/or representatives of the concern villages.. The result of this workshop was a unanimous decision to create and manage a council forest in the Nguti Council Area.

Another outcome of the workshop was that an action plan was prepared to guide activities leading to the preparation of a technical note. Included in this plan was the need for the village chiefs and/or representatives to further sensitise their inhabitants on the concept of council forest management. Thereafter, a technical team comprising of PDFOF MINFOF, and GFA visited the relevant villages for further sensitisation on the concept of council forest management, collect socio-economic and ecological data, agree and identify provisional boundaries, collect GPS Points and finally agree on user rights.

Two categories of villages were sensitised; those with direct user rights to the proposed council forest area (Baro, Osirayib, Sikam and Ayong) and those within the vicinity but without a direct impact on the area (Mboka, Ekenge, Ofrikpabi, Ediango, Betock, Manyemen and Ebanga).

2. Objective of the Council Forest.

The main objective of creating and managing the Nguti Council Forest is to sustain timber production for socio-economic development of the Nguti municipality. The specific objectives are:

1. Contribute to the sustainable use of forest resources in the municipality;
2. Manage a sustained source of income for the development of the council area;
3. Provide sawn wood for the local and regional needs;
4. Provide employment opportunities for the youths through artisanal/industrial activities like small-scale sawmilling, carpentry etc.

3. Boundary description of the proposed forest to gazette

The proposed Nguti Council Forest is situated in Nguti Sub-division, Kupe-Manenguba Division, South-West Province of Cameroon.

On its western part, the proposed Nguti Council forest will have a common boundary with the Korup National park, along the Bake river. In its northern part it will have a common boundary with proposed Nkwende hill protection forest.

The surface area of the proposed Nguti Council forest is about 12,083 ha.

The boundary is described on the basis of the 1:200.000 INC topographic map, sheet MAMFE, projection UTM 32 N, reference system Clarke 1880 (cf. map in annex 1).

EAST

- From point **A (539 082 / 583 022)** located at the river junction from Ayib-Eyang with Bake river following Bake river downstream to point **B (535873/577433)** still along the Bake river, which is the south western limit of the REPACIG CIG Community Forest and still in a south-westerly direction to point **C (534027/575188)**, which is the confluence between river Bake and river Bakebe around Ayong village

SOUTH

- Then from point C and moving in a north westerly direction to point **D (529440/577485)** along river Bake north of Sikam village and then still following the river Bake to point **E (5303347/576605)**, which is the confluence between the rivers Bake and Madie, marking the north eastern boundary of the Korup National Park

WEST

- From point **E** following the boundary of the Korup National Park along river Bake to point **F(523 570 / 581 120)**;
- From point following a straight line on a bearing of 64° for a distance of 1.4 km to point **G (524 816 / 581 727)**, located at the junction of the stream Monyeneton with an abandoned farm to market road from Baro to Sikam;
- From point G following a straight line on a bearing of 73° for a distance of 2.2 km to point **H (526 905 / 582 349)**, located at a river junction of not named rivers;
- From point D following a straight line on a bearing of 31° for a distance of 1.1 km to point **I (527 508 / 583 312)**, located on the abandoned logging road from Baro to Osirayib and named “Otto Green”;
- From point I following a straight line on a bearing of 331° for a distance of 0.3km to point **J (527 394 / 583 593)**, located at a river junction of not named rivers;
- From point J following a straight line on a bearing of 310° for a distance of 1.1 km to point **K (526 545 / 584 278)**, located at a river junction of not named rivers;
- From point K in a straight line on a bearing of 286° for a distance of 3.2 km to point **L (523 447 / 585 198)**, located at the source of the stream Bayas near the footpath from Baro to Abat;
- From point L following the stream Bayas downstream to reach point **M (520 568/ 585 462)**, located at the junction of Bayas with Bake river;
- From point M following Bake river downstream in northerly direction to point **N (519 990 / 586 145)**, located at the junction of Bake with a not named affluent;

NORTH

- From point N following the not named affluent upstream in easterly direction to point **O (527 781 / 587 716)**, located at one of the sources of this stream;
- From point O following a straight line on a bearing of 86° for a distance of 0.6 km to point **P (531 257 / 588 130)**, located at the source of a not named stream.
- From point P following the not named stream downstream in easterly direction to point **Q (535 336 / 585 433)**, located at the junction with another not named stream.
- From point Q following a straight line on a bearing of 172° for a distance of 0.8 km to point **R (535 445 / 584 601)**, located at the source of the stream Ayib-Eyang;
- From point **R** following Ayib-Eyang downstream to reach again the point of origin **A**, located at the junction of Ayib-Eyang with Bake river.

4. Brief description of the forest area

4.1. Situation of the proposed council forest with regard to zoning plan phase V

The proposed council forest of Nguti (about 12 083 ha) falls in the Plan de Zonage phase 5 of year 2001 as proposed protection forest “Nkwende Hills” (40 422 ha).

4.2. Topography

The topography of the area is in its whole extension flat to undulating land. The highest point is a hill with 428 m altitude at the northern border of the proposed forest area.

4.3. Hydrography

The hydrographic net of the forest area is composed of the Bake river and its affluents. Bake river originates from Nkwende Hills and flows in a southerly direction and starts marking the boundary of the proposed council forest to the south of Osirayib village. Downstream, Bakebe River joins Bake river near Ayong village, and Bake river continues flowing in a north-westerly direction. The proposed council forest is therefore enclosed by Bake River and some of its affluents.

4.4. Vegetation

The forest is part of the Atlantic Biafran Forest as described by Letouzey and as such moist lowland evergreen forest, rich in Cuscutaceae. It is typically a tropical lowland rainforest.

Lejoly (1996) proposes to nominate the zone “atlantic lower-Guinean domain” to stress the influence of the Atlantic Ocean.

Most of the forest is dense forest on firm land. Only on the banks of the river Bake in some places small swampy areas can be found.

Frequently occurring species in the forest include; Azobe (*Lophira alata*), Ekop Naga (*Brachystegia* spp.), Tali (*Erythrophleum ivorensis*), Okan (*Cyclodiscus gabonensis*), Framire (*Terminalia ivorensis*), Dabema (*Pipadeniastrum africanum*). Other occurring species are Bilinga (*Nauclea diderrichii*), Ilomba (*Pycnanthus angolensis*), Niove (*Staudtia stipitata*), Padouk (*Pterocarpus soyauxii*), Moabi (*Baillonella toxisperma*), Movingui (*Distemonanthus benthamianus*), Doussie (*Afzelia ssp*), Aiele (*Canarium schweinfurthii*).

4.5. Population and ethnicity

The Nguti Council Area is made up of 54 villages. However, four villages are directly concerned by the proposed council forest (Baro, Osirayib, Sikam and Ayong) together have a population of about 1,000 inhabitants.

The villages of Baro, Sikam and Ayong are part of the Upper Balong tribe, whereas Osirayib belongs to the Ejagham tribe.

Strangers have settled in Sikam village in the quarter Mokwalibe coming from Itoki in Konye council, belonging to Bakundu tribe. In Ayong strangers from north west province are settling.

4.6. Socio-economic infrastructure

Generally, the level of scholarisation in this area is low and this has a negative impact on the local village organisation. This notwithstanding, the inhabitants still exhibit a strong inclination to their traditional institutions. The traditional councils are at the centre of all development initiatives in the villages. This commitment was especially apparent in Baro, Osirayib and Sikam villages.

Social infrastructure development is generally poor in the area. For medical attention all these villages depend on the Manyemen and Nguti health institutions. The Ayong Health Centre remains understaffed and lacks basic equipment.

Three of the villages (except Osirayib) have primary schools but still under-staffed and under- equipped. The nearest secondary schools are found in Nguti.

None of the villages has pipe-borne water. All villages depend on Manyemen and Nguti markets to sell their forestry and agricultural products. Baro and Osirayib are linked to the Kumba-Nguti road by an abandoned logging road which is only seasonable useable by specially prepared Toyota Hilux 4WD vehicles up to Osirayib.

Baro has not been reached with a vehicle in the last two years as the bridges of the logging road are broken.

Ayong and Sikam are linked to the Kumba-Nguti road also by an abandoned logging road, which is also in a very bad condition and only seasonably useable by specially prepared Toyota Hilux 4WD vehicles.

A market to farm road had been constructed between Baro and Sikam some twenty years ago has been abandoned.

4.7. Human and Industrial Activities

4.7.1. Traditional activities by the population

In all the villages visited, **agriculture** is the main stay of the inhabitants. While some crops are grown mainly for home consumption like cassava, cocoyam, maize, yams etc, others like cocoa, coffee and oil palms are grown mainly for cash earnings.

Animal husbandry is still rudimentary, free ranging of livestock very common. Reared species are fowls and goats and mainly kept for use during cultural festivals and other traditional occasions.

Fishing mainly for subsistence is practiced by the males in all villages using nets mostly in the main rivers and big streams, particularly in Bake river.

Hunting, using fire arms and traps (of various types) is a tradition and general practice for the men. Common species hunted include duikers and deers (*Cephalophus spp*), porcupines (*Atherurus spp*) and Pangolins (*Phataginus spp*).

The harvesting and sale of **Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)** from the wild is also a common occupation of the inhabitants. NTFPs commonly harvested for sale include bush mango (*Irvingia spp*), eru (*Gnetum spp*), njangsang (*Ricinodendron heudelottii*) and Ngabe oil (*Baillonella toxisperma*).

4.7.2. Other activities

Forest license N° 1669 of a surface area of 26 800 ha was granted to the company CTL. The license covered a big part of the proposed Nguti Council Forest. Timber exploitation took place from around 1987 to 1991. The exploitation is said to have been very selective and not quite systematic.

Some earlier exploitation is said to have been taken place in the 1970s by a company named ATC.

The area also falls within the **support zone of the Korup project** (1988 -2003) and benefit from some financial assistance at different phases from WWF, ODA/DFID, WCS, USAID, EC, GTZ and GoC. In Baro there was a Korup National park field office, composed of two buildings and facilities for ecoguards. The buildings are presently not used by the park management.

A steel hammock bridge was build over the Bake River at Baro to increase accessibility into the Korup National park by Exxon Chemicals in 1997. The bridge is still in good condition.

4.8. Accessibility of the forest

The forest can be reached on an abandoned logging road, leading westwards in the north of Ediango village on the road from Kumba to Nguti. This abandoned logging road with several broken bridges continues to Baro village.

The distances are the following:

- Kumba – Ediango 89 km, tarred from Kumbe to Ediango (29 km)
- Nguti – Ediango 9 km, tarred road
- Ediango – Council forest limit 14 km, abandoned logging road

4.9. Planned working programme

After publication of the Public Notice, the gazettelement process shall continue as described by the Cameroon Forestry Law. This will include further sensitization, formation of management structure, negotiations on benefit sharing, responsibilities etc.

However, after submitting the technical note, arrangements for relevant studies will be done and subsequently executed.. This will include:

- A management inventory between November 2007 and April 2008.
- Wildlife and NTFP inventory.
- Detailed socio-economic study.
- Preparation of a management plan and the first 5 years plan by mid 2008.
- A first pre-logging inventory may be executed by the end of 2008 in order to be able to exploit a first cutting area in 2009.

Nguti council is proposed to be supported in the process technically and financially by the PSMNR-SWP.

5. Envisaged Management Structure

After gazettelement, the forest area will become the private property of the Nguti Council. This forest will be managed following relevant sections and articles of the forestry law pertaining to the management of council forest.

To enhance the participation of all stakeholders, a Council Forest Management Committee composed of the local administration, representatives of the council, and representatives of the concern villages etc will be formed to facilitate decision making in the course of managing the council forest. Also, at the level of the relevant villages, Village Forest Management Committees will be made functional.

For a smooth coordination of field activities, a Council Forest Management Unit will be formed as an integral part of the council management and this unit will be charged with the follow-up of field activities under the supervision of MINFOF services.

6. Description of user rights

The following users' rights will be acceptable in the council forest:

- Harvesting of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs),
- Fishing and traditional hunting;
- Right to harvest local building materials,
- Right to footpaths

7. Funding.

The Nguti Council will be assisted technically and financially in the creation and management of the council forest by the Programme for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, South West, Cameroon (PSMNR-SW).

However, substantial financial contribution is also foreseen from the Nguti Council to facilitate the procedure of acquiring and managing this forest. This financial contribution will be reflected in the council's annual budget. Also, other organizations supporting the creation and management of council forest in Cameroon will also be contacted for possible financial assistance.

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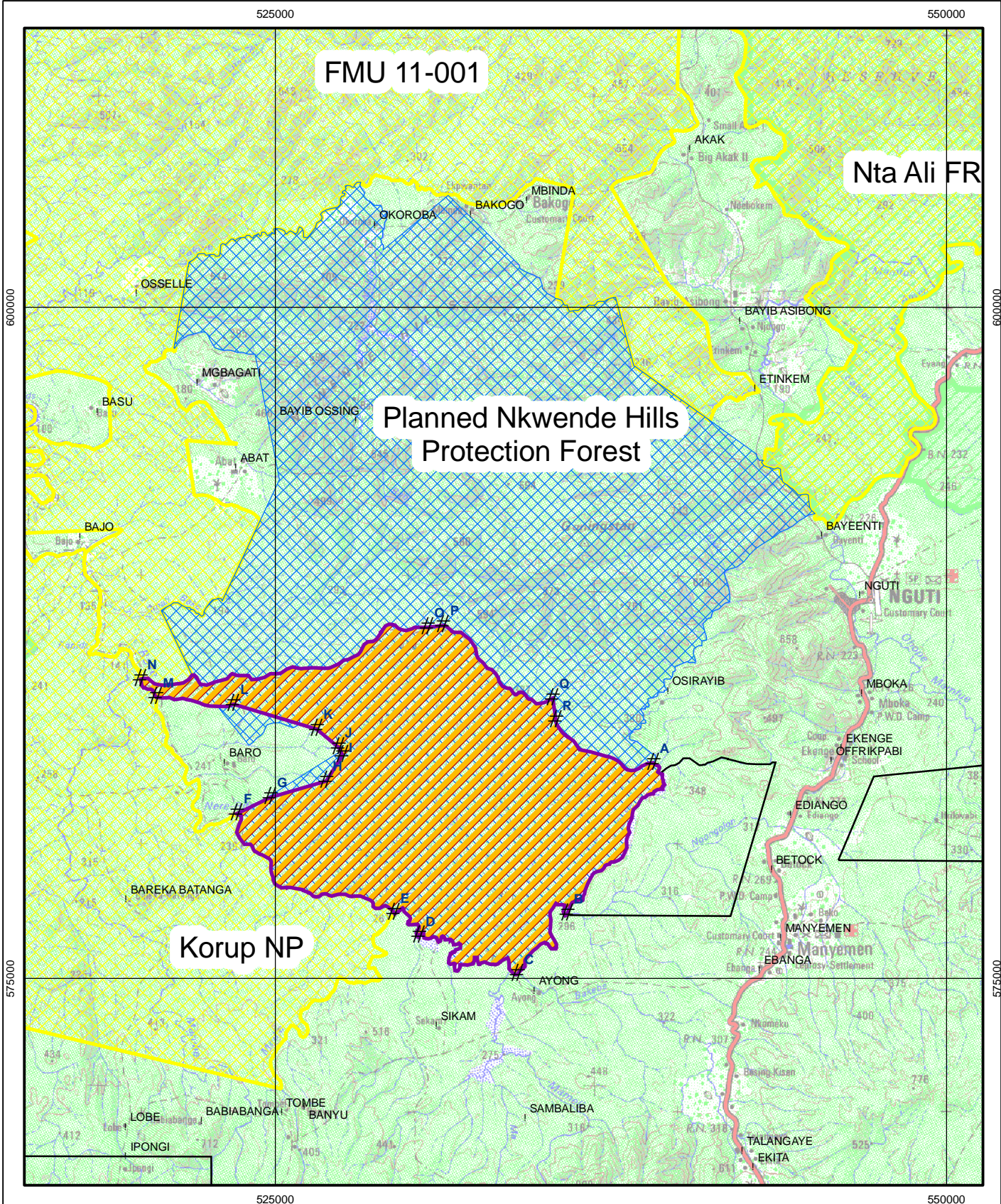
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Annex 1 : Map of proposed Nguti Council Forest 1 :200.000

Proposed Nguti Council Forest



Legend

- ! Villages
- # Boundary Points
- Reserved Community Forest
- Permanent Forest Area**
 - existing
 - planned
- STATUS**
 - existing
 - planned
- Proposed Nguti Council Forest

1:200,000
0 0.36 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 3.5 Kilometers
Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator UTM 32 N
Map Datum: Douala
Ellipsoid: Clarke 1880 (IGN)
Cartographic Reference: INC Topographic Maps 1:200,000
sheets: Bues/Douala; Mamfe; Akwaya; Bafoussam

Programme for the Sustainable Management
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Proposed Nguti Council Forest

Drawn By: PSMNR-SW
GIS/MS UNIT

Checked by: Divisional
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