

**MINISTRY OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE,  
PROVINCIAL DELEGATION FOR SOUTH WEST  
PROVINCE, BUEA.**

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

**REPORT OF FORMATION OF VILLAGE FOREST MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEES (VFMCS) IN THE NGUTI COUNCIL FOREST AREA.**



**Report by Besong Simon.**

**April 2008**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The need to fully involve local communities in the management of forest resources is clearly enshrined in the Cameroon Forestry Law and the accompanying decrees of applications. This involvement is seen in the procedures for classification as well as measures aimed at managing the forest estate/resources.

Procedures for the classification of the Nguti Council Forest are well underway and concurrently measures geared at developing a viable management structure for the forest are being implemented. These include mainly the collection of relevant ecological and socio-economic data for the preparation of a management plan and the formation and/or strengthening local management institutions.

An important local institution with legal responsibility in the management of Protected Areas is the Village Forest Management Committee (VFMC), whose composition, responsibilities and management are clearly spelt out in Decision No 1354/D/MINEF/CAB of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1999.

This report is a summary of activities leading to the formation of VFMCs in the target villages of the proposed Nguti Council Forest.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The need to organise local community members to form and manage viable VFMCs has always been acknowledged by conservation and/or resource management organisations charged with the management of specific areas. The approaches to this organisation and management have always determined the extent to which these communities are involved in the management of the resource/forest estate.

Generally during the project era, VFMCs were they existed were not well constituted, did not have a mastery of their responsibilities, little means of work, lack of capacity building for members, lack of follow-up among other shortcomings. This led to *shadow VFMCs* with little or nothing to do with the management of the PAs. This conclusion came out clearly during the recent evaluation of the extent of implementation of the Korup National Park management plan.

The approach adopted for the formation of VFMCs for the Nguti C F area therefore is aimed at reducing these shortcomings.

### **3.0 APPROACH ADOPTED**

Using the above Decree as a guide, a two-day programme or formation was prepared and executed in each relevant village. The villages involved were Baro, Osirayib, Sikam and Ayong.

Day 1 was dedicated to lectures and explanations on the Cameroon Forestry Law, concept of council forest management and the legality of the VFMC. Each presentation was followed by discussions, questions, clarification and suggestions.

Day 2 was mainly for election/nomination of members of the VFMCs, explanations on the management of the VFMCs especially the relationship with other local institutions like the Traditional Council, Village Development Committee (established as an implementing agent during the elaboration of Village Development Plan) etc.

The members of the committee were nominated or elected. A nomination was endorsed if the only nominee was unanimously approved by inhabitants present. Were two nominees existed, the inhabitants proceeded to an election were the winner was automatically declared. The nomination/election phase was generally

facilitated by the Secretary of the Traditional Council assisted by two other members of the Traditional Council in the absence of the technical team. This was done to enable the village to already assume ownership of the committee and avoid impositions. Upon return, the whole assembly including the technical team went through all proposed members to further confirm community choices.

Finally the list of committee members was endorsed by at least three signatories; the Chief or representative, traditional council secretary and the chief councillor. The peak of this process was the initial installation of these committee members by the technical team.

The technical team was comprised of the following:

Mr. Kebo Jean Pierre      Provincial Chief Forestry SWP.

Mr. Tabi Napoleon      Representative of the Mayor and Municipal  
Councillor of the area.

Mr. Asek Lordson      Council Forester, Nguti Council.

Besong Simon      PSMNR-SW M&E Officer.

The process of formation took place between the 14<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2007.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### *4.1 General impressions*

Generally, the whole exercise was very successful in all villages. The commitment of the inhabitants to seeing that they are involved in the management of the Nguti CF was observed in all villages.

The absence of total trust in the management of the council was also eminent in all villages despite all the assurances from the PSMNR-SW. It is obvious that until the envisaged transparent management



structure for the council forest is put in place practically, these fears will continue to live with the communities.

## **4.2 Members of the VFMCs**

### **4.2.1 Baro village**

This village had a 'VFMC' already formed within the framework of the PSMNR-SW Result 5, Korup component. However, discussions with the community showed that the committee was unrepresentative and formed out of legal provisions. This committee was therefore unanimously dissolved and the process of forming a new committee was embarked upon. At the end of the process, the following were elected/nominated as members of the VFMC Executive<sup>1</sup>:

| <b>NAME</b>           | <b>REMARK</b>                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mr. Tabi Napoleon     | Proposed Chief, President of VFMC     |
| Mr. Tambe Paxson      | Member, Village Development Committee |
| Inspector Basua Felix | External Elite                        |
| Mr. Oben Isaac        | Internal Elite                        |
| Mrs Ndip Dorothy      | Women representative                  |
| Mrs Ndumon Cicilia    | Women representative                  |
| Mr. Eban Rene         | Representative of Farmers             |
| Mr. Ngah Andison      | Youth representative.                 |

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<sup>1</sup> Members are called VFMC Executive members because it is understood that all inhabitants in every village are members of the VFMC but the eight members elected/nominated are there to pilot the affairs of this local institution. This understanding is vital to ensure total identification with the ideals of VFMCs in villages.



**Plate 1:** Mayor's representative, Mr. Tabi congratulating members of the Baro Village Forest Management Committee. Photo by Besong.



**Plat 2:** Group photo with some inhabitants of Baro at the end of the VFMC formation process. Photo by Asek

#### 4.2.2 Osirayip Village

In this village there was no current VFMC. The process of formation went on successfully leading to the VFMC composed of the following members:

| NAME                     | REMARK                                |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chief Adolf Mbik Ebelle  | Chief, President of VFMC              |
| Mr. Tambi Tabi Daniel    | Member, Village Development Committee |
| Mr. Mbelle Micheal Bate  | External Elite                        |
| Mr. Mbelle Emmanuel Ayem | Internal Elite                        |
| Mme Agbor Martha Ebelle  | Women representative                  |
| Mme Motale Gladys Ayem   | Women representative                  |
| Mr. Musa Samari Ayem     | Representative of Farmers             |
| Mr. Orang Cletus Mbik    | Youths representative.                |



**Plate--:** *Members of the Osirayp VFMC being commissioned. Photo by Besong.*



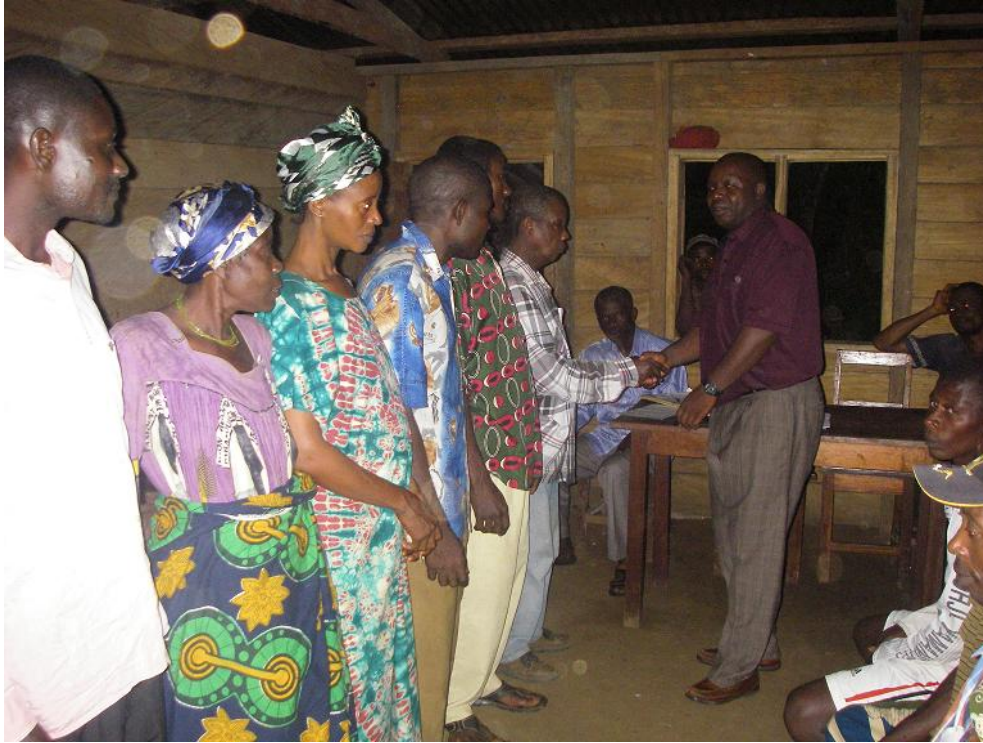


**Plate ---:** *Some inhabitants of Osirayip village at the end of the VFMC formation process. Photo by Besong*

#### 4.2.3 Sikam Village

In this village, more than half of the inhabitants are settlers from neighbouring areas. However, the closeness and joint commitment to work together for the development of sikam was clearly demonstrated in the attendance and general discussions leading to the formation of the VFMC. The following persons are members of the VFMC executive:

| NAME                        | REMARK                                |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mr. Robinson Elangue Ndifor | Acting Chief, President of VFMC       |
| Mr. Ekwe Manfred            | Member, Village Development Committee |
| Mr. Samuel Basua            | External Elite                        |
| Mr. Ebini Francis           | Internal Elite                        |
| Mme Enow Mercy              | Women representative                  |
| Mme Mary Mwillla            | Women representative                  |
| Mr. Paul Basua              | Representative of Farmers             |
| Mr. Ekuku Augustine         | Youths representative.                |



**Plate --:** PCF commissions members of the Sikam VFMC



**Plate---** A cross-section of Sikam inhabitants listening to explanations on the concept of council forest management.



#### 4.2.4 Ayong Village

Initially, the relationship between this village and the council was not cordial because of the failure of the Nguti council to pay their royalty areas following exploitation in this area some twenty years ago. However, the recent measures by the management of the council to redress this issue are, building some confidence. Discussions and deliberations here were highly participative and contributive. The following were elected members of the VFMC:

| NAME              | REMARK                                |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chief Akum Samuel | Chief, President of VFMC              |
| Mr. Dikonde Elias | Member, Village Development Committee |
| Mr. Tabi Asaiah   | External Elite                        |
| Mr. Tabi Martin   | Internal Elite                        |
| Mme Yien Odilla   | Women representative                  |
| Mme Akum Sally    | Women representative                  |
| Mr. Tendem Joseph | Representative of Farmers             |
| Mr. Adolf Nganya  | Youths representative.                |



**Plate---** Chief Akum pose with members of the Ayong VFMC





**Plate --:** *Chief Akum congratulates members of the Ayong VFMC.*

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The VFMCs have been formed in all target villages of the Nguti CF. This is just the beginning of a whole process of empowering the local communities to participate in the management of the Nguti CF. The implementation of the following recommendations will go a long way towards making these VFMC real active partners in management:

- Prepare, discuss and adopt internal rules and regulations for the functioning of VFMCs;
- While waiting for the exploitation proper of the Nguti CF, the PSMNR-SW should provide basic means of functioning like secretariat needs etc;
- PSMNR-SW to identify training needs, elaborate and implement a training programme for members of the VFMCs;
- PSMNR-SW to elaborate and activity plan, facilitate implementation, and put in place a veritable activity monitoring strategy for the VFMCs;

- The need to organise quarterly meetings for VFMCs is imperative;
- The management of the Baro Forestry and Wildlife Post to discuss and agree on ways to integrate the members of VFMCs in activities such as control of illegal activities etc;
- Finally, PSMNR-SW together with the Nguti Council to put in place a strategy for revitalising the VFMCs.

### **Acknowledgement**

The technical team wishes to heartily acknowledge the unreserved support of the Traditional Councils, and inhabitants in the execution of this demanding assignment.

The contribution of the untiring Okada Men who piloted the team through the unbearable roads is also worth mentioning. Thank you all.

## ANNEXES

### Annexe 1: Programme of formation of VFMCs

#### *Programme for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, South West Province (PSMNR-SW), Cameroon.*

##### **PROGRAMME OF FORMATION OF VILLAGE FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES FOR THE NGUTI COUNCIL FOREST AREA.**

###### **Day 1**

- Review of the Cameroon Forestry Law
- Detailed explanation of the concept of Council Forest Management
- Explanation on the legal instrument establishing VFMCs: composition, responsibility, membership etc
- Discussions, Questions, Clarifications
- Close of Day 1


###### **Day 2**


- Review of Day 1
- Nomination/Election of members of the VFMCs
- Summary of their responsibilities
- Management of the VFMCs: Activity monitoring, reporting, regularity of meetings, Identification of areas for capacity building etc
- Preliminary Installation of VFMC by the Chief or representative.


Annexe 2: TC endorsement of members of the VFMCs for Baro village.

MEMBERS OF VILLAGE FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE BARO VILLAGE 16/4/2008

- 1 Mr. Tabi Napoleon — Chief
- 2 Mr. Tambe Passon — V.D.C.
- 3 Inspector Basua Felix — external elite
- 4 Mr. Oben Isaac — Internal elite
- 5 Mrs. Ndip Dorothy — Woman representative
- 6 Mrs. Ndumon Cecilia — Woman representative
- 7 Mr. Eban Rene — Farmers representative
- 8 Mr. Ngah Andisen — Youths representative

Signed:  (Chief)

Sec. Sign:  Ndip Pius

Signed Head Council 






Annexe 3: TC endorsement of members of the VFMCs for Osirayip village.

FORMATION OF VILLAGE FOREST  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - OSIRAYIP.

17th April 2008.

1. Chief Adolf Mbik Ebelle - Chairman.
2. Mr. Iambe Iabi Daniel - Member of Village Development Committee.
3. Mr. Mbelle Michael Bate - Representative of External Elites.
4. Mr. Mbelle Emmanuel Ayem - Representative of Internal Elites.
5. Mrs. Aybot Martha Ebelle - Women Representative.
6. Mrs. Motale Gladys Ayem - Women Representative.
7. Mr. Musa Samari Ayem - Representative of the farmers.
8. Mr. Orang Cletus Mbik - Representative of the Youths.

SIGNATORIES

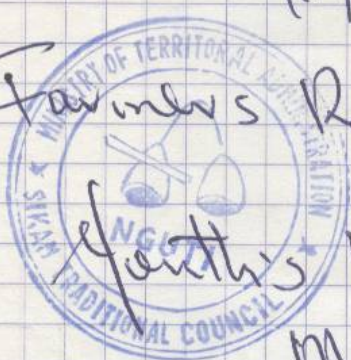
1. CHIEF :-  CHIEF Adolf Mbik Ebelle
2. SECRETARY GENERAL :-  Mbelle Emmanuel Ayem
3. CHIEF COUNCILLOR :-  Iambe Iabi Daniel



Annexe 3: TC endorsement of members of the VFMCs for Sikam village.

Composition List of The Village  
Forest Management Committee  
of Sikam -

- ① The chief (Acting) Mr. Robinson  
Elanguze Nchifor
- ② Member of V. D Committee.  
Mr. Ekwu Manfred
- ③ External Elite - ~~Mr. Samuel Bassey~~  
~~Mr. Chini Francis~~
- ④ Internal Elite = ~~Mr. Samuel Bassey~~  
~~Mr. Chini Francis~~
- ⑤ Two Women Representatives  
(1) Mrs Enow Mercy  
(1) Mrs Mary Mbiella
- ⑥ Farmers Repr. Mr. Paul Bassey
- ⑦ Youth's Rep.  
Mr - Ekraka Augustine





Annexe 4: TC endorsement of members of the VFMCs for Ayong village.

20-04-08

MEMBERSHIP LIST OF VILLAGE FOREST  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VFMC) FOR  
AYONG VILLAGE!

1. Chief Akun Samuel B: President
2. Dikonde Elias - Village development committee  
representative.
3. Tabi Martha - Internal elite representative
4. Tabi Asaich - External elite representative,
5. Yien Odillia - women association representa-  
tive
6. Akun Sally - women association representa-  
tive.
7. B Tendem Joseph - farmers' representative
8. Adolf Nganya - Youth representative.

