

► The West African Protected Areas Newsletter



« La Lettre des Aires Protégées en Afrique de l'Ouest »

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Last June, IUCN-PAPACO, in collaboration with the IUCN French and Dutch committees, the International Foundation for Banc d'Arguin (FIBA) and the French Global Environment Fund (FFEM) organized in Ouagadougou a forum of West African environmental NGOs under the theme: « local NGOs : place, role, experiences and future for protected areas management in West Africa ». This event brought together more than 60 people, representatives of 34 local NGOs and associations coming from 14 West African countries, local communities and other resource persons. Many subjects such as how to establish and manage community based areas, decentralization, NGO/State collaboration, sustainable funding, etc. have been addressed during training sessions, case studies presentations and group discussions. Recommendations have then been formulated for, among others, better taking into consideration biological diversity in local policies. In this newsletter and in the next issue, the various case studies presented during the forum are summarized by main topic. The full report of the forum will be available on www.papaco.org next month, and a discussion forum will be launched on the website.

Topic 1: « Creation of community protected areas in West Africa: assets, constraints and perspectives »

■ Sitatunga Valley, a natural community based reserve, established by CREDI-NGO Benin ■

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In 2006, CREDI-NGO, a newly-established Beninese association which mission is to promote aquaculture, decided to set up a small fish farm at about thirty km from Cotonou, the economic capital city of Benin. This farm is located far in a wet and green valley. Being too busy with

the management of its fish farm, the NGO does not pay attention to the site's immediate natural environment. It was not before 2007 that pygmy crocodiles (*Osteoleamus*), sitatungas (*Tragelaphus spekei*) and other animals seen in the farm and surroundings draw the attention of the NGO's managing staff. By consulting people's memory and by making thorough research, they discovered the great natural and cultural richness of the valley. As the NGO fell under this impressive ecosystem's spell, it decided to establish a community based natural reserve and to add environment protection to its primary mission. It first named this site "Sitatunga corridor", after the emblematic aquatic antelope of the dominating swampy ecosystem. At the end of 2007, the project for the establishment of the community natural reserve received the support of the French Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (PPI-FFEM) and of the Nature and discovery Foundation (*Fondation Nature et Découverte*).

A patient and careful process then began and information and awareness sessions started in Kpotomey village where the site is located. Preliminary surveys of fauna and flora were realized. A stocklist of more than 200 fauna species and 300 flora species was made. About thirty fauna species and ten flora species identified on the site were vulnerable or endangered (according to the IUCN Red List). With regard to the biological importance of this site, particularly as a wetland, the site was renamed "Sitatunga Valley".

The organization of communal and local elections in 2008 in the country left the NGO without real official interlocutor for about one year. Nevertheless, it continued its action on the field, and very quickly many villages established their own village committee for the management of environment (CVGE). The hunters on the riparian territory were also listed and brought together. These organizations will later give birth to the Sitatunga valley hunters' committee (CCVS) composed of nine members elected or selected by consensus. They constitute the NGO's direct and official interlocutors and play the role of interface between

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the NGO and communities. The role of the CVGE is to work towards sanitizing their territory and animating the socio-cultural life of the village. The role of the C CVS is to define and adopt sustainable and responsible hunting practices.

At the end of 2009, the NGO noticed that a sort of breaking-off between communities and their representatives was growing insidiously. To cope with this situation, the NGO created Village associations for environment management (AVGE) and Sitatunga valley hunters association (ACVS). The previous committees became their executive boards and the relationship was then re-established. From then on, membership to associations was no longer free (2000 CFA F- about 3 Euros- membership fees + 2000 CFA F for subscription dues). This increased members' involvement and submitted their representatives to an obligation to report on their activities.

In addition, being member of an association enables to benefit from CREDI-NGO services: free visits, access to (animal and financial) microcredit, free access to training and organized trips, etc.

In order to publicize and enhance the work of conservation done by communities, CREDI-NGO worked to the creation of a green museum for the reserve, in 2008. This museum is the main tool of the Sitatunga Valley eco-touristic and pedagogical enhancement strategy. For this, it presents a panel of the reserve small wild animals (fish, rodents, insects, snakes...) and game-related panels aiming at better understanding of natural phenomena around living creatures (water cycle, biodegradation, breathing...). Other planning and uses were realized within the reserve to facilitate discovery: pedestrian and aquatic circuits, observatories...



After the installation of the elected communal and local officials at the end of 2008, CREDI-NGO started actions of lobbying and advocacy which resulted in obtaining, to its great relief, an official communal decree recognizing the Sitatunga Valley natural reserve. A new official PA was born!

Today, the NGO focuses its action on accompanying and

strengthening the community based management process.

In fact, the sustainable conservation of the Sitatunga Valley totally depends on the relevance and effectiveness of this process, locally driven...

Forum analysis and recommendations: encouraging the creation of community protected areas

The participants unanimously recognized that classified or non classified ecosystems of the sub-region have been importantly degraded over the past years. The causes are mostly demographic, economic or political. According to the participants, there are however interesting resources to protect and conserve in classified forests as well as in village territories. The later constitutes NGO's centre of interest and might greatly contribute to the creation of new community based conservation areas. Successful cases already exist and could be reinforced. New creations can also be initiated with communities in all countries. NGOs committed to work in this direction and therefore made the following recommendations:

1. A better taking into consideration of the environmental dimension in the development of decentralized political strategies in West Africa,
2. A long-term commitment of financial partners (4 years minimum) to support their initiatives of Community protected areas creation.
3. States and decentralized communities must support their initiatives, and take the ownership of monitoring activities when the funding projects are over.

Topic 2: Forms of collaboration between NGOs and STATE

■ CREMAs as a strategy for the sustainable management of Mole National Park- Ghana ■

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Located in the Northern part of Ghana, Mole National Park is the largest protected area in Ghana with an area of 457 700 ha. The creation of the park in 1971 saw nine communities in the reserve area being forcibly resettled outside the borders of the park. The park management further adopted a strict and exclusive strategy which only aimed at conserving the park with very low concerns for the expectations of bordering communities.

Yet, the main activity of the bordering communities has always been farming (practiced by about 75% of the population) to which are added income generating activities such as the collection, processing and selling of non timber forest products (shea tree, "nééré", honey), hunting and small-scale trading.

Forty years after, resources around the park are running low and communities do not see any improvement in their lives, whereas the park relatively abounds in resources. We are therefore witnessing a new increase in poaching and illegal extraction of non timber forest products in the park. On many public platforms, traditional authorities do

not hesitate to make demands for the release of park lands for farming activities. For example, in the last quarter of 2009, the traditional authorities of Gonja, a locality located at the periphery of the park, contested the legitimacy of the park boundaries and demanded that one third of the park be released to local people for farming!

The future of biodiversity in Mole NP stands at great risk if conservation strategies that bring on board all stakeholders for the common purpose of sustainable natural resource management in communal lands and in the nearby protected areas are not employed.

In order to address this issue, the State of Ghana adopted, in 2000, the *Collaborative Resource Management Policy*. CREMA (Community Resource Management Area) approach was adopted as a strategic way forward for securing protected areas and natural resources.

CREMAs as a strategy to bridge conservation and livelihood gap around Mole NP

A Rocha (ARG) is a Ghana local NGO member of A Rocha International. It has been in operation since 1999 and provides practical conservation interventions aimed at contributing to the sustainable management of important ecological habitats. ARG receives supports both technical and financial from several committed donor agencies, enabling it to continue its work in many ecological areas in Ghana. The key donors are: IUCN-Netherlands, UNWTO (Tourism), US Fish and Wildlife Service and SNV.

In 2005, the NGO decided to engage actively with Mole National Park Management and look for the ways and means to minimize the threats from fringe communities in ways that are sustainable and afford opportunity for community participation in the management of the park. Therefore, the NGO adopted the CREMA approach as work method.

What is the CREMA approach?

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) are physically defined geographical areas that may encompass one or more communities that have agreed to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. The CREMA approach creates an incentive for farmers to sustainably manage and use their natural resources after being given the authority to manage and benefit from natural resources. The underlying philosophy is that, if natural resources are given focused value and communities are given the authority to manage, then they will have the incentive to sustainably manage and conserve.

Through the implementation of the CREMA strategy the following have been achieved:

- A continuum of 647.31 sq km of community managed areas established from Mongori to Yazori on the south-eastern boundary of Mole NP, with communities working to develop management plans for these areas. Resources assessment conducted in these

areas indicated that these off-reserve areas have appreciable density and diversity of wildlife.

- In the western boundary of the Mole NP, a CREMA of 165 sq km has also been established in Jelinkon.
- Participating communities now collaborating with the Park authorities to report illegal activities by recalcitrant individuals, within their respective communities.
- About 150 actors have been trained and supported in beekeeping enterprise, for which a functional value chain has been developed to facilitate easy marketing of produce.
- In Mognori, an eco-tourism enterprise called "Mognori Eco-Village - a life in tune with nature" has been developed. This enterprise directly employs about 45 people from the community. Revenue from the enterprise goes into a community development fund which is used in supporting development projects facilitated by district assembly.
- Protected Area Management Advisory Units (PAMAU) trained and supported to dialogue and negotiation and to establish modalities for communities to access resources (both consumptive and non-consumptive) within Mole National Park.
- In Yazori CREMA, a game hunting enterprise managed by the community is under development.



Forum analysis and recommendations: for a better collaboration between NGOs and States

At the forum, discussions on the collaboration between States and NGOs for the management of protected areas highlighted how much these two parts are complementary both for the management of classified areas and the management of community areas. In both cases, the level of collaboration varies according to the country. In fact, national protected areas are managed by the State in most countries. One case of concession granted to a local NGOs was described in Burkina Faso. But, in this case, the State provided support to improve the management of the areas concerned through a project. The following recommendations have been formulated to improve collaboration between NGOs and States:

1. To formalize the relationships between NGOs and States by defining a legal framework which describes the role of each actor in the West African countries;
2. To involve associations and NGOs in the design of natural resources management policies;
3. To facilitate the issue of official documents that enable NGOs to effectively protect community areas;
4. To encourage state services to change the way they perceive NGOs (local NGOs and associations must not be perceived as competitors by state services);
5. To make NGOs participate in natural resources management structures.

Topic 3: decentralization and PAs' management: legal framework, actors and competencies

■ A partnership between NGOs and local communities for the management of a classified forest- Burkina Faso ■

By Mamadou KARAMA, executive secretary
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The decentralization process is in progress in Burkina Faso with its related institutional changes, both at national and local levels. The introduction of this institutional innovation has given birth to new actors on the ground: decentralized communities.

In the AGEREF/CL area of intervention, a local association working for the management of natural resources in the western part of the country and owning a fauna reserve concession, two communes (municipalities) have been created (Mangodara and Niangoloko communes) with acknowledged competencies in natural resources management.

From then on, as a pioneer, the association had to harmoniously integrate in this process and together with both communes, encourage a dynamic and mutually profitable partnership that enhances the conservation of nature and ecological resources. For this, the NGO initiated and activated a process of participatory consultation including local administration, local elected officials (mayors and councillors), provincial directorates in charge of environment, agriculture, hydraulics and fisheries, and animal resources. IUCN-Netherlands supported this process through its Ecosystems Grants Programme (EGP).

The consensus reached at the end of the various consultations has been put down in a collaborative convention between AGEREF/CL and the communes of Banfora (the nearest main city), Mangodara and Niangoloko, for the management of the classified forest on the one hand, and of natural resources of communal areas on the other hand. This document stipulates the rights and duties of each party, the framework and periodicity of consultations as well as the arbitrating authority. From now on, it constitutes the reference framework for all joint interventions and a fertile ground to the emergence of local environmental governance, economically viable and socially acceptable.

Example of Rights and Obligations put down in the memorandum

AGEREF/CL has to:

- Support and develop specific action plans for the management of communal areas' natural resources;
- Pay to the communes 10% of the net profit made from the area's exploitation;

- Initiate a local tax proposal which will be directly collected by the communes;
- Support communes in the creation and management of village areas of hunting interest (ZOVICs) and communal forests.

The communes have to:

- Provide the appropriate political support to AGEREF/CL;
- Support AGEREF/CL in its activities of management and protection of the forests;
- Initiate the creation ZOVICs and communal forests for conservation;
- Support AGEREF/CL in funds' raising through advocacy actions with technical and financial partners.

Forum analysis and recommendations: how to improve collaboration between NGOs and communities?

The analysis made by the participants to the forum on the current state of collaboration between NGOs and decentralized communities shows that West African countries are not at the same level of decentralization. In some countries, like Bissau Guinea or Cape Verde for example, decentralization is not enough developed. Decision is still made by the State, sometimes through regional delegations. In warring countries, decentralization does not even exist. In countries where the level of decentralization is "acceptable", NGOs and communities collaborate for the development and implementation of capacity building, technical support and fund research plans. Examples of formal partnerships exist (local conventions, memorandum of understanding). In spite of these successful examples, NGOs and communities face many difficulties that often make their work tough: absence of a budget line to support or promote collaboration with NGOs, "monetization" of the relationships with communities' actors who always expect direct benefits from NGOs, a gap between NGOs and communities' level of understanding and technical capacity to manage natural resources, etc.

The following recommendations have been made:

1. To systematically formalize the collaboration between NGOs and communities by establishing communal consultation frameworks to facilitate communication between the different actors met on the commune's territory;
2. To systematically institutionalize NGOs' involvement in the establishment of PAs in communes;
3. To undertake communication/lobbying campaigns nationwide and locally with communes to publicize the advantages of working closely with NGOs;
4. To consider the allocation of a percentage of the budget of agreed/developed projects in communes to support the communal budget with management costs;
5. To support the setting up of transparent financial management systems in communes;

¹ Association for the management of Comoé Léraba (Burkina Faso) fauna resources

6. To avoid the “monetization” of partnerships (subsistence allowance and others). The funds should be used to develop projects rather than supporting salaries, indemnities, primes, etc. in town councils.
7. To develop the capacities of communes in managing the environment



Another example in Senegal: a local convention for the sustainable management of Mbédap natural resources

This initiative sprang from the communities of Mbédap area (rural community of Fissel, Thiès region in Senegal). Facing the extinction of many flora and fauna species, they formulated and introduced a request for a technical and methodological support to the Senegalese NGO IED (Innovation, Environment and Development in Africa). In order to meet this request, the NGO benefited from the support of many partners including IUCN- Netherlands. This support was materialized by the impulse of a participatory “research-action” process in collaboration with all actors. IED Africa has set up a learning group for the self-management of the process, and for a better enhancement of local experiences and individual aptitudes. This iterative process enabled to obtain excellent results on the ground.

In fact, the intervention of IED Africa facilitated the involvement of communities in the local management of their ecosystems through the definition of common rules agreed by all and in relation with the rural council. Moreover, this process contributed to biodiversity restoration by creating a protected area stretching over 200 ha, including four ponds. The process also enabled populations to better get access to resources and strengthen the social links and their organizational structures. This process had an important phase for women capacity building, which led to the reduction of wood consumption as source of energy. Today, this experience is extended to other villages of the same local community around the site.

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News from the conference of the parties to the CBD- Nagoya

Nagoya, Japan, 28 October 2010- A donor roundtable for the funding of West Africa protected areas will be organized in the first quarter of next year. The announcement was made on 28 October by the Minister who represented the Prime Minister of Guinea Bissau on behalf of his peers of the sub-region. It was in the sideline of the 10th conference of the parties to the CBD during a special event organized by the Regional Programme for the conservation of the coastal and marine area (PRCM) and the Lifeweb initiative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Ministers of environment of The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Mauritania and a representative of their Senegalese colleague committed to strongly support this initiative, and they were followed by partners of development : Germany, Netherlands, Spain, the World Global Facility (FEM), the European Union, WWF International, Wetlands International Africa.

All the ministers who took the floor showed the assets and results obtained in terms of conservation, but they all recognized that there is still lot of work to do. So, Guinea announced that it will extend its rate of protected areas cover which is presently 8% to 25% by 2020.

IUCN closing statement

Deadline Life - Nagoya defines future for life on earth

Nagoya, Japan, Fri 29 Oct 2010 (IUCN) – Governments meeting at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10) have approved a step change for biodiversity: a new Strategic Plan for the next ten years to reduce the current pressures on the planet’s biodiversity and take urgent action to save and restore nature; an agreed new protocol on access and benefit sharing; and pledged serious new resources to bring the agreements to life.

The plan consists of 20 targets designed to tackle the extinction crisis and restore the earth’s natural capital. There is also a deal, following hours of intensive all night negotiations on an agreement for a new international regime to give access to genetic resources, while at the same time making sure that benefits derived from them are properly shared (ABS), and a strategy for effective financing to fund efforts to save the natural world.

“We’ve seen history in the making here in Nagoya with a landmark agreement now in place that defines the future

for life on earth,” says **Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN Director General**. “Here in Japan the international community has moved closer to the realisation that it’s time we stopped considering nature as expendable, and any related expenditure a write-off - it’s time we valued and conserved nature.”

The stakes have been high at the Nagoya conference. The latest IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, released two days ago, showed that nature’s very backbone is at risk – with a third of species assessed seriously threatened and many among them facing the risk of extinction. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study, known as TEEB, warns us that many of the benefits of nature that we have been taking for granted and enjoyed for free up until now are at risk of running out. The Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 showed that we are on the verge of catastrophic and irreversible tipping points.

“What we’ve decided at this meeting will change the future of life on Earth - and many solutions are available to us,” says **Jane Smart, Director of IUCN’s Biodiversity Conservation Group**. “We know that targeted conservation action works. Results from the latest Red List show us that the status of biodiversity would have declined by an additional 20 percent at least, if conservation action had not been taken.”

“Participants may be leaving Nagoya this Saturday but they still need to be working to save life on this planet from Monday morning. We need to harness the energy of this meeting, where we’ve seen huge and significant commitments in terms of reinvigorated political will as well as real money from the likes of Japan and in terms of pledges to increase protected areas from the likes of Guinea Bissau. We need to bring the plan to life for life.”

“We’ve also seen increased participation and real engagement from the business community, local authorities and national politicians. There is a momentum here which we cannot afford to lose - in fact we have to build on it if we stand any chance of success in halting the extinction crisis. We congratulate the Government of Japan for their leadership at this Summit.”

“The scale of the threats facing nature is now clear. Government have agreed precisely in the forming of 20 clear targets on what needs to be done, enshrining them in an agreed decision to adopt a Strategic Plan at COP10. We now have the opportunity to bring this to life”

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New publications available on the web site www.papaco.org page our publications (studies and evaluations)

1. Parks and reserves of Ghana
2. Le tourisme dans les aires protégées d’Afrique de l’Ouest – quelle contribution à la conservation ?



« ATLAS DE LA BIODIVERSITE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE »

The official launching of the *Atlas de la Biodiversité de la Francophonie* was held on 10/27/2010 during a side event organized at the CBD CoP10 in Nagoya. Hundreds of representatives of the Francophone countries, international organizations and European Commission (EU) took part in this event chaired by Fatimata Dia Touré, Director of IEPF and opened with a presentation of the atlas’ content by Jean-Claude Jacques, Chief of IUCN representation at the EU. The Director General of IUCN, Julia Marton-Lefèvre and the Executive Secretary of the CBD, Ahmed Djoghlaif have insisted on the need to continue this work by 2012, in the form of a global atlas on biodiversity and a dynamic electronic version of the Francophone atlas. Diane Jean, Vice Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Parks of Quebec, has underlined all the interest of such a work co financed by Quebec.

The atlas is available at:

<http://www.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2010-055-En.pdf>
<http://www.iepf.org/ressources/ressources-pub-desc.php?id=377> or via www.papaco.org

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