

► The West African Protected Areas Newsletter



« La Lettre des Aires Protégées en Afrique de l'Ouest »
Nature conservation NGOs' Forum

N°37
December 2010



As a reminder, the previous APAO newsletter illustrated part of the various case studies discussed by topic during the forum on West African environmental NGOs held last June in Ouagadougou, with more than 35 local NGOs. The present issue of the newsletter presents three other case studies related to other topics.

For the record, the whole report will be available in December on www.papaco.org. The forum will also continue online on the website. Any contribution is welcome!

Topic 4: NGO, conservation and equity

■ Women involvement in community PAs management: the case of the restoration of damage mangrove sites and sun salt pan - Guinea ■

By Cécé Noël KPOGHOMOU, Executive Director, ODIL NGO/ Guinea, cecenoel04@yahoo.fr

The Republic of Guinea has an important capital of natural resources which constitutes the main basis for animal and vegetal production from which 80% of the population depend. Today, the intensive exploitation of this ecosystem's resources by populations has reached a critical threshold. This situation accelerates degradation and requires the setting up of sustainable management rules based on a better knowledge of the present situation and a wide consultation with the actors involved.

Located in the Lower Guinea region, the Sangaréya bay is an excellent area for salt, rice and firewood production. These activities annually destroy an average 4.2% of the

mangrove surface area. Mangrove wood is used by populations as fuel wood. Thus, it both constitutes a source of domestic energy and a source of revenue for the population in general, and for women in particular.

Concerned by the fragility of this ecosystem, and with the support of the Netherlands Committee of IUCN (IUCN-NL) "Ecosystems Grants Program" (EGP), the Integrated Littoral Development Organization (ODIL) initiated actions aiming at ensuring a rational management of the Guinea littoral natural resources, and encouraging an active participation of women.

The activities carried out enabled to obtain quite interesting results for the NGO and communities. A few examples of these activities are:

- The setting up of three women groups officially recognized in catering business and salt production;
- The reforestation of 10 ha of areas left bare by human pressure in the bay;
- Consensually placing under protection 8445 ha of mangrove out of 52 000 ha;
- The progressive dropping of destructive mangrove resources exploitation practices;
- The local population's awareness raising on the ecological, economic and cultural values of mangroves for their survival...

Forum analysis and recommendations: for a better perception of the equity concept

The participants to the forum underlined that most often the concept of equity is reduced to its mere form of creating or promoting women activities. Whereas men are highly involved in conservation activities, we have to notice and acknowledge that women are more often kept aside consultations and decision-making processes on protected areas management.



This approach of equity is correct. However, it is also too restrictive and NGOs have to go beyond this simplistic perception and take into account all social classes in their interventions (not only a gender approach).

The forum strongly recommended that women's (and other "minorities") role and place be promoted in the following areas:

1. Consultation and decision-making processes within the community;
2. Data collection and biodiversity surveys;
3. Income generating activities;
4. Management, monitoring and ecotourism activities in protected areas.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF EQUITY IN BENIN: INVOLVING WOMEN IN MANGOVES MANAGEMENT

Created in 1998, the *Association des Femmes Exploitantés de la Lagune* (AFEL), a development research-action NGO has been working to preserve the natural richness of the laguna through the dissemination of improved techniques that can reduce the pollution and the degradation of the laguna and increase the revenues of local populations.

In order to successfully achieve this mission, the NGO has placed women at the heart of its activities. Thus, supported by French GEF (FFEM) in 2007, the NGO has provided training to 250 women in solar salt production techniques. And this enabled to produce 50 tons of sun salt, saving about 350 cubic meters of mangrove wood...

Another support from IUCN-NL enabled the NGO to continue its activities and achieve the following main results: the integral protection of mangrove areas, the adoption of salt production by evaporation under the sun rather than heating with mangrove wood, and mangrove replanting.

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Topic 5: Managing human dynamics in and around PAs

■ A local convention to manage human pressures around and within the Bafing Protected Area - Mali ■

By Moriba NOMOKO, AMCFE / Mali
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Located in the South-West of Mali in Bafoulabè and Kiniéba circles, the Bafing fauna reserve was created in 1990 further to the construction of a dam on the Bafing

River at Manantali. This reserve aimed at creating a refuge for the wildlife which habitat was considerably reduced by the dam. At the same time, the dam construction had created an important movement of populations who settled around the reserve.

Populations' great need for resources generated conflicts. These conflicts have then increased between the park resource managers, local populations (indigenous populations) and transhumance stockbreeders whom have come to look for pasture and water for their livestock.

Facing this issue, the Mali association for wildlife and environment conservation (AMCFE) got the support of IUCN-NL for the implementation of the project: "Managing conflicts for a sustainable use of natural resources around the Bafing fauna reserve"; the objective is to develop a consensual convention that sets up the rules for the use of the locality's natural resources.

A participatory assessment has been conducted with the communities, technical services and NGOs. Following this assessment, a series of consultations resulted in the development and adoption of a conflict prevention framework convention around the Bafing fauna reserve.

This convention is supported by six communes of Bafoulabé, Kéniéba and Kita circles. It is managed by a local management structure named "association Sgida Kanu du Bafing (ASKA)". This convention already enabled to achieve some results namely:

- The reduction of communities' pressure (farmers, stockbreeders and forestry agents and poachers) on the protected area's resources;
- The acceptance of transhumance stockbreeders who establish contracts with farmers to provide fertilizers;
- The establishment of a confidence climate between protected area's users and managers by organizing meetings in the communes and protection and monitoring missions with village monitoring committees (mixed patrols);
- The materialization of a transhumance track;
- The installation of information boards at the various entries of the reserve; and
- The training of more than 150 members from grassroots communities' associations and organizations.

Analysis and recommendations of the forum: how to conciliate communities' disagreements around PAs

Managing human dynamics around protected areas remains a complex issue. According to the participants to the forum, the causes of natural resources management conflicts are of many orders: the story of the area's classification, the availability of the resource and the actors involved (farmers, stockbreeders, park managers, fishermen...). It is therefore a problem which goes beyond

the competence of local NGOs. Legal authorities, that means states and local authorities, are the primary actors of the issue's management. However, the neutrality of local NGOs and their level of involvement in the conservation of natural resources give them a special place that enables them to stimulate debate and propose solutions aiming at creating consultation frameworks and natural resources management rules around PAs. The final aim is to encourage each actor of the community living in, or around the protected area to integrate the environmental issue in its daily activities. The participants to the forum unanimously agreed on the fact that the conservation of resources around or within the PA and



local development go together. For this, they have made recommendations that give more consideration to local communities' socioeconomic concerns. It is about:

1. Taking local communities into account in sharing the benefits deriving from PAs enhancement;
2. Creating a consultation framework which brings together all the actors (indigenous and foreign-born) around PAs;
3. Involving communities in some PAs' activities such as management, monitoring, enhancement and ecological monitoring;
4. Taking more into consideration local development (income generating activities, realization of important infrastructures, etc.) and sensitization by donors through conservation projects' selection criteria.

Another example of human dynamics management within and around PAs: in Niger, giraffe conservation as a community-based development driver

The last herd of West African giraffes lives in Niger in Kouré locality, at about 50 km in the South of Niamey. The particularity of this giraffe population is that they don't leave in a classified forest. Living in farms, they share the same habitat with humans and cattle. Even if giraffes find their food in this region, they have been so far threatened by the competition for natural resources, including forest species which represent their main source of fodder and which are used by populations as source of energy and food for their livestock. Another source of conflict is when giraffes eat farmers' beans and fruit trees.

The Association for the protection of Niger giraffes (ASGN) is fighting to maintain the fragile human-giraffe balance. For this, the association has based its approach on the principle according to which "giraffe must be considered by local populations as a resource and not a constraint". The association therefore set three priorities: (i) the socio economic development of populations (ii) raising their awareness (iii) protecting giraffes and their

habitat. This work, done in addition to the activities of the services in charge of wildlife protection in Niger and supported by many donors including French GEF (FFEM), enabled ASGN to get many results.

On the one hand, the association has organized communities in groups, granted between 2007 and 2009 about 72 000 000 CFA francs of microcredit to communities to develop income generating activities and 29 000 000 CFA francs to improve agricultural practices; it has constructed 11 wells, installed three grain mills and provided education and training for the sustainable management of habitats. On the other hand, we note a more and more peaceful cohabitation between humans and giraffes and an increase in giraffes' population which went from 49 individuals in 1996 up to about 220 in 2009 according to the counting done by the association.

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Topic 6: Sustainable financing of conservation NGOs

■ Eco-tourism: a solution for sustainable financing around the Aheme Lake and in Tanongou village at the periphery of the Pendjari National Park? Benin ■

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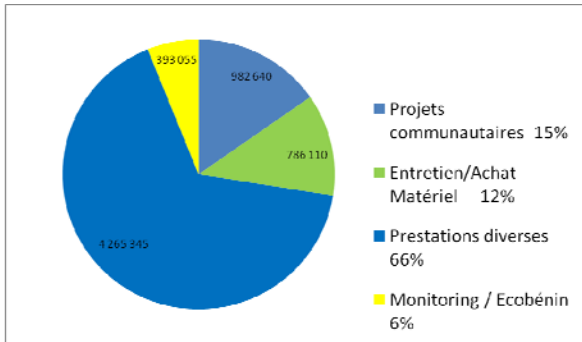
Eco-Benin is a Beninese non-governmental NGO created in 1999. Its mission is to promote eco-tourism and local development projects.

In the Ahémé Lake region which is particularly rich in biodiversity and which welcomes many tourists, Eco-Benin NGO has settled near the lake in order to organize the lake's exploitation and promote more environment-friendly eco-tourist activities with the involvement of a community-based association. On the Ahémé Lake site, Eco-Benin proposes region discovery tours led by eco-guides (tours around the Lake, by foot, by bicycle or boat, learning fishing techniques, visiting craftsmen workshops, discovering voodoo divinities sanctuaries, ornithological observation, initiation to medical plants, traditional cooking lessons, etc.).

Thanks to FFEM funding, the local association has bought small boats, tents, bicycles and life jackets to go on the engineless small boats. Today, the results of eco-tourist activities are promising:

At the economic level: In 2009, there were about 400 tourists, which generated 1 596 500 CFA francs (guiding), 1 266 600 CFA francs (catering), 2 337 500 CFA francs (stay in hotel), and other income from ecotourism (selling of postal cards and art objects). In 2008, 212 tourists had visited the site for 927 000 CFA francs income and 218

people came for promotional visits. Distribution grids have been defined for the use of eco-tourist activities incomes.



At the social level : Barter market shed, school kits, sponsoring of deprived children, small part-time jobs, micro-projects funded, extension of activities around the Ahémé Lake, international trips for community members, setting up of a community-based computer centre...

At the environmental level: Protection of vervets and mona monkeys, hygiene and sanitation of the environment (provision of about ten waste bins), development of a waste action plan, environment club, bank management, planting of mangrove...

Concerning project ownership: 10 eco-guides are now able to guide, welcome and provide catering; respect of load capacity of sites, raising tourists' awareness, 10 sites are operational for tourism welcome, raising mayors' awareness, visibility of Benin in eco-tourism community.

The other success of Eco-Benin is the support of Tanongou village at the periphery of the Pendjari National Park in the search for alternative additional incomes through the development or the strengthening of eco-tourist activities. This joint support with the German technical cooperation (GTZ) enabled to train 66 specialized village micro-entrepreneurs in tourist sectors and generate a total of five million five hundred thousand CFA francs in 2009.

These Eco-Benin two experiences at Possotomé and Tanongou constitute real sources of funding based on the sustainable natural resources exploitation and the enhancement of local know-how.

Analysis and recommendations of the forum: for sustainable modes of financing

Participants recognized that local NGOs benefit from many sources of funding. However, the sustainability of all these funds is not yet established. Generally, small grants extend over two years only. Difficulties also exist to raise and efficiently manage the funds. Some difficulties raised during the forum are the low capacity of some NGOs to mobilize and manage funds efficiently. Among the difficulties the forum also underlined the low capacity of some NGOs to elaborate reliable project proposals, the absence of diagnosis before developing projects, the high level of the co-financing required by donors and the

inaccessibility to large funds which are generally collected by international NGOs. The forum also recognized the relevance of external funds as source of sustainable funding while underlining the low level of these funds compared to the actors' needs and the difficulties linked to their statute of non lucrative structures.

The forum has made proposals aiming at improving the existing modes of financing and making them more sustainable:

1. The reconsideration of the small grants' duration from 2 years to at least 4 years;
2. Reducing the amount of the co-financing that donors request from local NGOs (bring the current rates of 30-40% down to 10%);
3. Building NGOs' capacities in project development and management techniques;
4. The necessity for local NGOs to work in synergy rather than considering each other as competitors;
5. The need to see international NGOs help local NGOs have access to large funds instead of screening them off.



GENERAL CONCLUSION OF THE FORUM

Which conclusions can we draw from this original meeting?

First, it constitutes the first experience of its kind in the region. It allowed the gathering of 36 representatives of local NGOs coming from 14 West African countries; a perfect opportunity to stimulate exchanges and discussions between these field actors who work daily with local populations in support for the long-term preservation of ecosystems and the sustainable management of their natural resources.

Discussions have been vigorous, exciting and always constructive, and are presented, as well as the main recommendations, in the proceedings of the forum (see papaco.org). They will therefore not be summarized here. Rather, this conclusion will highlight the general principles that this meeting enabled to recall.

First of all, what can we retain from the field observations? That we can both be pessimistic and optimistic at the same time...

A pessimistic observer will retain from the state of environment in West Africa, that natural resources, which used to be outstanding and abundant, are now decreasing fast, often irreversibly, in the entire region.

Some ecosystems are of course better protected than others, but globally, in parks as well as "other protected areas", at their periphery or in "wild lands" under villages' authority, the remaining natural resources (forests, fishing, and wildlife) are threatened. The absence of an economic alternative to a not very intensive farming, droughts and soils impoverishment, the free access to most natural resources, livestock needs, etc. are elements which combine to make overexploitation and deterioration continue, and even increase in a near future. Today, there is twice more rural population than thirty years ago, and this makes the demographic issue a crucial one. And an unsolved issue...

Face to this situation, an optimistic observation is that many solutions are successfully put in place, mainly at the local level and through global regulations too.

One of the most promising solutions comes from the global decentralization movement and the transfer of natural resources management to local authorities, communes and regions. This transfer often (but not always!) enables to manage natural resources more sustainably as local populations take ownership of this management.

Another hope comes from the civil society. West African NGOs are now engaged. And even if they sometimes lack experience compared to organizations from other continents, or even from other African regions, the 18 experiences exposed in the report of the forum are a live testimony of their dynamic involvement and effectiveness. With very modest means, without daily subsistence allowance or 4X4 vehicles, young (and less young!) people who graduated or not, put themselves at the service of populations and try to help them to better manage their natural resources.

This movement has to be supported and creates a real lever effect; some solutions exist and are accessible to the various actors concerned by the issue of biodiversity conservation (and more globally of natural resources) in West Africa. Therefore, they have to be mobilized.



Among the recommendations (28) made, we would like to underline some of them intended for "authorities", states and local authorities, donors and NGOs themselves... These recommendations are given with the aim of improving effectiveness and developing a spirit of partnership between these actors.

To the states first, we recall that NGOs crucially need a political support and an official mandate to obtain results and ensure their sustainability. Some administrations still consider NGOs as competitors to their prerogatives and in the access to funds. We rather ask them to consider NGOs as real partners, who complement their actions, and therefore to multiply work contracts which gives to NGOs the legitimacy to work more effectively. We also ask them to exercise their sovereign control, and make a judgement on the basis of the results obtained.

To local authorities, we ask them to turn to NGOs which employ young graduates who have competencies and qualifications that often lack in communes and administrations.

To donors, we recall that financial support over a period of two or three years is too short to obtain sustainable results in the fight against natural resources degradation. The causes of this degradation are structural, based on long-term phenomena, and this justifies the conception of long-term support. In addition, the amounts of these supports will remain small, especially when compared to the size of the stakes. We remind them that with the amount of a unique « classical » natural resources conservation project (which can reach 2 billion CFA francs), as many West African projects benefited, it is possible to finance about one hundred initiatives borne by local NGOs such as those presented in the forum report. We think that these projects which are truly supported and managed by the civil society and strongly rooted will provide more concrete results on the field and allow local actors to acquire competencies forever.

Finally, the **NGOs** ourselves are aware that we must acquire a culture of results and accept to be judged on concrete contractual, realistic and measured results at the end of the projects we manage. We also have to put our

knowledge, contacts and experiences in common and not consider each other as competitors, particularly as far as access to funds is concerned.

In the end, this meeting allowed to be aware of the vitality and enthusiasm of the West African civil society's movement that deals with environmental issues. It has permitted to compare various approaches and methods, to get advice from colleagues, exchange information and become aware that room for manoeuvre and progress are possible.

Our final recommendation, if any, is to continue this productive and motivating exchange in two very concrete ways:

- By setting up a simple information system (regular newsletter?) in which everybody could give information on the progress made in the various projects, but also the difficulties encountered;
- By organizing meetings of the same kind in the future and on a regular basis.

So, let us meet in 2012, for the Rio+20 in order to make an assessment of what we will have done with our 28 recommendations!

Remember: Online Experts Database

Remember that you can register on our database of « regional experts » available on our website www.papaco.org, section *Experts database*.

This database is intended to enable all experts involved in protected areas of the region to be known and contacted.

If you have any question while registering send an email to: uicn@papaco.org



New Papaco's publication

A new book is available on our website www.papaco.org / page "our publications" (evaluations)

Parcs et réserves du Niger



News from the world...



Opening remarks made during the first GEF-5 Council Meeting, by Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (extracts) 39th Council meeting – 16 November 2010

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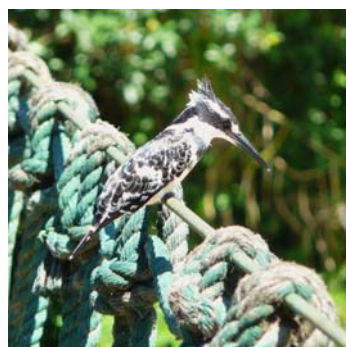
We have a busy week ahead of us. It is my hope that, like me, you left the Nagoya Conference brimming with energy and optimism.

...

The Nagoya Conference was historic, and for the GEF it was also extraordinary. Our delegation attended over 30 events during the meeting. The GEF booth, which was organized in collaboration with GEF Agencies, was visited by roughly 4,500 people during the course of the meeting. Our delegation received frequent requests to provide technical support to the negotiators and the chairs of contact groups. This support was very well received by the Parties and the CBD Secretariat. This, in my view, attests to the fact that solid cooperation between the GEF Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Conventions is key to ensuring alignment of the strategies of the Conventions with the financial resources required for their implementation.

...

Our first work program for the GEF-5 is another important item on the agenda. Resource programming is the mainspring of the GEF—it is at the heart of its mandate. Donor countries have pledged substantial financial resources to the GEF-5, a testament to their trust in our institution and its capacity to use these resources in the most effective way possible to generate real impact on the ground. This is why the quality of our programming is so important.



To prepare this work program, the GEF reviewed 37 proposals; however, only five are being submitted for your approval. Why? First, because we have limited resources at our disposal for programming as donors have only just begun to honor their pledges. We also accorded priority to the Small Grants Programme. And yet, even if more resources had been

available, these projects would have failed to meet our requirements for submission to the Council.

I was in fact disappointed with the poor quality of the projects we received for this first work program, which fell far short of GEF quality standards. We must target high-quality projects. Specifically, we must return to the GEF's founding principles, which I now wish to highlight:

- First, GEF projects must be aligned with country development strategies, which can be existing

strategies, such as the country development strategies, or outcomes from GEF-supported consultation processes.

- Second, funding incremental costs to generate global environmental benefits is the fundamental principle of the GEF. These “incremental costs” relate, of course, to a baseline project. It is therefore essential for these “baseline projects” to be clearly identified and for the GEF to build on these existing activities or those that have already been planned. We must not compromise on this principle, otherwise we will continue to receive mediocre projects that lack a solid foundation and have no connection with the real project developers in the countries.
- Third, we must systematically seek to achieve real impact on the ground. The GEF cannot continue to finance a whole host of small pilot projects. After 20 years of operations, the GEF must instead target programs that can significantly transform sectors and activities, and be able to closely track the impact of its projects. This is why we are proposing a new programmatic approach and an ambitious results-based management system.
- Fourth, our instrument will have maximum effectiveness if the projects are implemented by the GEF Agencies best qualified to do so. For example, a fisheries project must be implemented by an Agency that can provide the expertise, personnel, and resources for this project. This principle is key to the promotion of the integration of the GEF portfolio into the normal activities of the Agencies. Instead, a number of Agencies continue to develop major project portfolios in a number of focal areas without any expertise in this focal area and without having even identified this focal area in their strategic areas of intervention! This incurs high transaction costs. We therefore intend to adhere to our policy on comparative advantage for the Agencies in GEF-5.
- Lastly, the review of the proposals that we received once again underscored the issue of management fees and costs of our projects. The manner in which fees are used by the Agencies is not transparent. It is therefore impossible for the Secretariat to ascertain how these fees are being used and for which activities. Furthermore, it appears that projects include costs that should not be borne by the GEF. For that reason, this issue, in our view, warrants discussion by the Council.

These principles, which will guarantee quality programming, are also necessary to ensure the success of the reforms adopted for GEF-5. It is now time for these reforms to be implemented, with the engagement of all stakeholders: the Secretariat, the Agencies, and the countries.

...

Another important reform relates to the expansion of our partnership. In light of what I have just said, it is clear to me that the GEF would benefit from the competition that will result from the introduction of new Agencies. We presented an initial proposal to the GEF Council in June. Since then we have been working with a task force of technical experts and a subcommittee of our Council to refine the proposal for the rules and procedure that will govern the expansion of the network.

This matter is included in the agenda, and I am looking forward to a robust dialogue.

Finally, the GEF must make a greater effort to include civil society and the private sector in its projects. This Council will take stock of the role of civil society organizations in our partnership in particular the role of indigenous peoples, and discuss ways of including them more in GEF operations. We will also carefully consider the evaluation of the Earth Fund and the possibilities for moving forward resolutely in our collaboration with the private sector.

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Call for interest

PAPACO is seeking an expert to conduct a **study on the identity, the interest, the relationship and the impact of stakeholders on protected areas in West Africa** ■

The ToRs are available on www.papaco.org
 Technical and financial proposals for this consultancy should be sent in French at the following address:
beatrice.chataigner@iucn.org. Deadline: 31^h of January 2011.



Université Senghor
 DÉPARTEMENT ENVIRONNEMENT

Training

IUCN-Papaco, in partnership with Senghor University (US) of Alexandria (Egypt), launches for the year 2011, a **new modular training course on “capacity building in protected areas management”**.

The training will take place from Monday, January 31st to Saturday, March 26th 2011 in two sites: Ouagadougou for theoretical training and Nazinga Ranch and bordering villages for the practical part of the training.

Inscription will be possible on line starting 20 December on the US website.

► The APAO's newsletter ◀

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