



**Projet d'Appui à la Protection et à la Régénération  
de l'Environnement et des Ressources  
Naturelles pour un Développement Durable  
(APREN)**



---

**FINAL EVALUATION OF PROJECT  
(CMR00G345/A/G/71): COMMUNITY-BASED  
CONSERVATION IN THE BAMENDA  
HIGHLANDS**

**REPORT**

**JANUARY 2007**

**ALIOU SALI**  
*Consultant*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	4
LIST OF TABLES .....	5
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
2. INTRODUCTION .....	7
2.1 Context of the evaluation .....	7
2.2 Objectives of the evaluation.....	7
2.3 Methodology for the evaluation.....	7
2.3.1 Data collection .....	7
2.3.2 Literature review .....	7
2.3.3 Guided interviews.....	8
2.3.4 Field visits.....	8
3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....	8
3.1 The Kilum-Ijim Forest Project .....	8
3.2 Bamenda Highlands Forest Project .....	9
3.3 Community Based Conservation in the Bamenda Highlands .....	9
4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....	9
4.1 BHFP Project Goal, Purposes and outputs.....	9
4.2 KIFP Project Goal, Purposes and outputs .....	10
5. OUTCOME OF THE EVALUATION.....	11
5.1 Structure of the evaluation.....	11
5.2 Project general objective .....	11
5.3 Outcome 1 and corresponding indicators .....	11
5.3.1 Present situation with respect to each indicator.....	11
5.3.1.1 <i>Levels of participation</i> .....	11
5.3.1.2 <i>Number of people with increased awareness</i> .....	12
5.4 Outcome 2 and corresponding indicators .....	13
5.4.1 Number of communities with legal rights to manage their forest....	14
5.4.2 Number of functional community-based institutions for forest management.....	17
5.4.3 Area of land under effective community management.....	19
5.4.4 Areas of land under effective government management for conservation.....	20
5.4.5 Existence of a functional TOU for the Kilum-Ijim forest in Bui and Boyo Divisions .....	21
5.4.6 Existence of an independent, functional system for monitoring forests in the Bamenda Highlands. ....	22

5.5	Outcome 3 and corresponding indicators .....	22
5.5.1	Number of sites for which baseline biodiversity inventory is complete .....	23
5.5.2	Number of sites identified and published as critical sites .....	23
5.5.3	Number of sites for which advocacy (by bird life or other including government) has been limited .....	24
5.5.4	Number of initial sites which are protected .....	24
5.6	Outcome 4 and corresponding indicators .....	24
5.6.1	Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt forest-dependent economic activities .....	25
5.6.2	Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt techniques of using natural resources more sustainably .....	25
5.6.3	Number of communities in selected sites which have identified priority intentions for more sustainable management of natural resources .....	26
5.6.4	Number of communities in selected sites which have initiated cutting on priority interventions for more sustainable management of natural resources .....	26
5.4	General observations .....	27
6.	PROJECT RELEVANCE, PERFORMANCE, IMPACT AND KEY LESSONS LEARNT .....	28
6.1	Relevance .....	28
6.2	Performance .....	29
6.2.1	Effectiveness .....	29
6.2.1	Efficiency .....	29
6.3	Impact .....	30
6.3.1	Sustainability .....	30
6.3.2	Contribution for capacity and Institutional development .....	30
6.4	Key lessons learnt .....	31
7.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	32
7.1	Conclusion .....	32
7.2	Recommendations .....	33
	ANNEXES .....	35
	Annex 1: Group work on overall project assessment .....	35

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

APM	Assistant Project Manager
BHFP	Bamenda Highlands Forest Project
CAMCOF	Cameroon Mountains Conservation Fund
CBCS	Cameroon Bio-Conservation Society
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEMON	Centre for Environmental Monitoring
CF	Community Forestry
CFDP	Community Forestry Development Project
CFU	Community Forestry Unit of MINEF
CIG	Common Initiative Group
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DGIS	Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Dutch Government
EoP	End of Project
FESP	Forest and Environment Sector Programme
FMI	Forest Management Institution
GoC	Government of Cameroon
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HRM	Human Resources Management
KIFP	Kilum Ijim Forest Project
MC	Management Convention
MINAT	Ministry of Territorial Administration
MINEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MINEP	Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection
MINEPIA	Ministry of Livestock
MINFOF	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
MINJUS	Ministry of Justice
MTR	Mid Term Review
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SDO	Senior Divisional Officer
SMP	Simple Management Plan
SNV	Dutch Development Cooperation
TOU	Technical Operational Unit
WHICOFON	Western Highlands Community Forestry Network

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b>	Progress of community forest attribution.....	14
<b>Table 2:</b>	Status of FMIs.....	15
<b>Table 3:</b>	Distribution of land areas under Community Management .....	19
<b>Table 4:</b>	Area of land under government for conservation.....	20
<b>Table 5:</b>	Critical biodiversity sites .....	23

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pending

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Context of the evaluation**

GEF-UNDP, entrusted the implementation of the community-based conservation in the Bamenda Highlands to Birdlife International. In line with the conditionalities set for the 3-years project, which ran from January 2001 to December 2004, a terminal evaluation was envisaged with the objectives below.

### **2.2 Objectives of the evaluation**

The objectives are to:

- Assess the extent to which the outcomes and objectives of the project were met and see the overall contribution of the two projects to the UNDP-GEF project objectives;
- Assess the relevance, performance (effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness), impact and sustainability of project implementation and management while highlighting the issues that require follow-up by MINEF, GEF-UNDP and Birdlife International;
- Assess relevance of the project context, appropriateness of its project design and the approaches to implementation and management at both a local and national level;
- Measure the status of the implementation of the planned outcomes/objectives in relation time frames;
- Judge the level of inclusion of the major stakeholders of the project (NGOs, MINEF and MINFOF) in the project implementation and management;
- Assess the effective integration of the projects into local, provincial and regional level policy issues and implementation;
- To measure the effective integration of the technical aspects of the Kilum-Ijim Forest Project and the Bamenda Highlands Forest Project.

### **2.3 Methodology for the evaluation**

#### **2.3.1 Data collection**

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for the evaluation. This entailed review of relevant literature, interviews and focus group discussions with project stakeholders and field visits to project sites.

#### **2.3.2 Literature review**

The literature consulted included quarterly reports of the projects, annual reports, mid-term review report, report of audits, annual progress review reports and the final project implementation report.

### **2.3.3 Guided interviews**

Interviews were conducted with representatives of all project stakeholders notably government services (MINEF, MINEPAT, MINATD), local NGOs, traditional authorities, community based groups, UNDP and Birdlife Cameroon and former project staff. Focus group discussions were also organised with community members of the KIFP and BHFP.

### **2.3.4 Field visits**

Field visits were undertaken to the project sites in Bamenda, Fundong and Oku. This enabled the complementation of secondary data as well as appraised project benefits in the community and institutional development in the area.

## **3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

GEF-UNDP entrusted the implementation of community-based conservation in the Bamenda Highlands to Birdlife International. This comprises the Bamenda Highlands Forest project and the Kilum-Ijim Forest Project. The montane forests of these highlands are particularly diverse and include a number of endemic and endangered species. However, the population pressure on natural resources in the Bamenda highlands is leading to forest clearance with consequent reduction of the natural forest cover.

### **3.1 The Kilum-Ijim Forest Project**

This mountain range is a montane forest habitat which is home to endemic bird and plant species. Birdlife International started conservation activities on the slopes of the Kilum range in 1987. This followed from surveys that identified priority sites for conservation within the Cameroon Mountains range including montane forests. A second project was established on the opposite side of Mount Kilum in 1991 known as the Ijim Mountain Forest Project. In 1995, the two projects were integrated to become the Kilum-Ijim Forest Project.

Cameroon introduced the concept of community forestry after the enactment of the 1994 forestry, wildlife and fisheries law. This notion was embraced by the Kilum-Ijim Project to work with local communities as actors in the conservation activity on the slopes of these mountain ranges. The conservation efforts currently covers 17,000ha and this phase of the project covering the period 2001-2004 was aimed at completing legal attribution of community forests and putting in place mechanisms for the sustainability of these community forests and the forest management institutions.



### **3.2 Bamenda Highlands Forest Project**

This project was initiated in 1999. The successes of the Kilum-Ijim forest project was a stimulant for other communities in the North West province who demanded to be assisted to conserve their forest resources. This project therefore aimed at scaling up the experiences of the KIFP, by providing support to local communities to embark on the community forest process while also developing capacities within civil society organisations and local MINEF staff who are to take over the community forest initiative at the end of the project. The project was designed to develop a constituency for community-based natural resources management.

### **3.3 Community Based Conservation in the Bamenda Highlands**

The Kilum-Ijim project and the Bamenda Highlands Forest Project were designed to have separate objectives in order to facilitate the follow-up of the execution. However, they were inter-connected and therefore evolved to be integrated under the GEF-UNDP funding as the Community Based conservation in the Bamenda Highlands. The implementing agency was Birdlife International Secretariat in the UK. The coordinating office shared the same office with the BHFP in Bamenda. This program had outputs and activities that almost entirely covered the objectives and outputs of the two components.

## **4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Community Based Conservation in the Bamenda Highlands were as follows:

- Enable communities, government and civil society to be aware of forest values and also enable forest adjacent communities and other stakeholders to have incentives to manage them sustainably for biodiversity.
- Put in place functional management and control systems for sustainable forest management among government, NGOs and CBOs.
- Identify and protect critical biodiversity sites through appropriate legal mechanism.
- Enable communities use their natural resources more sustainably in a way which supports forest conservation.

Specifically, KIFP and BHFP had the following objectives set out

### **4.1 BHFP Project Goal, Purposes and outputs**

Goal: People of the Bamenda Highland sustainably manage their natural resources for the benefit of the local communities while maintaining the ecological value of the forests in the long term.

- Purpose1: At least eight natural forests are effectively managed by local communities so as to provide increased benefits to those communities and enhanced ecological value.
- Purpose2: Sufficient capacity for natural resources management exists in the North West Province in order for other communities to undertake new conservation initiatives without external assistance.
- Output1: practical options for forest management that help to meet the needs of forest adjacent communities, while maintaining forest biodiversity are developed and demonstrated at a minimum of eight sites.
- Output2: capacity for conservation and sustainable natural resources management amongst local communities, traditional authorities, local NGOs and government is increased.
- Output3: A broad local constituency in support of conserving the natural heritage of the Bamenda highlands exists.

#### **4.2 KIFP Project Goal, Purposes and outputs**

- Goal: Representative areas of the Cameroon montane forest biome are conserved in the long-term.
- Purpose: A permanent forest management system ensures that the biodiversity, extent and ecological processes of the Kilum Ijim forest are maintained and the forest is used sustainably.
- Output1: The entire Kilum Ijim forest is effectively managed by the local communities with support from traditional authorities and government for conservation and sustainable use.
- Output2: A permanent government structure to support sustainable forest management and conservation at Kilum Ijim is in place and functioning.
- Output3: A permanent, independent system is in place for monitoring the use and condition of the forest and for feedback to technical advice to forest users and managers.
- Output4: A trust fund is in place to support ecological monitoring and other strategic activities that contribute to the long term conservation and sustainable use of the Kilum-Ijim forest.

## **5. OUTCOME OF THE EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Structure of the evaluation**

The presentation of the outcome of the final evaluation exercise begins with a statement on the general objective of the project as defined in the project document. This is followed by each of the expected project outcomes and the corresponding indicators. The project objective, the different project outcomes and their related indicators provide the background against which a detailed documented description of the current situation is made with regards to each indicator.

### **5.2 Project general objective**

**The general objective of project is that the People of Bamenda Highlands sustainably manage this forest for the benefit of the local communities while maintaining the ecological value of the forest in the long-term.**

### **5.3 Outcome 1 and corresponding indicators**

**Outcome: Communities, government and civil society are aware of forest values and forest adjacent communities and other stakeholders have incentives to manage them sustainably for biodiversity.**

**Indicators to monitor the outcome:**

- Levels of participation in programmed-organized events/activities for environmental awareness and advocacy.
- Number of people in general population and in government with increased awareness of forest values.

#### **5.3.1 Present situation with respect to each indicator**

##### **5.3.1.1 Levels of participation**

The involvement of communities, government and civil society in program organized events/activities justifies the participatory approach recommended for development interventions and sets the base for eventual take over of the conservation processes by the community. The assessment of community participation in program organized events illustrates a high level of participation. This participation was demonstrated through the role played by communities in program organized events/activities for

environmental awareness and advocacy as well as the activities carried out by the FMIs even after the existence of the project as follows:

- Planning, community mobilization and organization during awareness raising campaigns.
- Restitution of awareness exercises in communities
- Distribution and pasting of posters and bill boards in strategic places.
- Writing of circular letters to churches, schools, and “Njangi” and “Nkwifon” meetings on environmental issues.
- Forest patrols to check against intruders, illegal exploiters, bush fires and other defaulters in the forest.
- Fire tracing carried out especially at the onset of the dry season by clearing and in some places using constructed burning
- Inventory of all farmers carrying out farming at forest boundaries and regularly monitored of their activities. This is obtained mostly in the Kilum/Ijim area.
- Nursery establishment and reforestation and enrichment planting
- Demarcation of forest boundaries in all project sites. The communities seems to be highly informed and aware of the boundaries
- Elimination of undesired plants like the eucalyptus from the community forest by the communities
- Support for capacity building of FMI members
- Water catchments protection
- Radio broadcasts on environmental awareness over Oku rural radio station.

#### **5.3.1.2 Number of people with increased awareness**

Based on individuals and focused group discussions with the FMIs, community members and representatives of some traditional authorities, NGOs and former project staff, the level of awareness is high and ranges between 60%-100%, with higher percentages in Kilum-Ijim area as compared to the Bamenda Highlands areas. However the actual participation in terms of concrete actions especially at individual level to conserve the forest is largely disproportionate (rated between 20% – 40%) to the awareness gained by general population. Some of the reasons for this low percentage of effective awareness by the population include:

- The livelihood component was not well addressed in the implementation of the project and the communities considered the project as a threat to their economic survival especially community members whose livelihood directly depend on the forest.
- Lukewarm attitude of the government officials and corrupt nature of some to support activities of FMIs and traditional authorities towards effective forest conservation.
- The planned exit strategy of the project was not adequately implemented to empower the community and its institutions to carry on with the processes

However the following institutions remained active in forest related conservation activities after the exit of the project.

- Common initiative groups in the community like the bee farming group, hunters, and medicinal plant/product users.
- The village traditional council, Manjong/Ngumba/Nkwifon houses
- The rural radio station in Oku and Nkambe
- 18 FMIs in KI and 4 BH areas
- MINFOF to a lesser degree
- CBCS (Supporting 2 site staffs in the KI conservation areas)

Some of the glaring results obtained by the awareness raising and actual activities carried out by all the stakeholders are:

- Community forest boundaries have that been demarcated in all target project sites and encroachment into the forest has stopped in most except in Anyanjua and Aboh areas in Boyo Division.
- The incidence of bush fires has drastically reduced in all the project areas.
- Increase and available water throughout the year especially in the Kilum/Ijim and Mbibi community forest areas.
- Increased vegetation cover and size of forest
- Increased tendency by neighboring communities to replicate the concept of community forestry e.g. the conservation sites supported by the BHFP out of the Kilum –Ijim area.
- Increased adoption of improved farming systems especially in the Kilum/Ijim area where contouring and erosion control is practiced.
- Increased awareness and knowledge on different biodiversity species and forest values by the community members especially the young generation.
- Proceeds generated from the forest (prunus back) by some communities are shared according to laid down rules e.g.MBI community.

It can be concluded that the communities and traditional authorities are fairly aware of the value and importance of conserving the forest especially the FMIs. Also the concept of community forest is being replicated out of the Kilum/Ijim area in particular. Significant progress has been achieved in the KI site as far as awareness and conservation is concerned. However, this is not the case in the BH site as only 4 communities (Mbiame, Baball, Mbie, and Mbibi) are fully showing aspects of awareness and values of the forest. The activities of communities were seriously hampered by the withdrawal of the project without proper arrangements to prepare the communities to stand on their own.

#### **5.4 Outcome 2 and corresponding indicators**

**Outcome 2: Functional management and control systems for sustainable management of forests exist (among government, NGOs and community-based organizations)**

**Indicators to monitor the outcome:**

- **Number of communities with legal rights to manage their forests**
- **Number of functional community-based institutions for forest management**
- **Area of land under effective community management**
- **Area of land under effective government management for conservation**
- **Existence of a functional technical operations unit for the Kilum-Ijim forest, and Bui and Boyo Divisions**
- **Existence of an independent, functional system for monitoring forests in the Bamenda Highlands.**

**5.4.1 Number of communities with legal rights to manage their forest**

The attribution of a community forest and the legal rights of an FMI to manage the community forest is secured through the signing of a management agreement. The acquisition of this fundamental and legitimate status by FMIs has been achieved at different levels across the Kilum – Ijim (KI) component and the Bamenda Highlands (BH) component due to the fact that the project which was started in KI since 1987 was scaled up to the BH areas for a duration of only 3 years (2001 -2004). 16 out of 18 FMIs in the Kilum-Ijim component are legalized entities (CIGs) and have their management plan signed, according them the legal rights to manage community forests. In the BH component, only 6 FMIs have been registered and none has its management agreement signed. The progress of community forestry attribution and FMI status within the program is as seen below

Table 1: Progress of community forest attribution

<b>Key Stages of the Community Forestry Process</b>	<b>Kilum-Ijim</b>	<b>Sites Outside Kilum-Ijim</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Information and Awareness of the concepts, principles, stages and requirements	18	60	<b>78</b>
Potential Community Forest sites Identified and External Boundaries Demarcated	18	32	<b>40</b>
<b>Forest Management Institutions (FMIs) Constituted</b>	18	19	<b>37</b>
Forest Management Institutions Legalised	18	6	<b>24</b>
Consultation Meeting Organised	18	5	<b>23</b>
Application Files for Reservation Submitted to MINEF	18	5	<b>23</b>
Potential Community Forest Reserved	18	4	<b>22</b>

Management Inventory and Relevant Socio-economic Studies Conducted and Simple Management Plan being Developed	18	4	<b>22</b>
Simple Management Plan Submitted to MINEF	18	0	<b>18</b>
Simple Management Plan and Agreement Approved by MINEF, and signed by MINATD (SDO)	<b>18</b>	0	<b>18</b>
<b>Simple Management Plan being Implemented</b>	18	0	<b>18</b>

Source: Updated from technical progress report based on final evaluation field survey

Table 2 below further shows the status of the various FMIs

**Table 2: Status of FMIs**

Name of site	Notes	Status
Bihkov	KI	Management agreement signed
Nchiy	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbai	KI	Management agreement signed
Emfveh Mii	KI	Management agreement signed
Kedjem Mawes	KI	Management agreement signed
Ijim	KI	Management agreement signed
Upper Shinga	KI	Management agreement signed
Juambum	KI	Management agreement signed
Yatimufco	KI	Management agreement signed
Laikom	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbi	KI	Management agreement signed but legal rights withdrawn
Ajung	KI	Management agreement signed
Adjicifomi	KI	Management agreement signed
Anyafoma	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbessa	KI	Reservation Granted by MINEF
Akeh	KI	Management agreement signed
Abuh	KI	Management agreement signed
Muteff	KI	Management agreement signed
Santa-Mbei	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Baba II	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Mbibi	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Mbengkas	BH	Consultation meeting organised
Mbiame	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted by ANCO with support from Project

KI = Community Forests in the Kilum-Ijim area of the Bamenda Highlands region

BH = Community Forests in the wider Bamenda Highlands region excluding Kilum-Ijim

Source: Updated from technical progress report based on final evaluation field survey

In the Kilum-Ijim area, FMIs have acquired full legal rights over their community forest. This right was withdrawn from Muteff community due to illegal activities in the forest while the situation for Mbessa community is still in process (reservation granted). The achievement of this output has been almost complete in the Kilum-Ijim component of the project.

Conversely, the situation for the Bamenda Highland areas has been extremely retarded. Though it is understood that the project existed for a limited period of 3 years in the Bamenda Highland areas, the achievement of a reservation from MINFOF for just 1 FMI is highly inadequate considering that processes within the Bamenda Highland areas were demand driven in which up to 60 communities were reached with information and awareness of the concepts, principles, stages and requirements on community forestry and 19 FMIs constituted and 6 legalized (as CIG). The role of the project to support the process of legal rights acquisition by FMIs is critical. The achievement of this output is quite elementary as far as the Bamenda Highland component is concerned. Major difficulties emerged as to why many FMIs outside Kilum-Ijim are still at an elementary stage of the community forestry process.

- The community forest process itself is quite long and complicated comprising 8 key stages. The feedback mechanism on the progress of FMI documents submitted through state procedures is also ineffective. For example documents submitted by Mbei, Baba II communities etc were noted to have been submitted to MINFOF Yaoundé but no response have been received after 3 years of submission. The questions at community level are; 'are our documents missing? Do we have to compile a completely new application?' This has developed a high degree of frustration within FMIs and communities and has served as a discentive to pursue the process.
- The Community Based Conservation in the Bamenda Highlands Project (CBCBHP) ended quite abruptly and unceremoniously. The accompanying technical support to be delivered by the project inherent in the process of acquiring legal rights by communities such as registration as legal entities, organizing consultation meeting, developing simple management plans, etc were punctured with the sudden discontinuity and rupture of the project activities.
- Limited technical and financial means at the disposal of FMIs to support the process on their own. The efforts by the 4 registered FMIs (Mbei, Mbibi, Mbiame, and Baba II) to track files submitted since 2003 is hampered by limited financing for FMI activities in Mbiame, Santa-Mbei, Baba II, Mbibi communities within the Bamenda Highlands component who have legal entities.
- Internal community conflicts ( composition of FMIs, protest from direct forest users for example hunters) in many communities within the Bamenda Highlands component slowed down community responsiveness in accomplishing their task in the processes.



#### **5.4.2 Number of functional community-based institutions for forest management**

The non-acquisition of legal rights has had a tremendous impact on the functioning of FMIs at institutional, administrative and community-beneficiary levels. All 18 FMIs within the Kilum-Ijim component are functional. In addition to their status as FMIs with legal rights, the cumulative experience gathered from implementation of the Kilum-Ijim project since the enactment of the 1994 Forest Law and support from traditional authorities has put them on a better footing as compared to the FMIs in the BH areas. The strategic objective and role of FMI stipulated by the project in governing and sustaining community forest management is being realized within the Kilum-Ijim component and Mbibi, Baba II, Mbei, Mbiame communities in the Bamenda Highland component. Key practical conservation activities realized within the framework of FMI structures across the Kilum-Ijim as well as in the 4 communities out of Kilum-Ijim (Mbibi, Baba II, Mbei and Mbiame) include;

- Regeneration of the forest/enrichment planting
- Eco-monitoring and Ecotourism promotion
- Regular fire tracing of forest boundaries
- Forest patrol and sanctioning of defaulters
- Continued community sensitization and education on forest values
- Prunus exploitation and management as well as benefit sharing within communities
- Fundraising for FMI activities
- Partnership building and information sharing with other FMIs, federations and NGOs
- Support to researchers/research works
- Forest boundary demarcation
- Livelihood promotion (bee keeping, sustainable farming/grazing etc)
- Lobbying and advocacy within the local community as well as other stakeholders.
- Regrouping of FMIs to form federations like ASSOKOFOMI, ASSOOMI, BIHKOV.

Three federations including ASSOKOFOMI (Association of Kom Forest Management Institutions) and ASSOFOMI (Association of Oku Forest Management Institutions) as well as BIHKOV which has a dual status as a federation and an FMI (since she is the only FMI in the Nso area) have been formed. The federations to an extent have ensured governance, carried out lobbying and fundraising, back stopping and training for FMIs with the aim of enforcing their performance.

However, the federations (particularly ASSOKOFOMI) are subject to severe governance lapses in terms of capacity and strategic orientation that impair its credibility and relationship with its FMIs. The concept and the designed role of federations remains a valid idea in the community forest management process

and require a meticulous approach and capacity to explore the opportunities and overcome the challenges encountered. The formal assessment of the community forestry related skill gaps of FMIs, their federations, local NGOs, NGO networks carried out and corresponding trainings realized in 2003, seems to have impacted more on NGO partners and program staff than addressing the practical technical and governance limitations of FMIs and federations for example, no FMI nor federation member received the training on Financial management which is emerging as major weak point within FMIs and federations.

The FMIs is the pivot around which the community forest management process revolves. They therefore constitutes the most critical structure for which maximum energy should be employed and clear strategies determined to address the following key problems they encounter:

- Limited financial resources and capacity to fundraise for its operations
- Weak governance skills within FMI executives
- Limited credibility and recognition by the wider community. Consequently, some FMIs are run from personal resources of FMI executives for example Santa-Mbei.
- Limited equipment and infrastructure for FMI proper functioning.
- Ineffective collaboration with administration and other state institutions and hence difficulties to fairly resolve litigations and enforce community forestry laws.
- Inconsistency in the understanding and implementation of the forestry laws, council laws and other state laws by the respective institutions. There was therefore the need to bring in all stakeholder institutions (MINFOP, MINAT, MINJUS, and Municipal Council) to establish a platform for mutual understanding and clarification of intervening laws.

The functioning of community based institutions for forest management was enforced through capacity building of NGOs through internships and trainings. Some NGOs were also supported to pursue the community forest process in their own target communities (e.g. SIRDEP and ANCO were supported in the Ndaka/Buku and Mbiame community forest process respectively). However, the end of the project brought the ambitions and activities of NGOs to a minimum as if they existed to fulfill the project's agenda. However, CAMCOF continued to support some local NGOs to complete the community forest process but this was minimal and lasted for a very short time. In this regard SIRDEP was supported in the Ndaka/Buku community to carryout a socio-economic survey, land use plan, consultation meeting and to compile and to forward Ndaka/Buku community application file to MINFOF Yaounde.

The building of capacities of local NGOs to support conservation processes in the field must also seek to address issues about the sustainability of such organizations as a reliable and long lasting option.

Through support from SNV Highlands, the Western Highlands community forestry Network (WHICOFON) now known as Western Highlands Conservation Network (WHINCONET) emerged to support capacity building within NGOs and also lobbying and advocacy on biodiversity conservation in the Western Highlands. This network that works in synergy with the objectives of the project is also subject to extremely high dependence on SNV highlands. Again, the sustainability and performance of the network is limited by the weak financial potential of the NGO members to support the network by themselves. Most of NGOs find it difficult to effectively continue supporting the community forest processes in their target communities due to funding gaps.

### 5.4.3 Area of land under effective community management

Reference to the technical progress report of the project period 2001 - 2004, the distribution of land areas under community management is as seen below

Table 3: Distribution of land areas under Community Management

Name of site	Size (ha)	Notes	Status
Bihkov	1,767	KI	Management agreement signed
Nchiy	922	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbai	489	KI	Management agreement signed
Emfveh Mii	1,365	KI	Management agreement signed
Kedjem Mawes	1,924	KI	SMP awaiting Approval by Central MINEF
Ijim	524	KI	Reservation Granted by MINEF
Upper Shinga	1,413	KI	Management agreement signed
Juambum	289	KI	Management agreement signed
Yatimufco	1,287	KI	Management agreement signed
Laikom	870	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbi	406	KI	Management agreement signed
Ajung	972	KI	Management agreement signed
Adjicifomi	1,026	KI	Management agreement signed
Anyafoma	684	KI	Management agreement signed
Mbessa	866	KI	Reservation Granted by MINEF
Akeh	267	KI	Management agreement signed
Abuh	292	KI	Management agreement signed
Muteff	386	KI	Management agreement signed
Abuh-Muttef	523	KI	Core conservation area within PlantLife sanctuary
Ijim-Mbessa	142	KI	Core conservation area
<i>KI Sub-total</i>	<i>16414</i>		
Santa-Mbei	48	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Baba II	87	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Mbibi	34	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted
Mbengkas	210	BH	Consultation meeting organised
Mbiame	200	BH	Simple Management plan being drafted by ANCO with support from Project
<i>BH Sub-total</i>	<i>579</i>		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16,993</b>		

Source: Technical progress report of the project

These figures vary slightly in some cases and significantly in others comparing with figures obtained from the FMIs delegates. This highlights that the data and information sharing between the project and the FMIs/communities was ineffective leading to inconsistency in facts relevant for conservation interventions.

Feedback on work done especially on technical issues like community forest mapping be shared and documented within FMIs to ensure consistency in monitoring and assessing impact.

The area of land under effective community management for Kilum-Ijim area is achieved for 17 out of 18 communities due to the withdrawal of the management agreement for MBI community.

A logical appreciation of the level of realization of this output in the Bamenda Highland component of the project is not actually possible due to the fact that no clear targets could be determined and because this component was demand driven and also short lived. The field visits to project sites and discussions held with the 18 communities in Kilum-Ijim and 4 prominent communities (Mbiame, Baba II, Santa Mbei, Mbibi) in Bamenda Highland areas with lands under community management show that their involvement in the management process is effective. However the number of communities with lands under community management in the BH areas is very few and this diminishes the overall level of achievement of this output.

#### 5.4.4 Areas of land under effective government management for conservation

Knowledge of land under government management for conservation were only shared by the government officials, NGOs and former project staff and the areas identified by the above mentioned institutions include Kimbi Game reserve, Bafut Ngemba Forest reserve, Bali Ngemba forest reserve, Kom-Wum forest reserve, Mbembe forest reserve, Bambui Protected forest, Fungom forest reserve. The areas were also obtained from secondary data as shown in table 4 below:

Table 4: Area of land under government for conservation

Bambui Protected Forest	85
Mbi Crater Game Reserve	1,400
Kom-Wum Forest Reserve	8,029
Kilum-Ijim PlantLife Sanctuary	911
Bafut-Ngemba Forest Reserve	3,248
Kimbi Game Reserve	6,000
Mbembe	Not known
Fungom forest reserve	Not known
Bail Ngemba	Not known
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,673</b>

Due to the high need for conservation for Bafut-Ngemba forest reserve and Kimbi Game reserve, and plant sanctuary, the project supported conservation at these sites. In Bafut, Ngemba, the project supported the putting place of an ad-hoc committee for its management. In collaboration with the provincial delegation of MINEF and related services, the committee carried out awareness raising on the value of the reserve, surveillance of human activities, retracing of external boundaries and restoration of degraded areas inside the reserve. Also through the project support the ad-hoc committee has evolved into a site support group (SSG) and the reserve confirmed as an Important Bird Area (IBA). This output is assessed as highly achieved at this site.

In Kimbi Game reserve, the support ended at the level of pre-selecting 17 community-based patrollers for training in view of supporting the rehabilitation of the reserve.

Three other conservation areas under government management for conservation (Bambui protected forest, Mbi crater game reserve and the Kom-Wum forest reserve) were only envisaged for support within the scope of the TOU which finally did not go operational. Overall, the realization of this output rates below 20% owing to the fact that support was granted for only 2 out of 8 sites assessed. Most of the sites haven't management plans and little surveys have been done on the flora and fauna in the sites.

#### **5.4.5 Existence of a functional TOU for the Kilum-Ijim forest in Bui and Boyo Divisions**

The TOU was strategically factored in the project design as a structure within MINFOF to support the sustainability of conservation processes and the remnance of the project in synergy with the increasing livelihood concerns in the communities. This was to be achieved through focus on priority sites in the Bamenda Highlands component, management effectiveness of protected areas, external financial and technical partnership resourcing, and capacity building for community based organizations and stakeholder institutions including MINFOF itself. Despite the relevance of the TOU and the energies dissipated by the project and all key stakeholders in developing the technical proposal for the TOU, this process only ended with the submission of the TOU file to MINFOF Central in January 2004.

As an extreme need for conservation, Birdlife International through support of funding from Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society (CBCS) maintains 2 site staff in the Kilum-Ijim area. Though the idea of the TOU was conceived from the start of the project for a very strategic role, it never materialized; it thus defeats the exit strategy of the project.

#### **5.4.6 Existence of an independent, functional system for monitoring forests in the Bamenda Highlands.**

No independent functional system for monitoring forests as intended in the project design was put in place. There emerge quite some contentions on this role especially with regards to who is suitable to assume this role, cognizance of its independent status. While MINEF was seeking to take up this role, it aroused much critic from the project who logically saw incoherency on the principle of check and balances with MINEF as TOU at the same time. The notion of an independent, functional system for monitoring forest is still a necessity. This however rests within the competence of an independent specialized organization that is also capable of building the capacities of MINEF and the communities (FMI and federations) to effectively sustain and vitalize the process in the long run.

#### **5.5 Outcome 3 and corresponding indicators**

**Outcome: Critical biodiversity sites are known and protected through appropriate legal mechanisms.**

**Indicators to monitor the outcome:**

- **Number of sites for which baseline biodiversity inventory is complete**
- **Number of sites identified and published as critical sites**
- **Number of sites for which advocacy (by Birdlife or other, including government) has been initiated**
- **Number of critical sites which are protected.**

Discussion with the communities and other stakeholders and interviews conducted in the Kilum-Ijim project and the Bamenda Highlands forest project areas indicated that biodiversity inventories were carried out with the participation of stakeholders especially the communities. But the communities in particular do not know the results of the surveys as they were not provided the final results which would have equally informed them of critical biodiversity sites. So they don't seem to be well informed.

However, critical look at the technical progress report for the period March 2001-December 2004 and the discussion with the government services and NGOs involved, some achievements and progress have been made with regards to this outcome.

### 5.5.1 Number of sites for which baseline biodiversity inventory is complete

Biological surveys were carried out in the Kilum/Ijim and Bamenda highlands forest project designated areas. It was observed that feedback of the surveys conducted was not shared with the communities. However, because of the surveys were carried out, the knowledge of the flora and fauna by the FMIs, NGOs, Government partners was increased. Besides determining the different fauna and flora species, the extent of the forest patches has also been mapped out and estimated. The total surface area of the critical sites of the BHFP is estimated to be about 579ha and that of the Kilum/Ijim area is estimated to be about 16.993ha. It is worth noting that all of the KI sites are critical sites for conservation because of the rare plants and animal species that inhabit these sites.

### 5.5.2 Number of sites identified and published as critical sites

Basic biological surveys were carried out for all critical sites earmarked for conservation with 18 community forests in the KI site including the areas of land under government management for conservation for example the plant life sanctuary and the four sites in the BH component.

The following criteria were used to determine the critical sites in the context of the BHFP:

- Biological importance of the site
- Willingness of the community to conserve the natural forest
- Representatively of the natural forest within the region.
- Potentials of the forest/site for eco-tourism, education and research etc
- Proximity to conservation sites with established legal status

The actual sites out of the Kilum/Ijim forest designated as critical sites are 17 as indicated in the table below:

Table 5: Critical biodiversity sites

SN	Critical site of conservation concern
1	Big Babanki
2	Mbinon
3	Finje
4	Santa Mbei
5	Mbingo
6	Small Babanki
7	Baba II
8	Mbibi
9	Bali Nyongha
10	Awing (Akak)
11	Takijah
12	Mbengkas
13	Down
14	Fomenji
15	Fossimondi
16	Mbaa
17	Bapa

The identification and effective protection of critical biodiversity sites is a function of biological importance of the forest and willingness to conserve by the communities. The technical progress report notes that the community forestry process is most likely to succeed where the congruence between biological importance and willingness to conserve is high. Conversely, where this is low, the success of the community forestry process will depend on whether the community is willing to conserve or not. The latter was highly demonstrated during field visit and discussion with Mbibi community.

### **5.5.3 Number of sites for which advocacy (by bird life or other including government) has been limited**

Due to the importance of the Kilum/Ijim forest, the government of Cameroon initiated conservation efforts in collaboration with Birdlife International. Project support has been directed at the establishment of community forests and the plant life sanctuary at the Kilum/Ijim forest. A file has been submitted to the ministry since 2003, and agreements arrived at with the Mount Cameroon Project on how to establish a trust fund to manage the Mount Cameroon and BHFP projects.

### **5.5.4 Number of initial sites which are protected**

Two sites (Bafut-Ngamba forest reserve and the Kimbi Game reserve) with legal protection status and having a total surface area of 9.248ha received support from the project. The TOU which was foreseen to facilitate effective conservation processes in three other protected areas never went operational. These protections of critical sites remain at the mercy of MINEP/MINFOF that unfortunately have inadequate site-based staff to prevent the high level of poaching, bush fires, grazing, farming etc in the critical sites.

## **5.6 Outcome 4 and corresponding indicators**

**Outcome: Communities have the ability to use their natural resources more sustainably and in a way which supports forest conservation.**

**Indicators to monitor the outcome:**

- **Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt forest-dependent economic activities**
- **Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt techniques of using natural resources more sustainably**



- **Number of communities in selected sites which have identified priority intentions for more sustainable management of natural resources.**
- **Number of communities in selected sites which have initiated cutting on priority interventions for more sustainable management of natural resources.**

#### **5.6.1 Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt forest-dependent economic activities.**

As rightly highlighted in the technical progress report of the project, the project implementation was initiated without comprehensive baseline data information for the assessment of progress in the adoption of forest-dependent economic activities. This necessitated the project to carryout a survey to assess the contributions of the Non-timber forest products (NTFP) to household incomes. This was piloted in Santa Mbei and Baba II community forests and replicated in Bihkov, Emfveh-mii, Mbiame, Mbibi, Ajung and Anyafoma. Though not quantifiable, it emerged that communities depend on the natural forests for a variety of forest products, which make substantial contributions to overall household cash incomes, potentially capable of contributing up to 12% to average yearly household incomes.

Following the field visits carried out to the project sites and focus discussions held with community members and FMIs it was evident that communities largely depend on the forest for medicinal plants, prunus, beekeeping, water, tourism, timber, fuel wood, fruits and vegetables, tools, craft all together estimated between 60% - 100% of the population involvement. A more systematic strategy to support forest dependent economic activities with regards to acceptable conservation codes as well as a broad livelihood component needs to be developed. Despite the huge awareness on forest values and the importance of forest conservation, the effective translation of awareness gained by community members into self motivated and self-driven concrete conservation actions is very disproportionate. The degree of illegal and unsustainable exploitation of prunus and other irregularities across all the communities poses a big question on awareness and the effective enrolment of communities in the concept and practice of community forestry.

Generally, the realization of this output has been relatively higher in KI areas than in the BH component.

#### **5.6.2 Number of individuals in selected sites who adopt techniques of using natural resources more sustainably**

The final evaluation focused on the activities/practices of farmers, grazers and hunters in response to the needs for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. With regards to this and as reported in the technical report, the project realized the following activities:

- Contour bunding and ridging on steep slopes
- Introduction of improved crop varieties and storage methods
- Planting of local and exotic tree species for food, timber, soil fertility management, fuel wood and other uses as well as grafting and air layering
- Improved feeding and health care packages for large and small ruminants provided
- Improved bee keeping technologies (Kenyantop bar hives, processing, bee farming)
- Processing and marketing of forest products

In KI, based on the feedback from the communities visited a considerable number of farmers have adopted sustainable techniques of farming especially techniques in contour bunding and ridging, soil fertility management, use of improved crop varieties etc. However the persistent farming and extension of farms within the community forest in Anyanjua and Aboh is a major threat to the community forest and reaffirms the acute relevance for livelihood enhancement to help farmers stay out of the forest. This phenomenon applies explicitly for grazing which constitutes a permanent activity in most of the community forests. Radical strategies implemented by FMIs such as threats of eviction and burning of grazers' huts to suppress this tendency has yielded very little long term results as grazers also have no ready option. The threats of eviction and burning of grazers' huts constrains the relationship between primary stakeholders and amounts to Human Rights violation that affects the sustainability of the project. Improved bee keeping techniques have also been widely adopted though a good number of bee keepers still strongly adhere to traditional practices, occasionally generating bushfires.

The need to regenerate fuelwood, timber, medicinal plantation is also gaining popularity amongst the communities and being replicated by some households. The potential for ecotourism and the motivation by FMIs to promote this sector provides a great opportunity for economic development of the areas and to ensure forest conservation and sustainable exploitation of forest resources.

### **5.6.3 Number of communities in selected sites which have identified priority intentions for more sustainable management of natural resources**

Information on the present status of this indicator was not available.

### **5.6.4 Number of communities in selected sites which have initiated cutting on priority interventions for more sustainable management of natural resources**

Information on the present status of this indicator was not available.

#### **5.4 General observations**

The institutionalization of a micro-grant scheme in 2002 by the project supported FMIs to establish income generating activities like bee keeping, community retail shops, vegetable garden, pig farms etc. A total of 5,130,280frs was disbursed for these activities that was determined to have a bearing in the sustainable management of community forests. This initiative also supported ASSOFOMI to complete and equip an Eco-tourism center in Elak-Oku. These interventions have produced some results but a more comprehensive strategy that transcends basic financial sustainability of FMIs and federation and that addresses broad livelihood problems, needs to be developed. It is evident that all efforts to effectively achieve global conservation objectives must be complemented to a rational degree by supporting livelihood options. The irregularities registered even in Kilum-Ijim (farming/grazing in the forest especially in Anyajua and Aboh) are a good example to illustrate this view point. From a logical discussion with the communities, a livelihood component is as important as the conservation component itself given that the economic potential of the forest is limited (essentially based on prunus harvesting) compared to other forest zones in the country. The interest of all forest users (farmers/grazers, hunters, fishers etc) must be considered in a participatory manner in developing a livelihood package to complement biodiversity conservation objectives. Generally the project exhibited limited interest and technical capacity to support livelihoods. Subsequently, projects of this nature should integrate and partner with one or more specialized organizations to deliver specific task in communities especially on livelihood enhancement. Prominent organizations in the province to support trainings for farmers, grazers, fishers, etc include Heifer Project International (HPI), Presbyterian Rural Training Centre (PRTC) Fonta, INADES Formation, SNV (through its partners) etc. who have such objectives and activities as their focus and hence solicit very little financial support from the project.

Also to ensure the effective utilization/implementation of trainings received, a revolving micro credit scheme could be instituted within FMIs and resourced by the project to finance feasible business plans for individual, household and group economic initiatives. The training of FMIs in credit management and infrastructural support is implicit in this element.

## **6. PROJECT RELEVANCE, PERFORMANCE, IMPACT AND KEY LESSONS LEARNT**

### **6.1 Relevance**

The concept and design of the project was very relevant at the start till date. The concept of community forestry builds on already existing collective ownership of forest by the community as they had traditional, social and economic and otherwise links to the forest. By the design of the project which brought in the aspect of critical awareness, creating legal ownership, indebt knowledge of the biodiversity, livelihood approach and capacity building for communities and community based organisations to ensure sustainability could not have avoided. The concept and design therefore addresses the issue of inadequate management and control of forest resources, breakdown of traditional institutions, inadequate implementation of government mechanism for forest protection and management, inability of communities to manage natural resources sustainably and poor protection of critical biodiversity sites. This therefore brings about an integrated participatory approach to natural resource management and conservation. However, it's worth noting that the concept of the project before, during and now is still relevant since not all the outcomes have been fully achieved.

The exit strategy was well thought of at the level of instituting a Technical Operations Unit (TOU) to support FMIs. However the exit strategy was not quite clear in terms of divulging responsibilities to FMIs in ensuring that the process becomes sustainable through the FMIs. Reason why very little consideration was given to FMIs in terms of equipments and document and other assets as the project wrapped up. Also, the establishment of an independent functional monitoring unit was a lofty initiative but not properly design to address its independence, functioning and sustainability. Also, since the areas in the BH component were identified as critical sites for conservation, the final evaluation thinks that the demand driven approach was ill-conceived.

To respond to the need to conserve community forest, improved farming techniques (contour farming, agroforestry, improved beekeeping, controlled hunting etc) are adopted by the community members.

Also addressing the extent of realisation of outcomes 2 and 3 which are also complementary, this has been realised at about 50%. While significant processes for ownership, management and control of community forest as well as areas for government management for conservation have been made, a lot more is still pending in the effective community forest management by communities as well as acquisition of legal rights by FMIs. The establishment of a TOU and a Independent Functional System for Monitoring Forest (IFSMF) that ended at the technical proposal for the TOU and virtually nothing for the IFSMF contributed to the low attainment of output 2 and 3.

## **6.2 Performance**

### **6.2.1 Effectiveness**

Regarding outcome 1 and 4 that are also complementary these outcomes have been achieved to a greater extent. In the KI site, this has been achieved to about 80% as communities, civil society and government are critically aware of forest values and sustainable forest management and conservation. This applies to communities that were directly involved in the project as well as adjacent communities. In the BH component however, this outcome was fairly realised for 4 out of 8 communities envisaged. Considering that more than 0 communities were reached with awareness campaigns on community forestry, one would think that the sensitisation package and approach was inappropriate as shown by the response of only 4 communities (Mbiame, Baba II, Mbei, Mbibi).

As mentioned above, the percentage of general awareness within communities, Civil society, Government high but in terms of concrete action to safeguard and protect the forest is generally low as many illegal activities are taking place in the community forests and critical sites (plant sanctuary)

### **6.2.1 Efficiency**

Overall the efficiency of the project was average. There was a series of factors that impeded the smooth implementation of the project regarding efficiency and timeliness amongst which are:

- Differences in interpretation of various financial and institutional policies involved in the process.
- Both Birdlife, UNDP were somehow slow in responding to project emerging issues e.g. the closed to 7 months management vacuum in the BH site.
- The contribution of the GoC in terms of their financial commitment, contribution in setting up the TOU, IFMSF as well as facilitating the acquisition of legal documents for FMIs per the project document was limited.
- Also insufficient involvement of stakeholders within the institutional framework of the project implementation like the municipal councils, influential community groups, administration and relevant government services.
- Lapses in effective financial management and control by both funders as well as implementers.

## **6.3 Impact**

### **6.3.1 Sustainability**

Impact generally is assessed for a relatively long period and certainly there is more impact in the KI site considering that the CBCBHP was building on an already existing project in KI. Comparatively, the BH component was implemented for a very short period and cumulates very little impact. Assessing impact in terms of sustainability, the following could be highlighted especially in the KI site.

- The conscientisation of the general population on forest values during and after the project is still positively felt even though with diminishing returns.
- Knowledge and skills gained by communities such as beekeeping, improved farming systems, reforestation, fire protection and adoption of other improved forest-dependent activities are still quite visible with some aspects experiencing increased tendencies.
- The spring up of private plantations for prunus, fuelwood, medicinal gardens as well as active removal of exotic plants species are all indicators of project results which will continue.
- The project has transformed illusions in the notion of community forest into reality in which community ownership with legal entitlement has been secured for sustainable management of community forest.
- The scale up of the KI project to the BH through a demand driven approach guarantees the uptake of the community forestry process by other communities.

Despite the fact that there are clear impact of the project and uptake of the process geared towards protection of the Western Highland Montane forest, there are some critical threats and limitations to the achievements especially for the future.

This is highlighted in the subsequent section.

### **6.3.2 Contribution for capacity and Institutional development**

There has been impressive knowledge built at community level, local CBOs and federations, NGOs, MINFOF/MINEP on forest conservation, biodiversity protection and livelihood. Through the creation and legalisation of FMIs and building of their basic capacities, training of traditional authorities and community members, federations and CBOs including the then MINEF, the process of forest governance and biodiversity is being maintained. Sustainability is more assured at community level and within community based institutions than in the NGOs which are either opportunistic to funding or are funder-dependent.

Furthermore, an output of this project is the emergence of networks e.g WHNCONET and other environmental NGOs all involved in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

It is worth mentioning that issues raised by the communities and the mid-term evaluation of 2003 especially financial sustainability of FMIs, poor collaboration between FMIs and administration, mistrust of some FMIs by wider community, poor financial management skills affect the effectiveness of FMIs and sustainability of the process as a whole.

#### **6.4 Key lessons learnt**

1. The concept of community forest is tenable to the community but must be accompanied by realistic alternatives for livelihood to minimise dependency on the forest.
2. The role of traditional institutions (traditional council, 'kwifon', Fon etc) and FMIs are indispensable in the performance, management and sustainability of the conservation processes
3. The duration of support to the communities by funders and other stakeholders is very crucial for the empowerment of the communities to carry on with the conservation processes in the long term. Projects of this nature, scope and complexity should be designed and executed for at least 10 years.
4. The cumbersome process of acquiring legal rights is a disincentive to the FMIs/communities and has to be simplified else, community forest attribution is perceived as unrealistic.
5. The value of the forest varies from the project perspective to the community perspective and communities sometime seem to be in a dilemma which one to pursue.
6. Projects of this nature which infringe on the livelihood of people are always seen as a threat especially at the beginning.
7. The evaluation of projects which are long ended though advantageous in terms of assessing impact and sustainability, are usually difficult and complicated since documentations, management structures and staff are not available or easily contacted.
8. Project of the magnitude without a corresponding and genuine government support is subject to crisis and risk of failure.
9. Project management style that has a lot of bureaucracy and centralisation of decision making will eventually become unpopular and would likely yield little results.
10. The exploitation of community forest for revenue and community development as conceived in community forestry is not realistic in some community forests with low economic potentials.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

The KIFP and BHFP that make up the CBCBH has as overall goal the documentation, protection and conservation of the Montane forest of the Bamenda Highlands in the long term while at the same time ensuring livelihood sustainability of the forest dependent communities.

In both the KI and BH impressive results have been attained in terms of awareness creation, biodiversity conservation, attribution of community forests, capacity building within the communities and stakeholders. This has been successful because of the involvement of all key stakeholders (FMIs, CBOs, Government partners and donors). Also the neighbouring communities have greater incentives to initiate processes of community forestry.

Even though these are remarkable achievements, they are not without challenges both at institutional frameworks and the community forest itself. Furthermore, the activities are not enough to support communities that directly depend on the forest for their livelihood.

In terms of functional management and control systems there are 22 functional community forests under FMIs and federations.

The total area under effective community management is 16,415ha at the KI component and 579ha at the BH component giving a total of 16,993ha under effective community management.

The total land area under government management for conservation is 19,673ha.

Significant progress was made in view of establishing the TOU and IFSMF in the Bamenda Highlands. However these two exit structures did not go operational and constituted more or less a set back to the project, particularly its sustainability.

In both the KI and BH components, a significant number of biodiversity surveys were carried out to determine the biodiversity composition of these areas. The results which have further highlighted the importance of the biodiversity composition of these critical sites reveal endemic plant, mammals and birds e.g. the bannaman turaco. The results have also emphasised the value and uniqueness of the Western Highlands Montane Forest and the absolute need for its conservation.

There are however serious threats to these plants and animals species observed in the forest such as illegal and unsustainable exploitation for medicines, poaching, encroachment by crop farmers, grazing of animals in critically prohibited sites etc.

A fair percentage of the population especially in the KI site has adapted sustainable forest dependent economic activities like improved beekeeping (using the KTB), improved crop farming and establishment of private plantations etc. Even though this is happening, it is rather on a small scale and not well planned to bring the desired impact on livelihood enhancement.



## **7.2 Recommendations**

1. The capacity of MINFOF/MINEP, NGOS, CBOs and more especially FMIs were inadequately built to ensure long term sustainability of the project. Any subsequent project intervention should carryout a thorough need assessment and training for the different interest groups.
2. The FMIs as the main structure to manage community forests needs financial and infrastructural support (office space, means of mobility and forest surveyance) to be effective. Capacities of FMIs on governance, relationship building, fundraising, planning, monitoring/evaluation and reporting needs to be build.
3. Any future project should carefully address the interest of key stakeholders (traditional authorities, municipal councils, Administration, MINEP/MINFOF, special interest groups like hunters, grazers, beekeepers, etc) at all levels to minimise on conflict and ensure sustainability.
4. Training on the legal tools for forest governance such as the forestry law should be carried out so that all stakeholders have a fair understanding of community forestry governance.
5. Considering that the TOU and the IFSMF never went operational and constituted a major setback, to the performance and sustainability of the project, this should be seriously considered and put in place by the government.
6. Any subsequent project should work with already existing structures (NGOs, FMIs, Federations, and CBOs) rather than creating independent structures that come and go with the project.
7. Community based processes must be participatory but the project management approach was more of less top-bottom. Planning, information management and sharing excluded key stakeholders especially the grassroots institutions and their representatives. Event the sharing of asses at the end of the project did not involve the communities and some stakeholders. The final evaluation recommends a bottom-top approach that involves all key stakeholders.
8. The livelihood component though realised to an extent in the KI site and virtually nothing in the BH site constitutes a crucial aspect to help forest dependent communities reduce their dependency on the forest. The current threats to the community forest as well as areas under government management for conservation are high. This is attributed to insufficient delivery of the livelihood component. For effective conservation to succeed, the livelihood component must be given adequate attention. This can be achieved through partnership with other organisations that can address the different livelihood needs of communities especially on forest dependent economic activities.
9. It was realised that a number of key primary stakeholders (livestock farmers especially cattle, sheep and oat grazers) continued to carryout

- activities in the community forests and protected areas because of no other option for their livestock survival. The livelihood component should specifically address the needs of the livestock grazers e.g. pasture improvement and sustainable livestock management techniques.
10. The project implementation in some of the livelihood activities targeted the inappropriate people e.g. apiculture training in KI site did not target the traditional beekeepers in the community but involved and trained people who showed interest and therefore resources were misdirected as some trainees used bee hives as kitchen stools. Subsequently, actors in the various domains of forest dependent economic activities should be a properly identified and trained. This could be realised through FMIs who are aware of the various interest groups and their members.
  11. While it was good that the government participates in both project concept and implementation, on most cases, the financial interest of some of the representatives overshadowed the overall project objective and the role they were supposed to play. For a project to be successful stakeholders and their representatives should be monitored and supervised and their performance regularly assessed to check irregularities and effect back stopping.
  12. The exit strategy of the project and more especially the sharing and liquidation of project assets did not consider the sustainability of the project as FMIs and their federations were highly marginalised and handicapped to continue the project activities.

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1: Group work on overall project assessment**

#### **T o R for group work**

- What are the achievements and successes of the CBCBHP
- What are the challenges, constraints or difficulties encountered in all aspects of the project.
- If the project was to be restarted, what would you recommend should be done?

#### **Bamenda Highlands component**

##### **Group 1**

##### **Achievements**

- Education and sensitisation of communities on environmental issues and biodiversity conservation
- Regular forest visit by the project staff
- Support with seedlings to plant in the forest
- Some of the communities trained on modern bee farming
- Modern method of fire tracing introduced in some forests
- Inventory were carried out in some forest
- Experts trained some communities on bird watching
- Project assisted the removal of exotic trees from the forest
- Project assisted the construction of some water catchments
- Exchange visits carried out to other communities by the project
- Opportunity to have visitors from NGOs, and international organisations.

##### **Weaknesses**

- Training on bee farming was not carried out for all communities and trained communities did not receive materials support.
- Many unfulfilled promises e.g. payment of communities to open paths in the community forest.
- Failure to address some farmer-grazer conflict in the forest
- Most of the communities did not get the results of the inventories and management plans
- The project ended without formal information to communities.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. All communities should be given copies of report of all activities carried out in their communities e.g. Inventory, mapping, Management plan, Minutes of meetings.
2. all promise made by the project management should be fulfill
3. The FMI should be assisted financially to carried it functions
4. forest farmers should be motivated with tools equipment and materials in the areas trained

## **Boyo Group 1**

### **Achievements**

- Awareness creation
- Behavioral changes towards conservation
- Positive change in biodiversity
- Successful formation of legal entities (C.B.Os)
- Assisted in the formulation of management plans
- Capacity building FMIs to a lesser extent
- Farming systems, afforestation, beekeeping and livestock was improved though to a lesser extent
- Employment to indigenes

### **Weaknesses**

- Resistance from farmers during boundary demarcation
- Recalcitrant graziers/hunters
- Topographical difficulties
- Enmity amongst citizens caused the projects not to penetrate easily.
- Lack of funds which culminated in sudden project closure
- Problems in collaboration with the local administration
- Management plans implementation introduced but not carried out even at preliminary stage carried out even at preliminary stage
- Ecotourism was introduced but not done

### **Recommendations**

- FMIs be assisted in management plan implementation for atleast five years
- Funds destined for FMIs be sent to FMIs
- Ecotourism be developed
- Capacity building of FMIs be fostered
- Means of movement be improved (e.g. vehicles) for FMIs
- More sensitization be done on the need for conservation
- The livelihoods programme be taken up afresh
- Employment for indigenes
- Making available equipment/infrastructure for management plans implementation
- The project should bring the forest administration to understand that the Kilum/Ijim forest are protected only for global concerns and has little or no contribution to poverty alleviation
- Incentives be sought for volunteer workers (FMOs and patrollers)

## **Mezam group 2**

### **Achievements**

- Help in mapping out the forest
- Awareness raising about conservation in communities
- Organisation FMI structures
- Organisation and sponsoring of exchange visits
- Capacity building seminars

- Some communities were provided tree seedlings and both trees and animals inventory was done

### **Difficulties**

- Encounter problems in organizing communities to keep part of their forest for conservation

### **Weakness**

- The project ended without noticed (i.e. it was suppose to be handed to the communities).

### **Recommendations**

- Rehabilitation of FMIs
- The involvement of all stakeholders such as Fon's, traditional councils, D.O, in the program
- Livelihood program should be introduced
- Creation of a revolving fund in FMIs (i.e. loanable funds)
- Provision of transportation means (vehicles, bikes etc)
- Assistances to grazers to improve pastures
- FMI offices created and equip
- Continue capacity building in all aspects
- Establishment of nurseries with all its necessary materials provided.

## **Boyo Group 2.**

### **Achievements**

- The concept of community forestry brought to the grassroots
- Timely interventions to stop the disappearance of the critical Kilum-Ijim forest (project started at a time when there was a mad rush for farmlands in the forest. They stopped it).
- The demarcation and establishment of the external forest boundary that is respected by most
- Facilitated the creation of community forests
- Succeeded in educating the communities of the need for biodiversity conservation even though to a lesser extent
- Help communities to demarcate internal forest boundaries
- Helped communities to obtain management plans and conventions
- Extended the importance of Kilum/Ijim forests to the international community
- Supported and facilitated biodiversity inventories (plants and animal lists available)
- Extended the experience of Kilum/Ijim to the rest of the region e.g. Bamenda Highlands
- Livelihood improved to a lesser extent

## **Weaknesses**

- Administrative bottle necks. Poor collaboration between administration and project and FMIs
- Community forestry is more of an illusion to many (75%) of the entire population are unaware of CF and conservation in general.
- Some very important target groups e.g. traditional councils, local groups were not identified
- The implementation of the management plans remain a very big challenge as forest activities cannot pay their cost
- Even with the establishment of external boundaries encroachment still continues
- Farmers who lost their farms to the forest were never compensated and so they remain a threat.
- No alternatives were made available to farmers/graziers to desuade them from mounting pressure on the forest. No follow up was done even after the little support was given.
- The process of obtaining a community forest very cumbersome and costly
- The project used top to bottom approach in the implementation of the project
- Programs to reduce poverty were not given a place of priority e.g. beekeeping trainings and workshops.
- The system of education and sensitization was not appropriate to the communities
- The activities of the project did very little to alleviate poverty of the communities and so pressure on forest continues

## **Recommendations**

- Sensitization be taken seriously and a different approach taken e.g. traditional council, rural councils, youth forums, churches, schools etc be approached independently
- A permanent monitoring system should be put in place
- Help to subsidize the cost of implementing management plans to the FMIs
- The capacities of management institutions be built in natural resource management, group management, good governance and transparency
- The forest management officers be supported to carryout the functions properly
- Support should be bought for all arms of administrations to execute their roles and responsibilities e.g. sanction all defaulters without bias or corruption
- An appeasement be made with those who lost their farms/grazing areas to the forest
- FMIs be assisted to clearly demarcate grazing land from the forest
- The project should carryout development activities in the villages in order to add value to the idea of community forestry

## **Oku**

### **Achievements**

- Holding or maintained the external forest boundary
- Assisted the community forest management i.e. from sensitization to negotiation
- Capacity building
- Assisted umbrella organizations to secure funds for ecotourism programmes
- Initiated and gave micro grants to FMIs

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of collaboration between stakeholders
- Some stakeholders failed in actually carrying out their duties e.g. administrative officials
- Some technical staff lacked the technical knowledge or capacity
- Refusal to obey project laws by some groups of persons e.g. the grazers
- Misleading targets

### **Recommendations**

- Capacity building should be accorded more consideration
- Information should or must reach target groups
- Livelihood programmes should be given due consideration and reporting
- Project planning and reporting should involve target communities
- Funders should be consistent
- Different stakeholders should know and exercise their roles and responsibilities