



# JENGI NEWSLETTER

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A PUBLICATION OF WWF SOUTHEAST FOREST PROGRAMMES, CAMEROON

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## VAST CONSULTATION OF BAKA AHEAD OF RENEWAL OF ACCORD WITH FOREST AND WILDLIFE MINISTRY

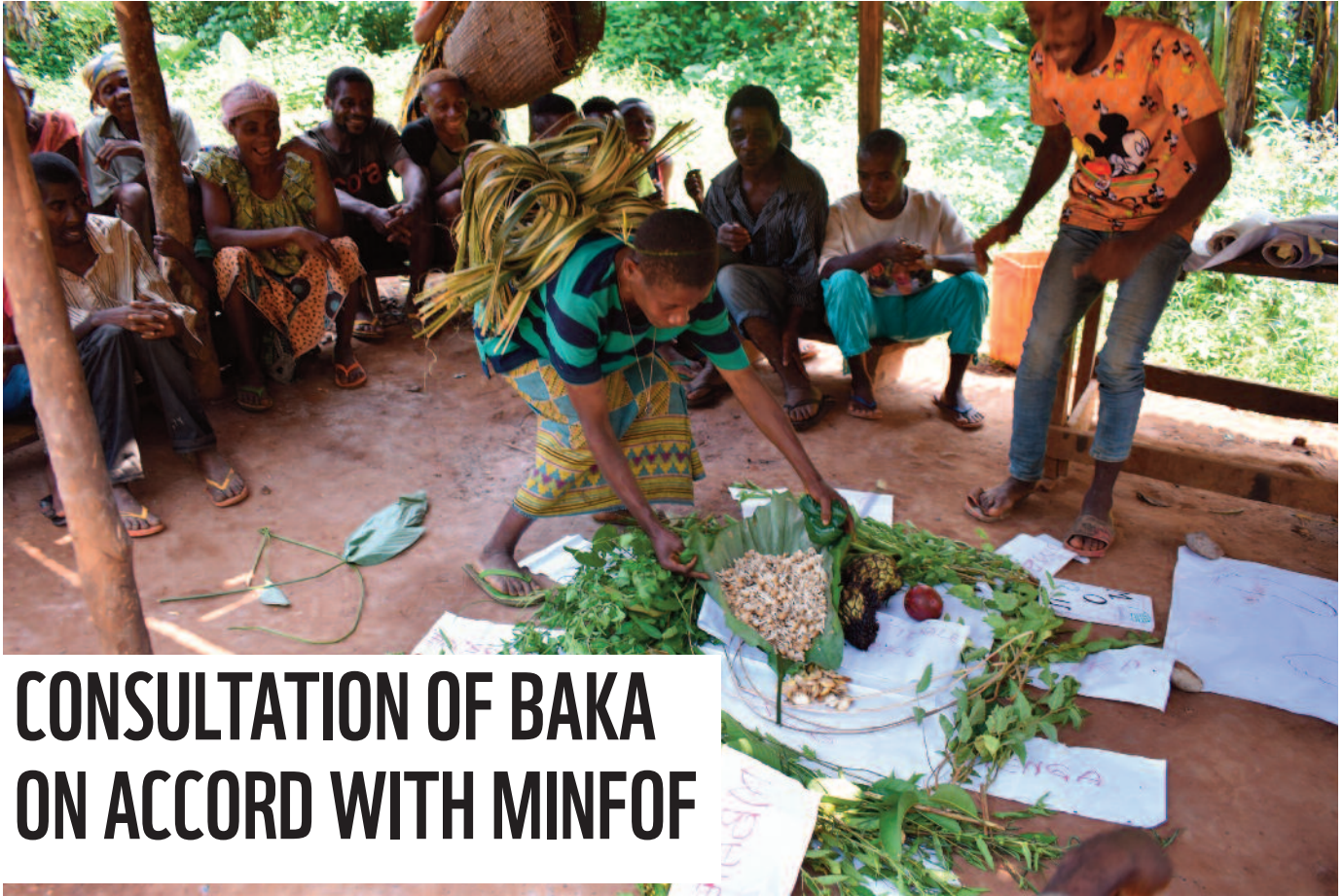
Indigenous Baka people in the East Region of Cameroon have been consulted on the renewal of the three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) they signed with Cameroon's Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) in February 2019. The MoU granted Baka access to resources areas within Lobeke, Boumba Bek and part of Nki National Parks.

An evaluation of the implementation of the Accord, conducted by a team comprising MINFOF personnel and representatives of some civil society

actors, showed that while the MoU permitted the Baka to gain access to the forest, they still faced several challenges from fully enjoying their access rights. Absence of a monitoring committee to follow up implementation of the MoU's action plan, lack of financial and human resources capacity of ASBABUK (the Baka Association representing the Baka), to conduct sensitization in the entire area, and conflict with sport hunting hunters, are some of the problems that plagued the implementation of the MoU.

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## CONSULTATION OF BAKA ON ACCORD WITH MINFOF

During consultation meetings on the MoU in some Baka communities near Lobeke National Park, illustrative maps and traditional material were used to demonstrate activities that the Baka carry out in the park including fishing, collection of non-timber forest products and hunting using traditional methods.

## FINANCE WAS A CHALLENGE

From the series of meetings held around Lobeke and Nki National Parks, ... the communities made us to understand that the crucial problems linked to this MoU are human-wildlife conflicts and need to restructure the Baka Association (ASBABUK) implementing the MoU. Another problem is linked to financing; how to finance the implementation such that ASBABUK, CSOs, international organisations and even the government can accompany this process.



Venant Messe, Coordinator of OKANI

## BAKA FACED DIFFICULTIES

On the whole, the Baka say they almost do not have access to the parks despite the MoU due especially to the presence of sports hunters that are stationed at the periphery of the parks. To get access to the parks, they must traverse zones managed by safaris and there they face enormous challenges with safari guards who brutalise them and destroy their material.



Mikam Miranda, Coordinator of AAFEBEN



# PROMOTING ECO-FRIENDLY COCOA FARMING IN TRIDOM



Abiam Delphine, cocoa farmer of Biwala 1 village displays her harvest

Cocoa provides income for most households in the East Region of Cameroon. However, after years of cocoa farming, local farmers do not make substantial revenue from their trade. Low yields from ageing farms push farmers to clear virgin forest to set up new farms. The debts they incur for chemical pesticides and fertilizers leave them vulnerable to shrewd businesspeople.

“Before the cocoa season starts, we are already in debt to acquire pesticides for our farms. We are often forced to give away our cocoa to pay our debts,” said Boh Pascal, a local farmer in Mboy II village, during a training supported by WWF for local cocoa farmers in Yokadouma Municipality.

To help the farmers to increase their production and reduce heavy dependence on chemicals, WWF through the Mobilizing More for Climate (MoMO4C) has been supporting training for farmers in Ngoyla and Yokadouma, in the East Region of Cameroon. Over 200 local farmers have so far received training by partner NGO called CIFED with financial support from WWF. They were taught natural farm treatment methods, pest control using bio-products and construction of traditional dryers, to improve cocoa production while reducing destruction of the forest.

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Harvesting cocoa



Cocoa farmer of Ngoyla sun-drying cocoa beans



# 32 HECTARES OF COUNCIL, COMMUNITY FORESTS REGENERATED



A modest start. WWF has supported council and community forests in Yokadouma, in the East Region of Cameroon, to regenerate 32 hectares of degraded forest and create three tree nurseries. Some 1000 young trees were planted and managers of the three community forests and the council forest were provided technical equipment to create and manage tree nurseries. The reforestation was the result of a WWF project dubbed "Support for the responsible management of communal and community forests in the TRIDOM Cameroon landscape", implemented since July 2021. The project involves six community forests and two local council managed forests covering an area of approximately 109,256 ha in Ngoyla and Yokadouma municipalities.

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In all beneficiary communities where the project is being implemented, Baka villages are involved in fruit tree planting. In Baka communities of Parney, Bienemama and Landjoué, over 100 young fruit trees were planted in each community. Men, women and youths participated in the activity.



# STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION FOR INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION



**WWF CCPO Team with CSO representatives and field staff**

WWF Cameroon Country Director accompanied by members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), including the Senior Field Programs Coordinator, the Indigenous Peoples Coordinator and the Finance Officer undertook a field trip to the Jengi landscape (TRIDOM and TNS) in August to assess implementation of community micro-projects, understand challenges faced by field staff and partners in delivering their work, and strengthen relations between WWF and local actors. The field trip that took the team through the Lobeke, Nki and Boumba Bek National Parks, and Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve, enabled the Team to discuss with various local actors intervening in the Jengi Southeast Forest Programmes landscape, including partner civil society organisations (AAFE BEN, CIFED, CEFAID, CREDI, Fusion Nature, Nature et Développement), Baka and Bantu community based groups, park managers, mayors and administrative authorities.

Some community groups the WWF team met include a women cooperative (COOP CA Or Vert of Mambele), a Baka CIG (GIC LEKA of Ngoyla) and an association of cocoa farmers of Nguilili, (all financially supported by WWF and the TNS Foundation).

The Country Director commended results achieved amidst challenges faced in the field, but emphasized the need to embed respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in our work, as well as maintain communication constant with different actors. Present in the Southeast of Cameroon since 1995, WWF has been working with Government through the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and CSOs to promote sustainable natural resources management and access for local populations, the rights and education of indigenous people and biodiversity conservation.



**Meeting with staff of Jengi TNS Program in Mambele**



**WWF Team listening to the District Officer of Ngoyla**



# STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION ...

## MEETING WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

WWF Management appreciate the work of COOP CA Or Vert women's cooperative of Mambele, one of several community groups around Lobeke supported by WWF and TNS Foundation through partner NGO AAFEBEN. Thanks to WWF/FTNS funds, the women are able to augment their revenue base, buy more NTFPs such as bush mangoes (*Irvingia gabonensis*) and njansang (*Ricinodendron heudelotii*) and transform some to add value and generate more income. The women have produced lotion from moabi and njansang.



## LISTENING TO COCOA FARMERS

The Team met with an association of cocoa producers of Nguilili near Lobeke. WWF and FTNS funds is helping the group to improve cocoa production and sell at higher prices. By increasing their revenue, they would reduce their debt burden and dependence on dubious traders and middle men who take advantage of their weak financial capacity to dupe them.



## DIALOGUE WITH BAKA LEADERS

Meeting with representatives of Baka community based group (GIC LEKA) of Ngoyla near Nki National Park. WWF provides support to GIC LEKA for the gathering and sale of NTFPs, as part of efforts to shore up the revenue base of members of local communities around protected areas. GIC LEKA is one of six associations that are benefitting technical support from WWF as laureates of the Mobilising More for Climate, MoMo4C bankable projects bid.







FTNS Board Members at start of meeting in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

## FTNS VALIDATES PARKS' WORK PLANS, BUDGETS



The annual work plans and budgets of the three protected areas of the TNS landscape were validated in November during the 29th Board Meeting of the FTNS in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). On the side lines of this Meeting, on November 24 and 25, a workshop was held in the conference room of the Grand Lancaster Hotel during which the Board examined the work plans and budgets of the three parks of the TNS (Dzanga Sangha, Nouabalé-Ndoki and Lobéké). They also produced an updated Report on the State of Conservation of the TNS. At the end of the workshop that took place under the

chairmanship of Mr. NGANONGO Jean Bosco, Director General of the Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas (ACFAP), participants expressed satisfaction and validated the work plans and budgets for the three parks for the year 2023.

They also adopted the updated report on the State of Conservation of the TNS, which has been transmitted to the World Heritage Centre for examination by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at its 46th session. The draft report shows that the State Parties of Cameroon, Central African Republic and Congo have implemented, thanks to internal resources and the support of their partners, substantial actions aimed at preserving the integrity of the TNS, through awareness raising, the development of income generating activities (IGAs), the fight against poaching and other forms of environmental crimes. It also highlights efforts at strengthening the capacities of the TNS management bodies, the preservation of human rights, in particular that of vulnerable indigenous peoples, and the promotion of the wellbeing of local communities.





Baka group GIC LEKA display processed non-timber forest products achieved with the technical support of AAFEBEN

## NTFPS PROVIDING REVENUE FOR BAKA



NTFPs collected by Baka women group, LEKA

*GIC Leka is among six civil society organisations receiving support from WWF and partners within the context of Mobilizing More for Climate (MoMo4C) bankable projects initiative*

GIC LEKA, a Baka group based in Ngoyla near the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and Nki National Park, has generated FCFA 675,000 from the sale of non-timber forest products thanks to support provided by the WWF Jengi TRIDOM Programme through local partner CSO, AAFEBEN. This is the first significant revenue made collectively by Baka in the area from NTFPs.

This modest achievement by the group is part of WWF strategy to empower Baka women to improve their livelihoods, while contributing to preserve the forest. AAFEBEN trained the women on storage techniques as well as linked them to credible buyers. Before now, the Baka women could neither stockpile their products nor sell collectively, thereby exposing them to opportunistic traders who took advantage of their vulnerability and bought their NTFP at give-away prices.

GIC Leka is among six civil society organisations receiving support from WWF and partners within the context of Mobilizing More for Climate (MoMo4C) bankable projects initiative.





# WILDLIFE

## WHY PROTECT ELEPHANTS AND THEIR MIGRATORY CORRIDORS

***With over 75 percent of the elephant population in the TRIDOM Cameroon landscape decimated in less than a decade, the need to protect the last elephants standing has never been so urgent.***

The forest elephant is the totem of many local people (tribes) in the East Region of Cameroon and also plays a cardinal role in the regeneration of important forest trees like the moabi (*baillonella Toxisperma*), which is of economic value to the local people. However, given the ever growing threat posed by poaching, it is feared that the elephant might soon go into extinction.

As part of efforts to involve local communities in the preservation of the forest elephant, WWF in collaboration with local MINFOF officials recently organised a vast awareness campaign touching 33 communities around the Nki and Boumba Bek National Parks and the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve. The awareness focused on the importance of high conservation values (HVCs), large mammal corridors, hunting regulations and the circulation of wildlife products and the exercise of community user rights.

With the aid of illustrative maps and posters, the people were sensitised on ways to minimize the risk human-wildlife conflicts and zoonosis.

The people were receptive to the messages delivered by the WWF and MINFOF teams, asking questions and receiving answers.







# TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE COMPLEX HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT



Nki National Park Conservator and Chief of Wildlife Control Post of Moloundou listening to a victim in Ndongo village



Assessing destruction caused by elephants in a farm around Lobeke National Park

WWF and MINFOP field staff have collected baseline data on human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in the south of Nki National Park (Ndongo area), which has enabled them to begin discussions with local communities on possible testing of WWF SAFE approach in the area. Data collected shows that among the wildlife species mostly involved in conflicts with communities, the elephant is in third place after monkeys and rodents. However, victims decry more the impact of destruction caused by elephants. About six villages in the south of Nki stretching from Ndongo to Adjala were most affected. **(Read article)**

Around Lobeke National Park, field teams have also gathered evidence of destruction of farms by elephants. Communities near the north of the park are hardest hit. As part of efforts to provide alternatives for affected community members, Lobeke Management has begun testing beehives as alternative source of revenue for affected communities.

Complaints by communities of destruction of their farms by animals are piling around Nki, Lobeke and Boumba Bek national parks in spite of constant poaching pressure.

Support by WWF for sustainable agriculture, NTFPs value chains and community forest management can cushion the HWC impacts.



# ELIANE'S PASSION TO PROTECT WILDLIFE



Camera trap images help to inform of wildlife presence around the clearing

Hiking into Ikwa forest clearing in Nki National Park (309 362 ha) is no easy task with its many hills, but this has become passion for Eliane Choutmoun, Biologist for the WWF Jengi TRIDOM Program. Eliane coordinates ecological monitoring at Ikwa and dedicates averagely 18 days a month in the forest, collecting data on wildlife in and around the clearing. She has been working as Biologist for Jengi TRIDOM Program since joining WWF in 2016, first as Volunteer and now as Staff.

Eliane is often the only female in a group of 12, comprising eco-guards, Baka and Bantu community members serving as biomonitoring assistants, guides,

trackers and porters. Their work includes setting camera traps on animal tracks around the Ikwa clearing; making observations from a watchtower; counting dung piles (of elephants, buffalo, gorillas, etc.) and animal footprints; and listening to animal sounds. Since 2018, biomonitoring teams have been taking turns to ensure that a permanent system launched by WWF in collaboration with MINFOF to monitor the Ikwa bai works. the strategy seems to be paying off, as elephants, great apes, buffaloes and various species of monkeys are returning to the clearing, after a period of retreat.



GPS devices used in collecting data



Observing wildlife in the clearing from a watchtower



# EMBEDDING HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE AROUND PARKS



Four elements are contributing to implanting a human rights culture around protected areas in the southeast of Cameroon. They include the introduction and implementation of a Community Complaints Mechanism, the creation of a Human Rights Centre near Lobeke, regular training of government rangers on human rights and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOP) and Baka for free access to protected areas.

The creation of protected areas and enforcement of the wildlife law have, in the past, engendered conflicts between government rangers and local peoples, particularly the Baka who depend entirely on the forest for their livelihood. The Community Complaints Mechanism and the Human Rights Centre are part of the programme “human rights due diligence in the Congo Basin”, financed by the German ministry of development cooperation (BMZ) and WWF. It focuses on promoting and strengthening human rights for indigenous people and local communities (IP & LC) around three WWF priority landscapes in the Congo Basin. These landscapes include the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas in the Central African Republic (DSPA), the Lobéké National Park in Cameroon (LNP) and the Salonga National Park (SNP) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The programme is implemented in collaboration with several local civil society partners.



Participants at one of the raining sessions in Mambele, Lobeke

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# BAKA-BANTU FESTIVAL REVIVING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE



Baka and Bagando cultural life were on display through music, dance, food, arts and craft and traditional rites at the second edition of the now annual Baka-Bantu festival – FESTIBABA. The festival organised by Lobeke Park Management from 14 to 17 November, assembled national and international guests in Mambele.

With patronage from MINAC (Ministry of Arts and Culture), this year's event held under the theme: "Eco-tourism and sub-regional integration; vectors for the valorisation of traditional knowledge".

Guests at the festival savoured local cuisine, learnt how to use Baka traditional hunting tools, witnessed a make of Baka sacred initiation rite (Jengi), and watched Baka and Bagando cultural practices. They also visited Baka doom-shaped huts (mogoulou) as well as

ecological sites around Lobeke headquarters.

The Park is using FESTIBABA to attract tourists and potential investors to the biodiversity-rich area, while making efforts to build an eco-tourism package and make Lobeke a favourite tourist destination.

Besides its exceptional biodiversity, Lobeke is a world heritage site under the Sangha Tri-national (TNS) landscape thanks to the cultural richness of the local people.

As technical and financial partner of Lobeke National Park, WWF works with MINFOF to conserve biodiversity, promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LC) and support income generating activities to improve the wellbeing of the local populations.



Baka and Bantu people display traditional pharmacopeia and craft works (Photo credits: Dahirou Moussa/LNP)



# BIRTH CERTIFICATES TO PROMOTE BAKA CITIZENSHIP RIGHT



*Within the context of promoting citizenship rights for local people, Lobeke Park Management with the financial support of WWF and Trinational de la Sangha (TNS) Foundation has facilitated the establishment of 171 birth certificates for Baka around the park.*

Two baka women (pictured above) of Dissassoui village situated in the periphery of Lobeke National Park, brandish birth certificates of their children established with the support of the park. They are part of 171 Baka that have benefitted from a scheme initiated by Lobeke management and partners to address a critical problem indigenous Baka and Bantu populations face; that of lack of birth certificates and identity cards. This hinders many local people from enjoying their citizenship rights. Without the birth certificate and the national identity card, local

populations cannot have access to most social and administrative services in the country such as writing public examinations and owning a telephone number or a bank account and .

The second phase of the project will fund the production of 100 national identity cards for Baka and Bantu. To achieve this, the Park is working with local NGO (Fusion Nature), administrative and council officials of Salapoumbe and Moloundou districts.



WWF Community Facilitator hands birth certificate to Baka woman





Lobeke Technical Adviser, Philip Tem Dia hands funds to COVAREF leaders

## PARK SUPPORT BOOSTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Sixty-four community members representing three local wildlife management committees (COVAREFs) around Lobeke National Park recently received FCFA 15 000 000, being revolving fund to enable the local people to undertake community livelihoods micro-projects.

The money provided to COVAREFs No. 1, 2 and 3 has enabled community members to maintain existing farms; run restaurants and make traditional mats to generate extra income.

"I invested the funds I received from our COVAREF in my farm. I received 23000 FCFA and invested in okra, groundnuts, plantains and njansang. My wife now supplies okra to communities from Mambele to Moloundou. We also distribute okra seeds for free to other women to plant in their farms," states



**The money provided to COVAREFs No. 1, 2 and 3 has enabled community members to maintain existing farms; run restaurants and make traditional mats to generate extra income.**

Badjeke Giotta of Mbateka village. For Badjeke, the fund is providing them sorely needed help. "We need more of such support to boost our agricultural production," he adds. COVAREFs manage community hunting zones around protected areas and use revenue generated from the exploitation of wildlife resources to build classrooms, pay teachers and provide bore holes in their communities. When well-managed, community hunting zones contribute to reduce pressure on wildlife in protected areas by stabilizing animal species at the peripheries.

To ensure effective management of community hunting zones and reduce illegal activities, Lobeke Management recently facilitated the renewal of the bureaus of COVAREFs, and provide training and funds for community projects.



## 34TH TNS CONSERVATORS' MEETING HOLDS IN POKOLA

The 34th Meeting of Conservators of the Tri-National de la Sangha (TNS) took place in Pokola, Republic of Congo, from 27 to 30 September 2022, with the participation of Lobeke National Park management (MINFOF and WWF). The meeting that assembled Conservators of the TNS landscape from the Republic of Congo, Central Africa Republic and Cameroon, enabled participants to review progress made in each segment since the 33rd session of the conservators' meeting; provide technical update on anti-poaching activities and plan cross-border anti-poaching patrols for 2023.

## NGO LEADERS TRAINED ON NTFP VALUE CHAINS

To improve the livelihoods of local communities living around Lobeke National Park, six leaders from local NGOs at the periphery of the park were trained in NTFP value chain methods. The training focused on *Irvingia gabonensis* - wild mango and *Recinodendron Spp* - Djan-san collection, primary and secondary processing protocols developed by Tropical Forest Food and Cosmetics (TF-FC).

## LOCALS EARN FCFA 3,2 MILLION FROM PARK ACTIVITIES

Thirty people from 13 communities around Lobeke participated in park activities such as biomonitoring, surveillance and road maintenance in the park. Revenue generated by mostly youths from these activities amounted to 3,226,000F CFA.

## UNDERSTANDING ELEPHANT DISTRIBUTION THROUGH ACOUSTIC MONITORING



Practical training session on getting up a tree to install ARU monitors

To help biologists in Central Africa to understand the distribution of elephants, identify threats they face in order to better conserve them, a training was organized in Bomassa, Republic of Congo, in September. Three biologists (two volunteers and a staff) from WWF field offices in TNS and TRIDOM Cameroon landscapes participated in the training on Acoustic Monitoring for wildlife surveys. Participants gained knowledge on how to configure, install and analyse Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) as well as create detection algorithm.

## STUDENTS INTRODUCED TO CONSERVATION AT LOBEKE



Sixty-two (62) students from schools around Salapoumbe, Moloundou and Yokadouma sub divisions completed a one-month holiday internship at Lobeke headquarters recently. The internship scheme introduces students to basic notions of conservation and builds interest in them to become future conservationists. At the end of the internship, which enabled the learners to participate in park activities, the students received a total of FCFA 2 190 000 as stipend to enable them buy didactic material and pay school fees.



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## WWF's MISSION

Building a future in  
which humans live in  
harmony with nature.