



WWF
UPDATES



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Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Strategy: Indigenous Peoples and Local communities, Government, Stakeholders, show commitment

Within the framework of the Sida-funded project titled 'Leading the Change: Civil Society, Rights and Environment', WWF Cameroon and her partner CSO, the Community Action for Development (CAD), facilitated the development of a gender-sensitive Community-Based Sustainable Tourism (CBST) strategy, the first of its kind in Cameroon, in particular, and the Central African Sub-Region, in general.

The strategy will enhance Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' (IPLCs) participation, ownership, control and maximization of benefits from the management of natural resources.

It is within this context that CAD, with the support of WWF, organized a multi-stakeholder workshop on 10 June 2022 at the Bangem Council Hall in the South West Region of Cameroon, to validate the CBST strategy for the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo (BBM) landscape. It was an opportunity to enlist stakeholders' participation and support in the implementation of the strategy.



Communities were enthusiastic to support implementation





Participants, excited and committed

The workshop familiarised the over 50 participants, drawn from public and private sector institutions, CSOs, Councils, Donors, and local communities with the CBST feasibility study report, including tourism resources, a synoptic presentation on the Bakossi Green Business Village, discussed and validated the CBST strategy for the BBM landscape at the community level.

Present amongst others were, the Mayor of the Bangem council; the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUL) at the Prime Minister's Office in Yaounde; representatives of the Regional Delegates of MINTOUL and MINFOF, South West Region; the Divisional Delegates of MINTOUL and MINFOF for Kupe Muanenguba; the Conservators of the Bakossi National Park and the Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary; the Mayors of the Tombel, and Nguti Councils;

Flora Travel Tour Operator; Chiefs of Bakossi, Kupe, and Muanenguba CBST segments; representatives of the Mbororo indigenous peoples' community; youth and women representatives within the BBM landscape; data collectors, cluster facilitators; CAD, WWF, the Lead Consultant, and the media.

Welcoming participants to the workshop, the Deputy Mayor of the Bangem municipality, Enongene Epie, said, "Our landscape is one of the hotspots for biodiversity in the Congo Basin, with a lot of endemic species: birds, plants, fish and amphibians, such as the giant frog.

This is coupled with huge cultural, historical and archaeological resources that, collectively, can foster the development of CBST activities in our municipalities." He said the CBST, if well managed, can be a tool for local development and valorisation of natural and cultural resources of the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape.



Martin Etone, the Coordinator of CAD, in his presentation said the Bakossi-Banyang-Mbo landscape is endowed with numerous tourism potentials, ranging from natural to socio-cultural attractions that create a fertile ground for Community-based sustainable tourism.

"We are blessed because WWF and CAD took this initiative, on behalf of the Government, the council, and the communities, to develop this strategy," Mr Etone added.

He said the pilot phase of the implementation will be launched in 2023, to run through to 2027. Mr Etone added, "we all will collectively put hands on deck to raise the necessary funds to implement various aspects of the strategy." He hopes that by 2027, revenue generated from CBST in the Bakossi Landscape will have increased by 5 percent.

Officially opening the workshop, the Divisional Delegate for Tourism and Leisure for Kupe Muanenguba Division, George Luma Musonge, stated that, "It is difficult not to be part of such a good idea."

On behalf of the Government of Cameroon and the Ministry of Tourism, I pledge our support for the implementation of the strategy," Mr Luma Musonge said.

The CBST, he added, "allows the local peoples to benefit from their own local resources, protect their natural and cultural resources and market their touristic potentials to the world."

Overview of the landscape

The Programme Executant for WWF Coastal Forests Programme Cameroon, Theophilus Ngwene, presented an overview of the Bakossi landscape area and revisited the rich touristic potentials it harbours, including, but not limited to, large rivers and waterfalls, the Bermin and Edib lakes, and the Muanenguba twin lakes which is one of the most prominent and unique feature that exists in the country.

Mr Ngwene said "the CBST implementation will begin first in the Bangem and Tombel areas and later on to the Banyang-Mbo area, when a proper assessment of the latter's touristic potentials will have been completed and recorded."

He said over the years, WWF and CAD have deployed putting resources to promote the conservation of the rich biodiversity potentials of this landscape, in collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

"But it was realized that the IPLCs were not benefiting much from their exceptional touristic potentials, hence an urgent need to reorganize the tourism sector to fully involve the IPLCs," he added.



"We want the communities to own the process, manage and control it and also have access to these potentials and the benefits that accrue from them" *Theophilus Ngwene, Program Executant, WWF Coastal Forests Program.*

For the CBST to succeed, the participants unanimously agreed that the construction of accessible roads to the sites that harbour these treasures was paramount.

Most of the roads within the landscape are in a very poor state, and some almost inaccessible. Giving a facelift to these roads will facilitate Tour Operators who have expressed their readiness to join in the drive to sell the treasures of this landscape to the rest of the world.

The Bakossi Green Business Village

In his presentation, Mr Njamen Barro, the lead consultant who led the feasibility study and development of the CBST Strategy, explained that the Bakossi Green Business Village will serve as the CBST coordination centre for the landscape.

"It will be CBST's pilot centre that will coordinate all the activities across the landscape and serve as the seat of CBST tourism board.

Although the Business Village will be located in Bangem, there will be satellite centres in Tombel and Nguti," he clarified.

It was quite promising to have the Permanent Secretary of the National Tourism Board Mr Akame Eitel, present to witness the validation of the CBST strategy.

Mr Akame left Bangem quite satisfied with the presentation of the CBST Strategy and all other technical presentations that showcased the rich tourism potentials of this unique landscape. "Rest assured that I will be your voice at the national level," Mr Akame said.

"The document we are validating here today will contribute to the transformation of the lives of the people within this landscape," Mr Akame added.

He took a firm commitment to present the CBST validated report to the Prime Minister during a Tourism Board meeting scheduled for July 2022, in Yaounde. It is, therefore, clear that Government's role is significant for CBST to succeed.



Left: *Mbororo traditional hut.* **Right:** *Bakossi traditional hut*

The Secretary General of the Tombel Council, Mr Kundu Johnson and the First Deputy Mayor of Nguti Council, Mr Esua Cyprain, both expressed their readiness to support the implementation of the CBST and to incorporate key aspects into their Council Development Plans.

The day before the validation workshop, a small team that comprised the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUL) at the Prime Minister's Office; the Divisional Delegate of MINTOUL, Kupe Muanenguba Division;

a representative of the Regional Delegate MINTOUL for the South West Region; the communication Officer for the WWF Coastal Forests Programme, and the media, braved the very poor and slippery road, under a heavy downpour and on motor bikes, to visit one of the proposed sites to host the CBST Green Business Village, situated at Mbat Village, with a courtesy stop at the Palace of His Royal Highness, the Chief of Mbat Village.

The team also made a quick stop at the Mbororo settlement and the Muanenguba twin lakes.



Biking to the Muanenguba twin lakes, Mbororo community, proposed Green Village site and courtesy visit to the Chief of Mbat village



Chiefs pledged their support

Some Chiefs of the Bakossi landscape present at the ceremony pledged their unwavering commitment to the success of the strategy.

They promised to take back all key discussions to their subjects and start putting in place strategies to raise funds to support implementation of the strategy.

"We want to thank WWF and CAD for this strategy that will help valorize our culture and our resources. From now on, we want to say this strategy has been validated by the Chiefs of this landscape," Chief Akang Samuel of Boka-Bajoh said.

"I owe a lot of appreciation to the organisers—WWF and CAD. This was a dream to us, and we are grateful for its becoming a reality. It will go a long way to boosting the economy of our villages because the tourism that was done here before was not handled in a professional way," remarked HRH Chief Ndode Tobias Ewang of Nzimbeng village.

Also prominent during the workshop were Chief Michael Ngwese of Mbat village, Chief Ejolle Enongene Felix of Muahunzum village, and a host of others, who pledged their firm commitment and promised to provide the necessary support for the construction of the Green Business Village and implementation of key aspects of the strategy.

Mrs Agnes Ngide Ekume from Ekaku village represented the women while Ernest Ekane Akoh from Epen Bajoh represented the youth. They also took a commitment to support the implementation of the CBST strategy.

The Secretary General of the Tombel Council, Mr Kundu Johnson and the First Deputy Mayor of Nguti Council, Mr Esua Cyprain, all expressed their readiness to support the implementation of the CBST and to incorporate key aspects within their council Development plans.

At the close of the validation workshop, the Divisional Delegate of Tourism for Kupe Muanenguba, Mr George Mosoke Musonge Luma, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the workshop.

He wished all the participants safe travel and declared the workshop closed after over five hours of intensive presentations, deliberations and exchanges that saw the validation of the CBST strategy for the Bakossi-Banyang-Mbo Landscape.



Chiefs participated actively

Empowering Indigenous Peoples in sustainable Beekeeping:

The case of Mbororo Derke-Joh



Some members of Derke-Joh, Muanenguba village

The Mbororo community is the lone pocket of indigenous peoples' community, sandwiched between Kupe Muanenguba Division in the South West Region, and Mounjo Division in the Littoral Region of Cameroon.

The Mbororo, a minority semi-nomadic group, is one of the established Indigenous Peoples groups in Cameroon.

After WWF integrated them into conservation activities in 2008, these Mbororo cattle herders have been so passionate about nature conservation within Mount Muanenguba, an important watershed, where they have settled for decades due to the vast grazer land for their cattle.

Several sensitization meetings held with them, made them to understand the importance of nature,

conservation and environmental protection for today and future generations, which inspired them to easily join WWF's activities within the Kupe Muanenguba Division.

In October 2012, some dynamic Mbororo youths created an organised group, named Mbororo Derke-Joh (Mbo-Derk CIG), a Common Initiative Group found in the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape, on the slopes of Mount Muanenguba in Cameroon.



Aerial view of one of the Mbororo settlements at the slopes of Mt. Muanenguba

The group started off with 17 members, and has as objective, to enhance the economic and social well-being of the Muanenguba community; improve the standard of living of its members through savings and income generation and support members in need with funds to start a business through borrowing at moderate interest rate.

They also work in close collaboration with related services, Village Development Committees, and NGOs and also educate their members through seminars, training sessions and exchange visits on new farming techniques, especially bee farming methods amongst others.

We have been observing and experimenting the production of white honey within our community for over 10 years, especially from hives installed near *Schefflera* sp, a strangler plant species that produces whitish blossom during the month of March.”
Oumarou Idrissou
Adamou, Leader, Mbo-Derk CIG



Some bee farming materials were offered by CAD

Derke-Joh, does not only produce natural honey, but, recently, started harvesting the rare and most cherished white honey, which is not common in the South West Region.

With support from WWF and facilitated by the Community Action for Development (CAD), a WWF Cameroon partner Civil Society Organisation located in Bangem, Derkerjoh have successfully installed 59 hives. Since the beginning of 2022, that is within 6 months, they have produced 80 litres of white honey and made an income of XAF 160, 000 (approximately US\$320).

There is a high potential for beekeeping on the Muanenguba slopes due to the very short colonization period, which gives an average production of 12 litres per hive.

White honey, cherished by many, was known to be produced only in the Oku area of the North West Region of Cameroon.

Honey farmed within the Kupe Muanenguba Divison in particular and most parts of Cameroon, is generally brown in colour, reasons why the white honey produced by Derke-Joh is getting attention from the area and beyond, though with some scepticism.

“Each time we produce white honey, some people think that we have mixed the honey with banana and sugar.” Idrissou said. “This does not discourage us because those who can identify good honey still go ahead and buy.” he added.



Natural white honey produced by Mbo-Derk CIG

The Mbororo CIG have become the first Indigenous peoples (IPs) CIG in the South West Region of Cameroon to produce white honey. This makes them so proud of the discovery.

During the dry season, both the Mbororo young and elderly men, usually spend many months out of their community in search of green pasture for their cattle.

Some of them testify that it is tedious, and they are not as strong as their parents. But with this alternative activity, they can balance cattle rearing and beekeeping.

From the income this group has begun generating from the small-scale beekeeping they are doing, many Mbororo youths in their community have begun adopting beekeeping as an additional source of income to cattle rearing.

This is also a means of encouraging the Mbororo youths not to stick only to their age-old traditional cattle rearing, but to find interest in beekeeping and food crop production.



Beekeeping – an additional income source to cattle rearing



I love beekeeping, especially this white honey which is our new discovery. I get encouraged when tourists come and buy my honey. It gives me money and increases my popularity as an IP beekeeper.”
Harruna Oumarou, member Mbo-Derk CIG

Another member of the CIG, Moussa Jai said, “I have discovered that honey production is a good business. It is cost and labour effective, relative to cattle rearing, which is one of our major income-generating activities.”

I very much enjoy beekeeping. I want to become a trainer so that I can empower and inspire more Mbororo IP youths into producing honey. It is important that we have additional income sources other than cattle rearing, but also to discourage honey hunting, which has become one of the principal sources of bushfire on the Muanenguba mountain.” said Oumarou Saidou, Vice president.

Within the perspective of the Leading the Change project, CAD, with the support of WWF, is exploring the possibilities of linking Derke-joh up with the Tombel Conservation and Development Cooperative (TOCODEC), a specialized beekeeping cooperative in the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape.

The aim is to improve their capacity in the processing (extraction and packaging) and marketing of honey but also to support them in the acquisition of relevant beekeeping equipment and the planting of bee-loving plants, particularly those that produce white honey, to enhance their honey production-base.

The honey market for Derkerjoh, is beginning to spread to other areas out of Bangem and Mounjo Division. “We sell our honey in Muabi, Bangem and Melong. CAD is working so hard towards linking us up with TOCODEC in Tombel to improve our processing skills and increase our business capacity,” Idrissou said.

“Beekeeping is an activity we enjoy, but we also face some challenges, which include, limited capacity in production, processing and marketing techniques, to insufficient beekeeping equipment such as hives, bee suits and honey extractors and more.” he added



“We are happy and proud with the passion, skills and knowledge the Mbororo men have acquired so far in the production of white honey within our landscape. We pledge to continue supporting them and to enhance both their technical and institutional capacity.” *Martin Etone, Director of CAD.*



WWF-CFP in brief...

Plastic-free city campaign

Within the framework of the Leading the Change (LtC) project, WWF Cameroon - Coastal Forests Programme, in partnership with the Limbe City Council, organized a plastic-free city campaign, with focus on the ocean, on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Watch video on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/YVANIQDHgVk>

and Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WWFCameroon>



Be part of the solution to #StopPlasticPollution

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