

## Summary of the Report of the Steering Committee of Mengamé Project, held at Sangmélima on 22 October 2002

by James K. Gasana, Intercooperation, Bern

<b>Project title</b>	PD 66/01 Rev. 1 (F) Establishment of the Mengamé Transboundary Gorilla Sanctuary (MMGS) at the Cameroon-Gabon Border
<b>Country</b>	Cameroon
<b>Implementing agency</b>	Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas
<b>ITTO contribution to budget</b>	US\$ 770,750.-
<b>Contribution of the Government of Cameroon</b>	US\$
<b>Donors countries</b>	Japan, Switzerland, USA
<b>Duration</b>	2 years
<b>Starting date</b>	June (?) 2002

The above project aims at supporting cooperation efforts between Cameroon and Gabon for transboundary conservation of the Mengamé (Cameroon) – Minkebé (Gabon) protected forests which harbor vital populations of the lowland gorilla. The Mengamé Protected Forest Area is located in Southern Cameroon along the border with Gabon. It comprises 65,000 hectares of prime habitat for the western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*). However, in view of the increasing threat to the species, the Cameroonian government is considering to extend this area to some 122,000 hectares. Gabon has also submitted to ITTO a similar project concerning a bigger area (about 900,000 ha, in the Minkebé Forest).

The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of Mengamé project took place in October 2002. His Excellency M. C.O. Tanyi-Mbianyor, Minister of Forestry and Environment chaired it. Participants included the Prefect of the Dja-Lobo Department, and several officials of the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, various other national and local administrations, NGOs, and ITTO and donor representatives.

The agenda of the meeting included, among other things, the review of the progress of the project. The project started its activities in January 2002, with counterpart funds. After a difficult starting period, the project has so far accomplished only the following:

- Creation of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and organization of 3 PSC meetings;
- Designation of a Project Manager;
- Identification of the site for the Headquarters of the project;
- A contract was signed between the Government of Cameroon and the Jane Goodall Institute for the contribution of the latter to the management of the Gorilla Sanctuary;

Among the recommendations made and decisions taken by the PSC are the following:

- The Executing agency should provide all the required project staff members as early as possible, and should take all the necessary measures to make the project management office operational;
- The project must include awareness building among the local communities among its activities;
- There should be a clear definition of responsibilities of all the agencies involved in the implementation of the project.