

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
Project of the Government of the Central African Republic

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Number and Title:	CAF/95/G-31/1G/31 - A highly-decentralized approach to the protection and utilization of biological diversity in the Bangassou dense forest
Duration:	Four years
Project site:	Mbomou prefecture
Sector and sub-sector (CAC/UNDP)	(0630) Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable natural resource management
Executing agency:	UNOPS
Government executing agency:	Ministry of the Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries
Implementing agency:	To be selected
Planned project starting date:	June 1997
Government contribution (in kind):	CFAF 37,000,000
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	UNDP Financing and Cost Sharing
	USAID \$ 150 000
	WWF \$ 120 000
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	UNDP/GEF \$ 2 500 000

Project description: The project will promote community-based forms of management with a view to the conservation and sustainable use of local natural resources, suggest and implement reforms in the way local resource use is organized and in land tenure systems in order to establish on a permanent basis both local and national efforts to develop and protect biological diversity of the Bangassou forest.

Signature

Date

Name and title

For the Government

For UNOPS

For UNDP/GEF

Official United Nations exchange rate on the date of signature of this document: \$US 1 = _____ CFAF

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AFAN	African Forest Action Network
AfDB	African Development Bank
ATO	African Timber Organization
BSP	Biodiversity Support Program
CAR	Central African Republic
CARPE	Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE/USAID)
CESP	Country Environmental Strategy Paper
EPAT	Environmental Policy and Training Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIR	Groupement d'intérêt rural
GIS	Geographical Information System
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agro-Forestry
IDCP	Integrated Development and Conservation Programme
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MEEFCP	Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries
NASA	National Aviation and Space Administration (United States)
NEAP	National Environmental Action Programme
NESDA	Network for Environmentally Sustainable development in Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRM	Natural resources management
PARN	<i>Programme d'aménagement des ressources naturelles</i>
PA(S)	Protected Areas (System)
PRA	Participatory Rural Assessment
PVO	Private voluntary organization
UMD	University of Maryland
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WWF	World Wildlife Fund (United States)

A. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

The environment and rational natural resources management sub-sector

1. The degradation of the environment as a result of an unsustainable pattern of natural resources use is one of the major concerns of the Central African Republic. The scope of the problem is such that the Government has incorporated environment in its programme of action as one of the priority sectors on which it needs to focus its efforts to achieve sustainable human development by the end of the century.
2. The selection of the Bangassou forest (16,600 km²), a unique interface between the Congo-Guinean area and the Sudano-Guinean area, is a reflection of this determination. This forest area constitutes a transition between the bio-geographical regions of the west-central and east-central parts of Africa. It possesses exceptionally diverse ecosystems owing to the presence of a vast patchwork of dense primary forests and semi-deciduous secondary forests. It is thus a vast reservoir of biodiversity in which the two subspecies of elephants -- the savanna and forest elephants -- live.
3. Bangassou forest, together with the Dzanga Sangha forest in the southwestern part of the country, forms the northern edge of the dense equatorial forest. There is no industrial exploitation of the forest and owing to its sparse population (0.5 inhabitant per square kilometre) it has relatively stable edges. It should be emphasized, however, that in spite of its low population density, the pressure exerted by the population, which is economically marginal and poor, is very strong and is becoming more intense with each passing year. Many of the economic activities in which the population engages are still carried out on a small-scale using traditional methods. These include hunting, shifting cultivation, livestock raising, timber harvesting, fishing, mining, etc. These activities pose a serious threat to the flora and fauna of the Bangassou dense forest.
4. Faced with this situation the Government has found it imperative to identify alternative, more appropriate management approaches. This involves encouraging communities to organize in order to respond to the challenge of survival while preserving on a sustainable basis the reservoirs of natural resources needed to meet the vital needs of present and future generations. This imperative requires the promotion of behaviours based on conservation and good stewardship in individual households and in the community at large.

Host country strategy

5. The national strategy for developing the environment subsector is in the design phase, with one-time initiatives and broader thinking being carried out by national and international players. In the initial stage, a number of instruments have been worked out (Wildlife Code, Forests Code, Mining Code, etc.) and have been applied after a fashion in the absence of a coherent national strategic framework for the environment. In the second phase, a series of reviews is being carried out leading up to the establishment of a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). As far back as

1988, the workshop on hydrometeorology recommended the development of a national framework for sectoral environmental strategies. In October 1991, the Government published an important document of policy guidelines entitled "Situation des aires protégées ou proposées de la République Centrafricaine" ("Situation of Protected Areas or Proposed Protected Areas in the Central African Republic"). This document envisaged the inclusion of several new sanctuaries and reserves (covering a total area of 2 million hectares) in the national system of protected areas. It also took into account several sites, with multiple-use buffer zones, thus increasing the total area covered by the national protected areas system from 6.1 million hectares to 8.5 million hectares, or an increase of 34 per cent. The plan will make the Central African Republic the country in Central Africa with the highest percentage of its national territory set aside for conservation (the percentage increasing from 9.8 per cent to 13.4 per cent).

6. In 1990 a national seminar on environment and sustainable development provided broad guidance for the national strategy to be devised for the sustainable development of the environment. In 1992, the report of the Central African Republic for the Rio Conference set forth the elements to be taken into account in drawing up the NEAP. These elements were reaffirmed by the workshop on the implementation of Agenda 21 in 1993. At the end of that same year, a multilateral donors meeting encouraged the Government to draw up its NEAP and designated UNDP as lead agency.

7. A new constitution was approved by the voters in 1995 and laid the foundations for a new division of responsibility between the State and the local authorities by establishing the principle of decentralization and regionalization. As part of this policy, a ministry dealing with the environment and tourism was established in April 1995. It was strengthened in 1996 with the establishment of a Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MEEFCP), with the aim of promoting and coordinating actions in this sector. This step is another reflection of the Government's intention to give environment the place it deserves in national development. In strategic terms, the country ratified, on 3 March 1995, the United Nations framework conventions on climate change and biodiversity and the Bamako Convention of Trans-boundary Shipment of Hazardous Wastes. Numerous directives have been issued by the Head of State concerning protection of the national resource endowment and the handing over of responsibility to grassroots communities for the sustainable management of their lands. Act No. 96.013, adopted in January 1996, endorses the implementation of the decentralization and regionalization policy. Lastly, the process of drawing up the National Environmental Action Plan was launched that same month with the aim of providing the country in a relatively short period of time with a coherent and realistic strategy for environmental planning and management.

8. The working out of the plan is taking place in the context of an open national dialogue from the bottom up. It is in keeping with the spirit of the new constitution, which now defines decentralization as the pattern for the conduct of affairs and management of the country's resource endowment. It is based primarily on a participatory planning approach in diagnosing problems and formulating realistic strategies at the local, regional and national levels. A desire to provide comprehensive information and secure the involvement of external partners has been taken into account. The exercise will result in the definition of programmes whose coordinated

implementation in the framework of the NEAP will enable the Central African Republic to use its natural resources to best advantage in order to respond more effectively to the challenge of eradicating poverty and preserving the ecological balance. In this perspective, the project for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the Bangassou forest is viewed as one of the operational pillars (pilot) of the implementation of the Plan.

9. It is in pursuit of this objective of conserving and developing natural resources that the Government has included the Bangassou forest in the national conservation programme, having regard to its global importance.

Previous or ongoing assistance

10. The Central African Republic has received assistance from its external partners for the development of several projects in the areas of conservation and sustainable development of resources and biodiversity. Most of these have been designed having regard to the mandate to support the protection, conservation and development of natural resources, and the conservation and utilization of forest ecosystems. Among the most important of these mention might be made of the following:

- The "Man and Biosphere" project, supported by UNESCO and UNDP in the 1970s, was one of the first initiatives in the area of sustainable management of the environment. Two biosphere reserves were created, namely the Basse Lobaye reserve in an area of dense forest, and the Bamingui-Bangoran reserve. The latter were intended to serve simultaneously the purposes of demonstration and training, and emphasized broad dissemination of the concepts of development area, transitional area and fully protected area.
- The "Northern Region Development" project was instituted in 1988 by the European Union in the prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga, in the northern part of the country. It was intended to counter the intensive poaching that was taking place there by protecting wildlife, ensuring environmental monitoring and promoting rural development activities.
- The "Dzanga-Sangha" project undertaken in the southwestern part of the country in the 1990s with support from the World Bank, the GTZ and the WWF is an initiative which aims to establish a special reserve and develop ecotourism.
- The PARN project (Natural Resources Development Project), in the southern part of the country, undertaken in 1991 with support from the World Bank, encompasses several aspects, including a forestry inventory, the provision of digitized cartographic data and strengthening institutional and human capacity in this sector.
- The ECOFAC project (Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa), launched in the southern part of the country at the same time as the previous programme, which is part of a regional

initiative sponsored by the European Union. It is concerned with forest management, conservation and rural development and includes components involving "conservation and sustainable use of natural resources".

11. As regards the Bangassou project area, participatory rural evaluation and rapid ecological evaluation actions were carried out with the support of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) during 1994. The United States Peace Corps is providing support for agroforestry extension activities targeted to the village populations. USAID has identified the project zone as a high-priority site for its Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). As part of its South-Central Project, initially designed to support coffee growing and marketing in three prefectures, including Mbomou, the European Community intends during the second phase to encourage fish-farming, vegetable growing and social services such as village health centres. The activities planned under the project are highly relevant to the new regional programmes aimed at concerted sub-regional management of the environment (CARPE-USAID) and environmental information (PRGIE-GEF/World Bank).

Institutional framework for development efforts in the sector

12. The creation of a Ministry of Environment and Tourism in April 1995 and its strengthening in June 1996 with the establishment of a Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries, with a mandate from the Prime Minister, reflects concerns with respect to the planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the entire range of activities relating to the environment.

This is the main role entrusted to the General Directorate of the Environment, whose responsibilities are twofold:

- Promotion of environmental management (monitor and evaluate the state of the environment and implementation of environmental strategies, promote the adoption of measures for the protection, rehabilitation and development of natural resources, work out and develop mechanisms and instruments conducive to the inclusion of environmental factors in macro-economic planning, foster information, education and communication about the environment; and
- Coordination of environmental action (keep track of international instruments and promote their application, harmonize inter-sectoral policies and programmes and strengthen involvement).

13. The tasks of the central authorities are therefore not concerned with the on-site implementation of projects and programmes (which are within the purview of other ministerial structures which have support machinery in the field), but rather with monitoring and evaluation.

14. Thus in the project area, the regional, prefectural and sub-prefectural services of the former Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries will fully play their role in supervising the population. During the local workshops organized either at Bangassou in connection with the formulation of the project or in other localities throughout the country as part of the exercise to draw

up the National Environmental Action Plan, the local residents even recommended a reorganization of the responsibilities of these local authorities to take into account the needs expressed. Local residents wanted these authorities to be trained to serve as real advisers on the sustainable management of natural resources instead of simply serving as agents of enforcement. In that sense, the regional administrative structure (Division of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries) will be very involved in the project both in terms of on-site coordination and in terms of providing leadership and technical support.

15. Lastly, this coordination at the grassroots level and the call for efficient technical support expressed by the local communities requires assistance from other quality partners, particularly high-level professional research institutions such as universities (University of Bangui, the University of Maryland (USA), the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium)), highly specialized organizations (the NASA Pathfinder Project, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Wildlife Conservation Society, Tropenbos, ICRAF-IITA in Balmayo, ICRA in Bangui), development operators and experienced NGOs (CIONGCA, WWF, Pavillon Vert, etc.).

B. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Current situation

16. Never before has a development project having a component relating to the sustainable development and conservation of resources been implemented in the Bangassou region, in spite of the region's abundant natural resources, its rich endowment of wildlife species, the diversity of its plant life, its diamond and gold deposits, soil and climate conditions conducive to the growing of a variety of food crops and cash crops, such as coffee, palm oil and tobacco, a rich ethnobotanical heritage, a dense network of watercourses and extensive cattle-raising. But the region is isolated and economically disadvantaged. The total population is small (120,000 inhabitants in 1988 in a total area of 61,150 km²), and the natural population increase is small (the area has a very high infertility rate) and a net outflow of population owing to migration. Lying outside the economic circuits, the area engages in a subsistence economy, based on traditional practices that exert heavy pressure on the stores of biological diversity. The area derives its income from coffee, which continues to be the only sure revenue producer. Unfortunately, hoarding is widespread and is one of the main obstacles to access by the population of the region to consumer goods, which are already overpriced because of the region's remoteness and isolation. Alongside traditional farming, the population engages in hunting as a major activity (owing to high consumption of game birds), fishing, and, to a lesser extent, traditional lumber milling, small-scale commerce in foodstuffs or game and mining of diamonds and gold. Lastly, the region is shaped by psycho-sociological factors favouring intensive exploitation (tremendous development of do-it-yourself manufacture of firearms, use of chemical products and plant poison for fishing, burning of the brush, etc.).

17. There is relatively little information about human models of resource use and its impact on natural stocks. There would seem to be an urgent need, therefore, to envisage an ecological survey

and to inform resource users about trends affecting natural stocks. The use of an experimental approach combining the following elements would make such an exercise operational effective:

- (i) Obtain high-quality data on the Bangassou ecosystems;
- (ii) Provide such data to the inhabitants so that they are better able to grasp the relationships between their pattern of resource use and the trends with regard to stocks;
- (iii) Promote innovative methods for cooperating with local residents with the aim of making their resource use more sustainable.

18. A pre-condition for this initiative is greater accountability on the part of the local and regional stakeholders. Recourse must be had to methods for preserving biodiversity and sustainable use which take into account the country's and the region's current economic situation, the skills and means which are available, and the need to reconcile the demands of survival and development with the imperatives of preserving and conserving resources.

19. In August 1995, during the participatory planning workshop held for the formulation of the project, the inhabitants, through some 80 village chiefs, identified a number of critical situations that needed to be corrected in order to ensure sustainability in utilizing the biological diversity of Bangassou:

Table B1. Factors in the non-sustainable use of resources at Bangassou

Factors which can be influenced by the project	Factors outside the influence of the project
Inappropriate administrative systems	Demographic pressures
Absence of meaningful authority	Climate change
Land-tenure system unsuited to environmental conditions	Political instability in the region
Transhumance	Availability of modern firearms
Uncontrolled mining activity	Cross-border poaching
Local economic conditions	
Shifting cultivation	
Brushfires	
Use of pesticides	
Demand for palm wine	
Plantations (coffee)	
Conflicts between resource users	
"Anarchic" management by the State	

20. In this perspective, the GEF project will study and analyse these critical elements and test in the light of local realities the most appropriate resource management mechanisms by securing close collaboration between local resource users and the authorities. (For detailed information on the Bangassou workshop, see annex 8 ("Notes on the planning workshop").)

Expected situation on project completion

21. A considerable amount of high-quality data (studies, analyses, remote-sensing images) on the conditions necessary to ensure sustainable forest preservation must be amassed and broadly disseminated among the populations involved in the project. These populations must thus be fully informed about the state of their natural resources and made aware of the necessity of ensuring sustainable use and sound conservation.

22. A reorganization of the local territories through zoning could be carried out and would facilitate land-use planning, which would explicitly assign high importance to the values of biological diversity. It would encourage economic activities by reconciling profitability and the preservation of natural stocks.

23. The institution of a system for coordinating decisions relating to land use and management, regulatory measures and their enforcement, and the monitoring mechanism could:

- (I) Strengthen local authority for the improved organization and rigorous monitoring of grassroots initiatives;
- (ii) Provide support agencies with the technical resources which would enable them adequately to play their role ;
- (iii) Facilitate a better distribution of responsibilities between local communities (capable of carrying out their land management plans) and the regional and central structures (whose task is more concerned with research, monitoring, long-term follow up, policy formulation and coordination among donors).

24. A regional base for implementing the National Environmental Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Preservation Strategy could thus be constituted and could serve as a model for similar initiatives.

25. The Central African Republic would thus possess the elements to demonstrate its compliance with the obligations of evaluation, planning and monitoring under the biodiversity and climate change conventions.

Target beneficiaries

26. The target beneficiaries are the resource users living in the project area, or around one third of the territory of the sub-prefectures of Bangassou, Bakouma and Rafai (20,000 km² out of a total of 61,150 km²), or between 15,000 and 25,000 inhabitants. The group targeted is households in the well-organized villages existing within or on the outskirts of the forest area whose activities involve basically the exploitation of animals, plant life and land.

27. Civil servants dealing with the environment, water, forests, hunting and fisheries and certain administrative units involved in supervising, advising and leading the populations could benefit from training sessions in the fields of development, land organization and management, the rural economy and accounting, inter alia.

28. National researchers and NGOs involved in either component will benefit from experience gained in the field. **Project strategy and institutional arrangements**

a. Methodological approach

29. The GEF project is aimed at assisting the communities concerned in improving management of their natural resource base so as to be able to respond to the development challenges they face. As part of a virtually ongoing participatory approach, which is necessary to secure local consensus on the changes to be adopted in order to establish firmly patterns of sustainable resource use, the basic principle of the project is to foster:

- (i) At the local community level, highly cooperative working relationships in order to mobilize effectively and efficiently all local capacities in decisions and the implementation of activities for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
- (ii) at the level of the local territories (terroirs), zoning and the most appropriate mechanisms for information, research and resource management;
- (iii) at the level of regulations and laws, the adoption of provisions reinforcing local decision-making and promising local initiatives; and
- (iv) in terms of organizational arrangements and coordination, the establishment of a flexible, operational and transparent system for supervision and implementation, along the lines described below.

b. Structures

At the supervisory level,

■ A *Steering Committee* made up of representatives of MEEFCP, UNDP, the executing agency and the local communities;

- will determine the strategic guidelines for the project taking into account the NEAP;
- will ensure good communication between the partners and coordination with donors (GTZ, CARPE, World Bank, French Cooperation, African Development Bank); and - will evaluate project implementation as it occurs.

Table D1. Logical framework of project

OBJECTIVE 1	Make policies, legislation and practices conducive to sustainable development of renewable natural resources in the Bangassou dense forest
OUTPUTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laws and practices governing land ownership with a view to reversing destructive practices in the use of improved land 2. Legislative arrangements and practices governing land and resources ownership with a view to sustainable resources management, adopted and implemented 3. A planning mechanism for sustainable land use and appropriate technical support for that purpose designed and implemented
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of existing laws to determine changes to be recommended with regard to assignment of land rights and the right to use resources 2. Participatory workshops on testing of hypotheses concerning laws and practices fostering sustainable management of resources 3. Promulgation of regulations defining the limits of the project area and management arrangements 4. Circulation of texts and promotion of awareness among the communities with a view to reinforcing perceptions of their new responsibilities for control and sustainable management of natural resources 5. Zoning of local districts and demarcation of various resource-use regions at the community level through the process of dialogue and negotiation, in cooperation with the administrative and village authorities 6. Training of personnel of government bodies and/or national NGOs in resource planning and management
INDICATORS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislation enacted and enforced to strengthen land tenure law relating to the use of natural resources 2. Number of villages in which the regulations are accepted and enforced to define and limit exploitation of resources 3. Agreement on zoning signed and implemented by Prefecture, supervisory bodies, local authorities and the project 4. Number of personnel trained in planning and zoning 5. Number of villages with land occupation maps and maps showing natural resource use

OBJECTIVE 2	Strengthen local institutions and partnership in order to create opportunities for developing natural resources and improving ecosystems management
OUTPUTS	1. An appropriate mechanism for the decentralized management of renewable resources empowered to take the wisest decisions on investments and resource management, introduced and consolidated
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participatory workshop on decentralization and inter-agency cooperation with a view to improving management of renewable natural resources 2. Provision of appropriate data to groups of users on planning procedures, the community management system, the functions of community extension work, and mechanisms for enforcing regulations and accountability 3. Adoption of provisions to adapt the functions of the personnel of the water and forests division to the technical assistance requirements expressed by user groups 4. Training of personnel of the water and forests division in organizational development, project financial management and accounting, monitoring and participatory assessment, strategic planning and adult education
INDICATORS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of staff members of the water and forests division trained in technical assistance with respect to NRM 2. Agreement signed and in force specifying the responsibilities of the local authorities, communities, user groups and the division of water and forests with respect to decentralization of NRM

OBJECTIVE 3	Promote specific economic activities that will help to raise income levels, provide opportunities for gainful employment, improve living conditions for communities of natural resource users and lessen strains on the environment
OUTPUTS	1. Activities involving incentives and economic performance of resource user communities and ensuring sustainability of biological diversity
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnostic workshop on the feasibility of and sectoral priorities for natural resources development and organization to promote conservation behaviours among communities and households 2. Support for small-scale activities (selected) which create local employment and value added to local resources (lumber) without damaging the forest 3. Support for selected communities participating in a pilot project in game ranching of species for which demand is great in order to reduce hunting to a more sustainable level 4. Support for selected villages engaging in integrated and sustainable farming (forestry, animal husbandry, fish farming, etc.) 5. Support for pilot commercial ventures relating to forestry products other than wood (medicinal plants, cosmetic products, foodstuffs, packaging, etc.) which are potentially of interest to the national and external markets
INDICATORS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of pilot activities under way to test methods for sustainable natural resource use 2. Number of village communities which adopt improved approaches

OBJECTIVE 4	Promote traditional knowledge and scientific information in order to build capacity in grassroots communities for sustainable management of natural resources
OUTPUTS	1. High-quality data available and widely disseminated in order to improve knowledge about natural resources and promote the optimum use of natural resources while reinforcing behaviours consistent with the conservation of biological diversity
ACTIVITIES	1. Participatory study of linkages between different kinds of information and behaviours promoting conservation among the community and households 2. Support for the introduction of a communication strategy in the context of environmental education and the promotion of community awareness 3. Support for the preparation of documentation on traditional knowledge about resource-use practices and technologies 4. Support for community measurement activities (surveying of sample sites), and activities involving the use of cartographic and photographic materials and other modern information providing a basis for environmental education and the planning of resource use
INDICATORS	1. Number of user groups receiving technical data and outputs (satellite images, etc.) 2. Regulations of natural resource harvesting (game birds, etc.) are adjusted in the light of data received from environmental monitoring officials

E. CONTRIBUTIONS

Government contribution

1.1 STAFF

39. The Government will make available the supervisory personnel of the Mbomou Division of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries.

1.2 OFFICE SPACE

40. The Government of the Central African Republic will make available for the project premises to accommodate:

- at Bangassou, the coordination committee, the administrative office and the NRM operational unit, and
- at Bangui, the liaison and coordination office of the legal and institutional reforms unit during the first year of the project. During the second year, coordination of this unit will move to Bangassou with the recruitment of an officer for the reforms unit.

1.3. OPERATIONS

41. The Government will take responsibility for the maintenance of the offices and various supplies not specified in the UNDP-GEF contribution.

UNDP-GEF contribution

2.1 STAFF

42. The project personnel financed from the UNDP-GEF budget will comprise the following:

- An expert (international) in NRM to oversee the start-up phase, provide advice on environmental policies and propose necessary reforms -- 24 man-months (renewable) - 30 man-months divided into two stages (15 months at the start and 15 at the end of the project). The title of the post will be Chief Project Technical Adviser. During the first year of the project, the international expert will train the chief of the NRM unit in order to prepare the latter to take over the management of the project.

A chief of the community NRM unit (national) to serve as secretary of the On-site Coordination Committee, assume primary responsibility for activities financed by the project, including activities involving environmental research, surveillance, etc., and, in

the absence of the international expert (Chief Technical Adviser) ensure direction of the project - 24 man-months (renewable);

- A chief of the legal and institutional reforms unit (national) to ensure coordination of the unit's activities from the second year of the project; 36 man-months (24-month contract, with the possibility of a 12-month extension). During the first year of the project, the official in charge of the liaison office will coordinate the activities of the legal and institutional reforms unit from Bangui;
- A liaison officer (national or United Nations Volunteer) to tend to day-to-day logistical support at Bangui - 24 man-months, renewable;
- An accountant (national or United Nations Volunteer) to provide support for financial management in the Bangassou office - 24 man-months, renewable; and
- Project support staff, including two secretaries and two drivers.

2.2. EQUIPMENT

43. The equipment to be financed from the UNDP-GEF budget will include:

- Vehicles;
- Computers and printers;
- Communications equipment, including radio transmitters, fax machines, walkie-talkies, etc.; and
- Audio-visual equipment etc.

2.3 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

44. Technical assistance will comprise national consultants (or United Nations Volunteers) and a Chief Technical Adviser (international) on a contractual basis, in areas relating to the organization, conservation, development and participatory and community management of natural resources.

2.4. MISCELLANEOUS

45. The UNDP-GEF budget will also cover expenses for the following:

- Clerical assistance
- Travel
- Environmental research (by contractors)
- Oversight, evaluation and auditing (by contractors)
- Dissemination of information (by contractors)
- Capital for community undertakings (by contractors)

- Costs of subcontracting for work to be awarded under arrangements to be concluded between UNOPS and the implementing agency for the project which prevails in the competitive bidding organized for this purpose.

F. RISKS

46. The risks associated with the preparatory and operational phases of the project are:

- n *During the preparatory phase*, the absence of or delays in the introduction of texts (decrees) governing the project area, delays or shortcomings in technical analyses or the operational feasibility of components involving estimates/observation of local resources, delay in the formulation and implementation of the NEAP; and
- n *-During the operational phase*, delay in the availability of texts adjusting the functions of the local staff of the division of water, forests, hunting and fisheries, responsible for supervision, delays in paying this staff, geographical isolation and difficulties affecting movements in the project area, tendency to view the project as a traditional rural development initiative, the variety of interferences at the grassroots community level, difficulties in finding markets for local products, etc.

G. PRIOR OBLIGATIONS AND PRE-CONDITIONS

47. Prior to the provision of technical assistance by UNDP-GEF, the Government must set up the Steering Committee and the Coordination Committee and ensure optimum involvement on the part of the personnel of the division of water, forests, hunting and fisheries at Mbomou.

48. Assignment of the role of supervising the project activities to the Ministry of the Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries should facilitate project implementation, in particular by ensuring the close cooperation of technical departments in solving operational problems.

49. The project description will be signed jointly by UNDP, UNOPS and the Government of the Central African Republic. The assistance of UNDP/GEF will be provided to the project subject to assurances given to UNDP/GEF that the conditions outlined above have been met or are about to be met. UNOPS will invite international tenders and will select the project implementing agency from among the bidders. This agency must be able to demonstrate its capacity to carry out the project activities in a timely manner, particularly the activities of the NRM unit and those of the legal and institutional reforms unit necessary for community participation in NRM in the Central African Republic under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries. If one or more of these conditions are ultimately not satisfied, UNDP/GEF may, at its discretion, suspend or terminate its assistance.

H REVIEWS, EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS

50. The points outlined below will be taken into account in reviewing and evaluating the project and in the drafting of project reports:

The project will be the subject of a tripartite review (by the representatives of the Government, UNDP/GEF and the executing agency at least once every twelve months and the first review meeting will take place within twelve months of the actual start up of the project. The chief technical adviser or his national counterpart (chief of the NRM unit) as chief project manager should prepare an evaluation report on the results of the project in preparation for each tripartite review meeting. Other such reports may be requested, as necessary, while the project is under way;

- A final project report will be drawn up in preparation for the final tripartite review. A preliminary draft will be prepared sufficiently in advance so that the executing agency can consider and approve it from the technical point of view at least four months before the final tripartite review; and
- The project will be the subject of a mid-term appraisal and a final appraisal. The organization, characteristics and timetable of the appraisal will be determined after consultations among the parties to the project document. The indicators specified in the project's logical framework will be used as performance measures for the project appraisal.

I. LEGAL CONTEXT

51. This project document and its annexes constitute the instrument envisaged in article 1 of the basic agreement concluded between the Government of the Central African Republic and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), signed on 21 August 1976 by the parties concerned.

52. For the purposes of the said agreement, the agency of the recipient country responsible for execution will be the government cooperating agency envisaged in the agreement.

53. The following revisions may be made in the present project description even if they are not signed by the Resident Representative of UNDP, provided that the latter has assurances that the other signatories of the project description have no objection to the proposed changes:

- a- Revisions or additions to the annexes to the project description;
- b- Revisions which do not have the effect of introducing major changes in the immediate objectives, in the project outputs or activities, but which result from a reorganization of already agreed contributions or cost increases resulting from inflation;
- c- mandatory annual revisions for the purpose of rescheduling the provision of already agreed contributions, confirming an increase in expert or other costs resulting from

inflation or taking into account the preferential treatment accorded to reimbursement of the expenses of executing agencies.

54. The Government will submit periodically to the Resident Representative certified financial statements and an annual statement of the position of UNDP funds (including GEF funds) in accordance with the procedures set forth in section 30503 of the UNDP Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) and section 10404 of the UNDP Financial Manual. The financial audit will be performed by a government auditor or by a private auditor engaged by the Government.

J. BUDGETS

J.1. Budget of the Government contribution

Country: Central African Republic

Project No.: CAF/95/G-31/D/1G/31:

A highly-decentralized approach to the protection and use of biological diversity of the Bangassou dense forest

Budget items	TOTAL M/M CFAF	YEAR 1 M/M CFAF	YEAR 2 M/M CFAF	YEAR 3 M/M CFAF	YEAR 4 M/M CFAF
10. PERSONNEL	284	72	72	72	72
40. OFFICE SPACE	32 000 000 pro memoria 5 000 000	8 000 000 pro memoria 1 250 000	8 000 000 pro memoria 1 250 000	8 000 000 pro memoria 1 250 000	8 000 000 pro memoria 1 250 000
50. OPERATIONS					
TOTAL	284	72	72	72	72
	37 000 000	9 250 000	9 250 000	9 250 000	9 250 000

J.2. Project budget covering UNDP contribution (in United States dollars)

Country: Central African Republic

Project number: CAF/95/G31/D/1G/31 - A Highly Decentralized Approach to Biodiversity Protection and Use: the Bangassou Dense Forest

	TOTAL (US \$)	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
10.00 Project personnel					
11.01 International Consultants (Preparatory Assistance)	83,523				
11.99 Total for Project Personnel component	83,523				
15.00 Travel (inside country)					
15.01 Travel inside country	16,477	3,477	5,000	4,000	4,000
15.99 Total Travel	16,477				
16.00 Costs of missions and evaluations					
16.01 Evaluation and mission costs	64,000	5,000	20,000	4,000	35,000
16.99 Total, missions and evaluation component	64,000				
20.00 Sub-contracting					
21.00 Support Unit for Legal and Institutional Reforms	160,000	39,000	62,000	44,000	15,000
22.00 Community Natural Resource Management Unit	1,780,000	592,000	370,500	334,500	483,000
29.00 Total, sub-contracting component	1,940,000				
40.00 Equipment					
42.00 Equipment and supplies					
42.01 4 four-wheel drive vehicles (3@ \$40,000 and 1@ \$20,000)	140,000	60,000	40,000	40,000	
42.03 Computers and peripherals	15,000	10,000	5,000		
42.04 Communications equipment (Fax, 4 long-distance radio transmitters, walkie-talkies)	20,000	15,000	5,000		
42.05 Mapping equipment and Global Positioning System	6,000	6,000			
42.06 Office equipment	6,000	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
49.00 Total, equipment component	196,000				
93.01 UNOPS project support costs (8%)	200,000				
99.00 TOTAL GENERAL	2,500,000				

SULCONTRACTS BUDGET
LOCAL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Country: Central African Republic

Project number: CAF/95/G31/D/1G/31 - A Highly Decentralized Approach to Biodiversity Protection and Use: the Bangassou Dense Forest

PROJECT PERSONNEL	TOTAL (US \$)	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
International Expert					
Chief Technical Adviser (30m/m)	375,000	150,000	(3m/m) 37,500	(3m/m) 37,500	150,000
National Personnel					
Chief, NRM Unit (48m/m @ \$1,667 per month)	80,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Accountant (48m/m @ \$1,000 per month)	48,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Manager, Bangui Liaison Office (48m/m @ \$1,000)	48,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
2 Secretaries (96m/m @ \$625 per month)	60,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
2 Drivers (96m/m @ \$500 per month)	48,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
National Consultants					
- Technical assistance/studies and feasibility studies/Training for NGOs (108 m/m)	216,000	72,000	48,000	48,000	48,000
- Preparation of work plan (4 m/m)	8,000	4,000		4,000	
- Collection of project baseline data (9 m/m)	18,000	18,000			
- Introduction to environmental assessment (9 m/m)	18,000	12,000	6,000		
- Mapping/land-use survey (12 m/m)	24,000	24,000			
- Socio-economic assessment (24 m/m)	48,000	24,000	24,000		
- Preparation of biological diversity map (12 m/m)	24,000				
- Zoning of resource use districts and regions (6 m/m)	12,000	12,000			
- Indicative delimitation of activity sites (3 m/m)	6,000	6,000			
- Formulation and establishing of monitoring strategy (6 m/m)	18,000	18,000			
- Selection of environmental monitoring sites (6 m/m)	12,000	12,000			
- Assessment of protected area needs (2 m/m)	4,000			4,000	
WORKSHOPS					
16 workshops (see work plan) @ \$15,000 per workshop	240,000	75,000	60,000	30,000	75,000
COMMUNITY VENTURE FUNDS					
Community venture funds	300,000	40,000	60,000	100,000	100,000
TRAINING					
- Study tours	35,000	20,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
- On-the-job training and training for participating communities	30,000	7,000	8,000	8,000	7,000
- Information and dissemination	28,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
RESEARCH					
- Research costs	80,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
TOTAL, SUBCONTRACTING NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	1,780,000	592,000	370,500	334,500	483,000

SUBCONTRACTS BUDGET
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
IN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Country: Central African Republic

Project number: CAF/95/G31/D/1G/31 - A Highly Decentralized Approach to Biodiversity Protection and Use: the Bangassou Dense Forest

PROJECT PERSONNEL	TOTAL (US \$)	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Officer in charge of legislative and institutional reforms unit and training officer (Activity 6, Objective 1; 36m/m @ \$916 per month	33,000		11,000	11,000	11,000
National Consultants					
- Review of existing laws to determine changes to be recommended (12 m/m)	24,000	12,000	12,000		
- Assistance for promulgation of new regulations (10 m/m)	20,000	6,000	10,000	4,000	
- Legislative support for zoning of resource-use districts and regions (3 m/m)	6,000	6,000			
- Training of staff in planning and NRM (6 m/m)	12,000		6,000	6,000	
WORKSHOPS					
3 workshops (Activity 2, Objective 1) @ \$15,000 per workshop	45,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	
TRAINING					
- Training of personnel (local governments, NGOs)	10,000		5,000	5,000	
- Publicizing of texts, awareness promotion and dissemination (Activity 4, Objective 1)	10,000		3,000	3,000	4,000
TOTAL, SUBCONTRACTS, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS	160,000	39,000	62,000	44,000	15,000

ANNEXES

ANNEX I - WORK PLAN FOR BANGASSOU PROJECT (NRM)

● = Non-recurring activities; Shaded areas = long-term or ongoing activities

Quarter:	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
START-UP ACTIVITIES																
Issue of contracts	●															
Recruitment of staff	●															
Establishment of the legal status of the project site																
Establishment of liaison office in Bangui																
Establishment of project office in Bangassou																
Establishment of Project Oversight Committee																
Establishment of on-site coordination committee																
Commencement of procurement																
Project start-up workshop	●															
MANAGEMENT INPUTS AND TECHNICAL INPUTS																
Inputs of international expert in NRM																
Planning workshop of Oversight Committee	●				●				●				●			
Preparation of training plans for project units	●															
Study tours/training for personnel and project partners			●						●						●	
Technical assistance/consultations, surveys and feasibility studies/training for NGOs																
Liaison with other projects promoting economic activities																
Activities of on-site coordination committee																
Establishment of work plan																

Quarter:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
DATA-COLLECTION PHASE												
Workshop on wildlife population census	•											
Collection of project baseline data												
Introduction to environmental assessment												
Mapping/land-use surveys												
Socio-economic assessment												
Review of existing laws and regulations												
Establishment of relations with NASA, ECOFAC and other research bodies (sources of data)												
Workshop on setting biological diversity priorities					•							
Preparation of biological diversity map												
Diagnostic workshop on feasibility and sectoral priorities												
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PHASE												
Participatory workshops on legal arrangements and practices encouraging sustainable management												
Indicative demarcation of activities site												
Zoning of resource use districts												

Quarter:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
and regions																
Workshop on intervention mechanisms																
Workshop on use of traditional and scientific information		•														
IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITIES PHASE																
Promulgation and publication of regulations																
Training of agency personnel																
Enforcement of regulations																
Support for pilot activities																
Support for educational and communication activities																

ANNEX 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROJECT PERSONNEL

1. INTERNATIONAL EXPERT IN NRM

Category: International recruitment, senior level

Duty station: Bangassou

Qualifications: Post-graduate university degree, with a minimum of seven years experience in areas of relevance to the project. Academic studies in resource economics, applied social sciences, public administration, forestry or environmental science. Strong analytical, research and writing skills. Experience in Central Africa very useful, but, as a minimum, the candidate will be required to possess management experience in sub-Saharan Africa. Command of French essential; ability to read and write English for professional purposes also important. Experience in natural resources policies, institutional reform and capacity-building important, as well as sound understanding of research methods, in particular in the context of action-research. Experience in leading multidisciplinary teams very important.

Functions: Providing direction during the project's start-up phase, including staff guidance, and primary responsibility for establishing procedures applicable to the project activities. Serve as secretary of the Project Steering Committee and Coordination Committee and assume primary responsibility for negotiations with the host country Government and UNDP/GEF. Supervise the work of consultants on short-term mission providing technical assistance to the project. Preparation of written reports required in accordance with the directives concerning oversight and financial reports on project activities. Provide leadership in preparing for project workshops and other participatory activities to be carried out with the involvement of the local communities. Serve as project focal point for coordination with other donor agencies involved in the environment and forestry sector, including policy reform initiatives. Assume primary responsibility for preparing written reports documenting the results of action-research activities and participate in initiatives for the dissemination of information. The expert will assign various of these responsibilities to the chiefs of the operational teams concerned. Evaluation of environmental policies and the formulation of proposals, including draft legislation, concerning reforms that may be needed. Provision of technical support for the PAEN process and work with the donor community, NGOs and other concerned partners to identify potential problems and formulate appropriate strategies to lessen the environmental impact of macro-policies on Bangassou, in particular, and on forested areas of the Central African Republic in general. Organize training and the provision of other technical inputs for MEEFCP staff and other interested personnel.

Chain of command: Steering Committee, Coordination Committee and project implementing agency.

Length of contract: 15/15 months, renewable once for the final 15 months of the project.

2. CHIEF, COMMUNITY NRM UNIT

Category: National recruitment, senior level

Duty station: Bangassou

Qualifications: University degree in wildlife management (flora and fauna), forestry, applied social sciences relevant to natural resources, or other relevant disciplines. Experience in management and relations with community organizations, NGOs and other basic participatory activities. Experience in action-research also essential. Seven years professional experience. Strong analytical, research, drafting and participatory planning skills. Command of French and Sango essential; practical knowledge of English useful.

Functions: Primary responsibility for local activities financed by the project. Interact with village chiefs, the GIR and other community groups participating in activities for testing hypotheses concerning natural resources management. Primary responsibility for negotiating agreements on the use of local resources and the development of a surveillance system. Supervise the community residents and extension agents of the Water and Forestry Service and the project personnel in the project activities dealing with environmental research, monitoring of test sites, surveys of flora and fauna and similar other similar activities in the field.

Chain of command: Project implementing agency (international expert in NRM), Steering Committee, Coordination Committee

Length of contract: Two years, with possibility of a two-year extension.

3. MANAGER, LIAISON OFFICE

Category: National recruitment or United Nations Volunteer, middle or senior level

Duty station: Bangui

Qualifications: University degree in a field relating to public relations or materials management. At least seven years experience at senior levels of management/administration and demonstrated ability to support a multidisciplinary team. Strong financial management skills.

Functions: Administration of the day-to-day activities of the project liaison office in Bangui, including files, logistic support for project activities, communications with donors' headquarters and the executing agency and project implementing agency, supervision of vehicles and drivers, and related functions. Provision of clerical support for consultants on short-term mission, maintaining project files and data. In addition, during the first year of the project, the manager of the Liaison Office will ensure coordination of the activities of the legal and institutional unit.

Chain of command: Chief of the Community NRM Unit

Length of contract: Two years, with the possibility of a two-year extension.

4. ACCOUNTANT

Category: National recruitment or United Nations Volunteer, middle level

Duty station: Bangassou

Qualifications: Professional qualifications in accounting and a minimum of five years experience.

Functions: Provision of financial management support for the project office in Bangassou. Maintain accurate accounting documents and follow all grant activities relating to the project. Provide clerical support to consultants on short-term mission, maintain project files and data and files on national personnel;.

Chain of command: Chief of the Community NRM Unit [?? text illegible here??]

Length of contract: Two years, with the possibility of a two-year extension.

5. CHIEF, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS UNIT

Category: National recruitment or United Nations Volunteer, senior level

Duty station: Bangassou

Qualifications: University degree in administrative management, real estate law, customary law, institutional law, ecology or other related fields, such as natural resources economics and field experience in legislative or institutional reforms with community participation. At least seven years professional experience. Command of French essential; practical knowledge of English (reading/writing) also important. Experience in the Central African Republic or another country of Central Africa useful.

Functions: Primary responsibility for the activities of the Legal and Institutional Reforms Unit from the second year of the project. Interact with village chiefs, the GIR and other community groups participating in activities under the project, in particular studies geared to revising the legal texts, training in the rights, duties and responsibilities of the population, support for grassroots organization in carrying out reforms, etc. Responsibilities for negotiating agreements on the use of local resources and setting up of a surveillance system. Coordinate the activities of the unit in consultation with the Chief of the GNR Unit and the Chief Technical Adviser.

Chain of command: Steering Committee, management of the implementing agency, chief of the NRM Unit

Length of contract: Two years, with the possibility of a one-year extension.

ANNEX 3. DESCRIPTION OF TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executing agent and subcontractor: The GEF project in Bangassou will be implemented in accordance with the national execution procedures of UNDP, it being understood that some of the project activities and some responsibilities, as well as the financial resources required for their execution, will be entrusted, by mutual agreement between the parties to the project, to an executing agent, which, in the present instance, is UNOPS and a subcontractor. The implementation agent (or subcontractor) will be chosen on the basis of competitive bidding to be conducted by UNOPS. The implementation agent may, in turn, either subcontract certain specialized work to partners for the execution of specialized components, for example a consulting firm or a national NGO, or recruit national consultants.

Responsibility: The implementation agent will assume primary responsibility for the conduct of the activities described in the project plan, in consultation with UNDP/GEF and the Government of the Central African Republic. Responsibility for project management will be entrusted to the Steering Committee for the project, whose membership and procedures will be the subject of an agreement between the parties to the project. Operational responsibility for the tasks and activities assigned to the implementation agent will be under the latter's day-to-day management, with the Steering Committee providing guidelines as agreed by the parties to the project.

Partner agencies: A number of other agencies may be associated directly or indirectly with the GEF project, for example by providing technical assistance, participating in action-research activities or environmental research in the field, or by cofinancing activities of the GEF project. The project partners will establish formal or informal relations with the project as appropriate, in accordance with the criteria and procedures to be determined by the Steering Committee. Participation in such joint activities should not be construed as constituting a delegation of managerial responsibility to the partner agencies, unless otherwise expressly provided by a decision of the Project Steering Committee.

Subcontracts: Contract documents will be negotiated and signed by the parties to the project, on the one hand, and the executing agent and its subcontractors, on the other. The contracts shall specify all the arrangements relating to procedures for recruitment, management, evaluation, financing, auditing and transfers to be applied during the implementation of the project, including all matters relating to the payment of expenses incurred in the country/in local currency, the costs in foreign currency and the overheads of the implementing agent.

ANNEX 4. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Bangui office: The premises will be provided by the Government of the Central African Republic and will be fitted out with office equipment and supplies necessary to support the implementation of the GEF Bangassou project, namely a facsimile machine, personal computer, photocopier, radio transmitter and other equipment usually required (liaison vehicle) suitable for transporting consultants to the project site.

Bangassou office: The project's management structures will be provided with accommodation by Mbomou prefecture in consultation with the executing agent. The provision of the premises will be considered a Government contribution of the Central African Republic and will be entered into the accounts as a component of cost-sharing in the project's budget. The office equipment and supplies necessary to support the implementation of the GEF Bangassou project at the local level will be purchased for the project, namely a telex machine, a personal computer, a photocopier, radio transmitter and other equipment usually required. A radio system for communicating with staff in the field will also be needed. One four-wheel-drive vehicle will be purchased for use in Bangui and three for use in Bangassou.

GPS equipment will also be purchased for use in surveying.

As the project's operational units are to be based at the Bangassou office, comprising the action-research group on community management of natural resources and the ecological monitoring field group; the members of other project groups, such as those of the technical advisory group and the Steering Committee, will travel to Bangassou from time to time for short visits. The meetings of the Steering Committee will be held alternately at Bangui and at Bangassou, in premises reserved for this purpose.

Other:

The Government of the Central African Republic will make available a light aircraft for travel within the project area and between the project area and Bangui, as part of Government cost-sharing in the GEF project. The project partners will agree on arrangements relating to the use of this service and the dates and timetable for the use of the service.

The Government of the Central African Republic will also make available all project maps and other cartographic documents, remote-sensing images, survey data and other relevant technical information which can be communicated by other government services or projects, including through the PARN initiative of Water and Forests. These inputs will also be considered as part of Government cost-sharing in the GEF project.

Other requirements for equipment for the project will be approved and financed by the project with the agreement of the parties, which shall also provide procurement instructions for the executing agent.

ANNEX 5. ROLE OF THE SUPERVISORY BODIES

Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee (Comité directeur du projet)(CDP)) will be set up to handle the overall direction of the project. The Committee shall meet quarterly or more often if necessary to deal with specific matters relating to the direction of the project, such as review of evaluation reports. The meetings of the Steering Committee shall take place alternately at Bangui and Bangassou. The Committee shall comprise a representative of UNDP, one or more representatives of government counterpart agencies, the prefect of Mbomou, one representative of the University of Bangui, of the management of the executing agency, and one representative of the local coordination committee.

Representation of outside parties is of great importance in that it provides an independent viewpoint and establishes links with the latest experiences with participatory management of natural resources outside the Central African Republic. It will be ensured through the periodic participation of a high-level expert in biodiversity conservation, who will attend one or two meetings of the CDP each year.

From time to time, CDP shall also invite to its meetings as observers individuals whose experience and functions have a bearing on the project. Such individuals are likely to provide insights and useful advice. In addition, this form of networking can help to make the project activities known outside the services directly involved and draw the attention of project managers to potential problems and the opportunities to be seized.

Among other things, the CDP will provide support and advice to the project managers and will help to ensure adherence to the general direction of the project in accordance with the project description. It will also propose changes in project activities or approach on the basis of such elements as inputs from the local coordination committee, the results of monitoring and evaluation activities, or recommendations made by the project partners. The project office at Bangassou will provide the secretariat of the CDP. The chairmanship of the CDP shall be determined by vote within the Committee.

Local Coordination Committee

A Local Coordination Committee (CCS) will be established in Bangassou. The local authorities of the project area will be represented in the Committee, in particular by village chiefs who participated in the project planning workshop. This body will establish close links with the local authorities and will serve as a channel of communication through which the latter can make known their points of view. The participatory planning workshop for the project aroused keen

local interest in the project and it will be important for the project to establish appropriate mechanisms available on a continuing basis through which local viewpoints can be expressed and will make possible frequent interaction with the project management.

The project partners must grasp the distinction between "consultation" and "participation". Many projects provide for occasional public meetings in the context of which consultations with stakeholders are held. This activity is quite different from participation as regards substantive questions as envisaged for the GEF project in Bangassou. The CCS will provide inputs which will be taken into account at the level of the field activities financed by the project. It will also provide inputs for the Project Steering Committee. The CCS will thus play a role as intermediary and will facilitate communications between the field and project headquarters.

The CCS will meet each month, alternately at Bangassou and other communities in the project area. The public will be encouraged to attend its meetings. The office of the community NRM group will serve as the secretariat of the CCS. The chairmanship of the CCS will be decided by vote within the Committee.

ANNEX 6. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project context:

The dense Bangassou forest, which is situated north of the Mbomou and Ubangui rivers in the southern part of the Central African Republic, is a unique interface between the Congo-Guinean area and the Sudano-Guinean area. It also marks the transition between the bio-geographical regions of the west-central and east-central parts of Africa. The estimates of its area range from 9,500 km² (Pinglo 1988) to 16,600 km² (Doungoube 1991); no official surveys have been made (see attached map).^{1/} Bangassou possesses exceptionally diverse ecosystems owing to the presence of a vast patchwork of dense primary forests and semi-deciduous secondary growth at varying stages of regeneration, and evergreen woods and wetlands interspersed with islands of savanna habitat (Boulvert 1986). The great wealth of species is one of the results of these factors, as is the presence of hybrid populations resulting from the mingling of species. Bangassou has the northernmost population of common chimpanzees in Central Africa and populations of wild dogs that are threatened with extinction. The area is, moreover, a corridor of migration for the forest and savanna subspecies of elephants. The area is also believed to serve as a refuge for large mammals fleeing intense poaching activity in the Sudan (R. Carroll, private paper; Fay 1991). Forest vegetation is found throughout the savanna communities and forest and savanna wildlife mingle extensively.

Changes in land use, late dry-season burning, indiscriminate hunting and an apparent drying trend are exerting pressure on Bangassou's ecosystems. Since the end of the 1980s, pastoralists have been herding their flocks in the Bangassou area, apparently owing to the deterioration of their traditional range areas situated in the north (M'Bringa-Takama, private communication). Most of the primary forest along the relatively densely settled Bangassou-Rafaï corridor appears to have been replaced by secondary growth, probably as a result of shifting cultivation. Secondary growth is also to be found on abandoned coffee plantations. Burning of large areas by hunters is, according to reports, affecting vast stretches of woodlands, even in the relatively sparsely inhabited regions to the north-west and north-east of Bangassou.

^{1/} Boulvert (1986) provides information on soils, topography and vegetation of the Bangassou Massif; Pinglo (IUCN, 1988) describes the area's importance to conservation of biodiversity in the C.A.R.; M'Bringa-Takama (1993) provides historical, socio-economic, and demographic data for the Mbomou region in which Bangassou is located. Biodiversity Support Program (1992) summarizes what is known about deforestation in the central African region and assesses data gaps, policy issues and development linkages.

The eastern half of the Central African Republic is among the most remote parts of Africa. Situated some 1,800 km from the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, its transportation and communications networks are extremely weak. The region is sparsely inhabited for various historical reasons, which include the particularly destructive slave trade carried out in the nineteenth century and a severe smallpox epidemic. The region was also subjected to a succession of devastating raids and territorial wars during the same period. According to M'Bringa-Takama (1993), the eastern parts of the Central African Republic, which today have only 1 or 2 inhabitants per square kilometre, probably had a population ten times as large in the sixteenth century. The town of Bangassou is situated approximately 400 kilometres by air from the capital, Bangui, and around 750 kilometres by road. The human population of the sub-prefectures in the proposed project area (Bangassou, Rafaï and Bakouma) stood at some 76,000 in 1988 (date of the most recent census); the area of the zone is 55,000 km², hence the average population density is less than 1.4 inhabitant per km² (Ngounio-Gabia 1994). During the colonial period and during the years following independence, coffee plantations made Bangassou a minor economic and administrative centre, but since the 1980s, economic stagnation has become chronic. The plantations have been in decline owing to the collapse of the marketing system for agricultural commodities and the serious degradation of the region's infrastructure. Some villages situated to the east have been abandoned owing to cross-border raids and related problems (Ngounio-Gabia 1994). With the exception of small-scale diamond mining in the Bakouma area, there is very little economic activity that might stimulate an increase in population. Commercial logging, which has been resumed in other areas as a result of the devaluation of the CFA franc, is still impracticable in the isolated region of Bangassou. This situation stands in marked contrast to that of other parts of central Africa, where the logging industry has stimulated in-migration and large-scale forest clearing. In spite of occasional proposals for investment to develop the region's economy, for example through small sawmills to meet local demand, commercial substitution crops, etc., the prospect of an economic boom is extremely remote. Local markets are very small, purchasing power is declining and access to external markets is becoming increasingly difficult. Thus only two vehicles a day use the 130 kilometres of the Bangassou-Bakouma road, which underwent maintenance work most recently in 1981 (Whitehead 1994).

The economy of the Central African Republic has traditionally been based on the export of timber, diamonds, coffee, cotton and ground-nuts, and it has therefore been hard hit by the fall in world prices for these basic commodities. Many government services have discontinued their operations owing to serious budgetary restrictions. The recent political reforms and the changes to economic policies have, nevertheless, had positive effects, and the Government is seeking cost-effective ways to protect and manage the country's natural resource endowment. In October 1991, the Government of the Central African Republic issued an important policy guideline entitled "Situation of Protected Areas or Proposed Protected Areas in the Central African Republic". This document envisages the addition of several new sanctuaries and reserves

(covering an area of 2 million hectares) to include ecosystems that are inadequately represented in the national system of protected areas. It also provides for the expansion of several existing sites, with the addition of multiple-use buffer zones, which will increase the total system of protected areas from 6.1 million hectares to 8.5 million hectares, for an increase of 34 per cent. This plan will give the Central African Republic the highest percentage of national territory reserved for conservation of any country in central Africa, with 12.6 per cent; by comparison Cameroon, the Congo and Zaire have 4.3 per cent, 3.4 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively (WCMC data).

The Government realizes, however, that a strategy which involves increasing the area under special protection cannot in and of itself stem the loss of biodiversity in the Central African Republic. Although the traditional methods of natural resource management were swept aside by the colonial government and later by the national administration which succeeded it, these externally-driven approaches were never very effective and in recent years they have operated in name only. The leading citizens in Bangassou deplore the lack of authority which prevents them from intervening to solve problems relating to natural resource use that are having a serious impact on communities, in particular over-hunting, dry-season burning, and diamond prospecting, and they are very anxious to cooperate with the proposed GEF project to reassert local authority. In October 1993 the Government began to develop a policy of decentralization and local empowerment coupled with the scaling down of central administration. This affords an opportunity to try new innovative approaches which restore control over the use of natural resources to the community and sustainable methods for monitoring the results and ensuring accountability.

Plans for a conservation project at Bangassou have been under development since 1991. They are based on the concept of a special multiple-use forest reserve adjacent to a strictly managed national park. These plans are inspired by the experience of GEF with the Dzanga-Sangha Special Forest Reserve and the adjacent Dzanga-Ndoki National Park, in the south-western part of the Central African Republic. This concept was approved by the MEFCPTE in 1993 and Bangassou was added to the list of protected areas communicated to the IUCN by the Government of the Central African Republic. A participatory rural assessment (PRA) and a rapid ecological assessment were carried out at Bangassou in March 1994, financed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The mission was conducted by a group of nine individuals (all nationals of the Central African Republic) divided into three teams, which proceeded to collect data and identify issues relating to: (1) socio-economic factors; (2) conservation and use of natural resources; (3) the potential for ecotourism. The group included representatives of FOCSARENA, the GEF, the Peace Corps, the University of Bangui, ICRA (Central African Institute for Agricultural Research) and an official of the United States Embassy having experience in ecotourism. The PRA team held public meetings in six villages to gather information on local use of natural resources and to discuss the planned GEF project. Several

villages had been contacted by the GEF, UNDP and MEFCPTE, and there is a keen interest in the Bangassou initiative at the local level and people are well informed about it.

In order to meet their needs, the local residents increasingly depend on hunting and subsistence agriculture, as well as on fishing and gathering various wild products, owing to the degradation of the situation of the coffee sector in the region in recent years. The population has keenly felt the decline in its standard of living and has found disappointing the efforts to intensify farming activities and launch alternative economic activities. The poor results have been ascribed to the non-existence of markets, the poor road infrastructure and inadequate investment in tools and inputs. Hunting may provide attractive income, but given the growing number of inhabitants who depend on this means of subsistence, there is a serious strain on the wildlife population. The availability of modern firearms, the local manufacture of simple but effective smooth-bore guns and indiscriminate burning are causing serious problems. Some inhabitants believe that they will no longer have any alternative but to emigrate in search of work and to go settle in other parts of the country, but local leaders think that the region has a significant potential which should be taken advantage of in an effective way. In several villages, community organizations such as the Groupements d'intérêts ruraux (Rural Interest Groups) (GIR) have begun to drill wells and build dispensaries. The GIR will, it is clear, constitute a solid basis on which the project will be able to rely. Among the other groups identified by the PRA team are the women's groups and several active associations of loggers. The latter constitute a group of local resource users who are very much interested in ways to add value to a local product in a sustainable way.

The mission also made a preliminary assessment of the region's nature-based tourism potential and other income-producing activities. Rock paintings and hot springs are likely to attract tourists, but the poor condition of the roads and the lack of lodging are serious obstacles to this kind of activity. Controlled hunting safaris are more practicable and Bangassou has advantages in this respect in relation to other parts of the Central African Republic where safaris are already conducted. An assessment of this kind of undertaking has a place among the project activities. It would be important for the local inhabitants to participate actively in such an assessment, in order to avoid the problems which have occurred in other parts of the country owing to disagreements between the operators of hunting concessions and the inhabitants.

A rapid ecological assessment was made in order to identify areas which had particular importance and justified prompt attention to ensure their conservation and to gather information on other relevant points, such as the location and the condition of roads and bridges and the pattern of the human settlements in the region. This assessment, carried out with the help of aerial reconnaissance, has revealed the following:

The area situated to the north of Bangassou is sparsely populated all the way to Bakouma. There are important stretches of virgin forest and there are few signs of man-made pressures (visible to aerial observation). In the savanna situated to the east of Bakouma, we noted extensive burnt areas indicating the presence of hunters. This entire area situated east of Bakouma and immediately north of Rafai is virtually unsettled. The large burnt areas are the only indication of the presence of humans. The area around Rafai and the areas bordering on the river to the west are much more inhabited. Large areas of forest are degraded (Blom 1994).

This work has been followed by a more detailed wildlife census and by the compendium of baseline data, which began in July 1995, also financed by USFWS, which has made available a four-wheel-drive vehicle as logistical support for the proposed ecological assessment. The field work includes transects to estimate the chimpanzee and elephant populations, and to gather data on vegetation, relief, soils, traces of burning and other human impacts. The USFWS contribution for the planning of the Bangassou project totalled US\$ 122,000 for budget years 1994 and 1995.

After discussions with the local communities, the United States Peace Corps assigned four volunteers to Bangassou, who are carrying out agricultural and forestry extension activities to reduce the tendency of local villages to depend exclusively on natural forests to obtain such products as firewood and building materials. The Peace Corps also envisages assigning volunteers who would be responsible for environmental education and conservation activities, as in the case of the GEF project on the Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve. The representatives of USAID, UNDP and GEF also met to consider the case of Bangassou, which was identified by USAID as a high-priority site for conservation and improved natural resource management. USAID will collaborate closely with UNDP/GEF to ensure coordination in terms of financial and technical contributions and in terms of policies with other donors supporting activities in the country's forestry sector. This coordination will rely on the NEAP (National Environmental Action Plan), which UNDP strongly supports. USAID also plans to establish a small subsidies plan for NGOs and community groups active in such sectors as agroforestry, research on indigenous varieties of food crops and environmental education.

These discussions with the communities in the Bangassou region have helped to identify a number of issues which influenced the project design and will have an impact on its implementation. Thus the ecotourism potential of the region is called into question by the extreme isolation of a great many of the sites of interest. It also appears that there are few species of wildlife of interest to visitors in those few parts of the area which can be reached by vehicle. For these reasons, it may not be possible to establish a national revenue-producing park in the northern part of the Bangassou forest before having more complete data on animal

populations and the threats facing them. These questions, and others, must be taken into account in the Bangassou project on the basis of an appropriate timetable. It would be advisable, for example, in the early stages of the project to take as a starting point the ecological and socio-economic baseline studies by the USFWS and the WWF and to establish basic agreements distributing authority and responsibility with respect to resource use between the central government, the prefectures and the local communities. As these activities progress, it will become possible to envisage in the best possible conditions such questions as zoning and authorized forms of resource use.

Strategy and results:

The conventional approach to the management of classified forests and national parks by the central government has been a failure throughout central Africa, as evidenced by the degradation of ecosystems and the serious deforestation that has occurred. These phenomena are evident in Bangassou today. However, there is a group of local leaders, herbalists and other residents whose traditional knowledge and personal experience of life in the Bangassou forest area, including the resolution or avoidance of disputes involving problems of access to resources, has not been totally lost. The strategy of this project is to test a highly decentralized approach to the management of natural resources in protected areas, with very extensive local involvement in decision-making and local accountability. Local initiative and traditional knowledge will thus be basic elements in the design and implementation of resource management plans for Bangassou. The proposed GEF project will test the hypothesis according to which such knowledge can provide a sound basis justifying the long-term transfer of responsibility for natural resources management to local inhabitants, with better results for the conservation of biological diversity than the previous approach based on the primacy of central government bodies.

In October 1993 the Government of the Central African Republic embarked upon the decentralization of its administration, giving up certain functions that it was no longer in a position to perform. At the same time, it embraced a commitment to conservation of the Bangassou dense forest, which will become the second largest protected area in the country. In order to reconcile these two decisions, the Government agreed that primary responsibility for the undertaking should be assumed by the local communities, the prefecture authorities and NGOs, thereby breaking with past notions. However, it must not be assumed that the local communities will always adopt a macro-environmental perspective: high-quality ecological surveillance will be key to ensuring that the local management practices are conducive to the objectives sought. It will be important, therefore, for the project to carry out a long-term surveillance programme that will identify problems and help to bring about adjustments in resource use, as needed. This is a key area for the participation of the national government and its technical departments, with the support of international experts. The GEF project intends to combine conventional resource management with effective modern methods, rather than to rely exclusively on one or the other.

Successful implementation of the project will produce the following results:

- Agreements concluded between local communities under which they will manage clearly delineated resource-use and protected areas, and effective mechanisms enabling the communities to ensure enforcement of regulations and assume control over use;
- Modifications in the country's laws governing land rights and access to natural resources, in order to place local management on a solid legal basis, including procedures for mediation of disputes and clarifying the role of central government agencies and the regional government vis-à-vis the local authorities;
- Protected areas or areas of regulated resource use, in order to preserve biological diversity, in the entire range of habitats, from dense forest to savanna woodlands, and swamplands, while guaranteeing access by local communities to supplies of plants and animals for local consumption and ensuring their autonomy;
- Activities for protecting and studying forest regeneration in man-made savanna areas or abandoned agricultural lands, such as measures to combat burning;
- An ecological inventory of the Bangassou dense forest and the communities associated with it, which ascertains the degree of endemism, the distribution of indigenous species and the level of biological diversity;
- Research and education activities to ensure the pursuit of the inventories, surveillance, data analysis and transfer of knowledge, including in such areas as ethnobotanical research and prospecting for biological diversity.

Project approach:

- The first task will be to establish the framework of the project to ensure full and effective participation of the local communities, the subprefectures and MET. The GEF project will negotiate agreements between the central government, the subprefectures in the Bangassou area (Bangassou, Rafaï and Bakouma) and community organizations, such as the Groupements d'intérêts ruraux (GIR). This process will determine the general framework of responsibility for natural resource management and dispute settlement at the local level. The NGO sector will have a vital role to play. In partnership with national NGOs such as Pavilion Vert and FOCSARENA, WWF has already begun a dialogue with the local residents concerning the proposed GEF project.

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capacity, which will result in the long-term in the greater sustainability of many of its interventions.

The overall purpose of the project is to demonstrate approaches to the conservation of biological diversity which are more sustainable than those pursued at present, which usually presuppose unrealistic levels of government intervention and run counter to the objectives sought by local resource users. The prevailing economic and political situation in central Africa is such that the functions of government in the areas of administration, regulation and extension do not produce lasting effects, especially in rural areas, and that even where they are being performed, their effectiveness is doubtful. The Bangassou project would formulate approaches that would make it possible to regulate resource use at the local level. This strategy could be much more sustainable than the present conservation model and, if it succeeds, could be replicated in many other places throughout Africa.

Local participation is a fundamental aspect in the planning of the present project. Four missions have been conducted in Bangassou since 1993, including a two-day planning workshop attended by some 80 local leaders in August 1995. These missions carried out broad consultations with local communities and the original project design was significantly altered as a result of this dialogue. The local communities will exercise unprecedented authority for the management of resource use areas and protected areas under this project, and the national legal and political framework will be adjusted to recognize and guarantee their new status.

As far as the GEF criterion of incremental costs is concerned, the baseline situation is the ongoing degradation of Bangassou's ecosystems. It is highly unlikely that the private sector or the Government will make the necessary investment to stem this degradation. The planning missions have revealed the great isolation of the region, which casts doubt on the revenue-producing activities originally proposed (ecotourism, raising of game birds, etc.). While it might be attractive to consider such investments as contributions with a view to the long-term durability of conservation activities at Bangassou, the absence of markets and the severe inadequacy of the region's infrastructure are serious obstacles which will not be easy to overcome. Without GEF financing, it is almost certain that the current trends of indiscriminate resource use and ecological degradation will continue. On its own, the country cannot afford the investments in the activities required to eliminate these trends.

The Bangassou forest is widely recognized as a priority site for conservation. As noted by A. Gautier-Hion in the technical review report on the initial GEF project note, submitted in November 1994, *"the Bangassou forest is therefore of major importance for the history of the fauna and flora of central Africa and deserves to receive a high degree of priority in order to ensure its preservation."* Bangassou will become the second largest conservation area in the Central African Republic, covering approximately 1.6 million hectares. It will be managed on

the basis of an innovative approach which minimizes direct government intervention in administration and enforcement of regulations, and which, on the contrary, strengthens the authority and responsibility of local communities and provides them with support for that purpose. In the long run, this approach will substantially reduce current expenditure on the operation of the protected areas system while increasing the effectiveness of conservation. If the GEF project is carried out successfully, the Bangassou area will be the most cost-effective protected area of all those existing in the country.

In March 1995, the Government of the Central African Republic ratified the conventions on biological diversity and climate change, and the Bamako convention banning the importation of hazardous wastes and controlling transboundary movements of such wastes in Africa. The proposed Bangassou project reflects a solid commitment to the conservation of biological diversity in a region where this aim is relatively marginal in relation to the country's economic development priorities. It also reflects a serious effort on the part of the Government to restructure and reform its approach to conservation of biological diversity and its determination to work with local communities in a full partnership to manage resources. For these reasons, the proposal constitutes an excellent model for the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity in an African nation that is one of the world's least developed countries.

The project would provide the components of a response to the following environmental problems:

- The maintenance of the biological diversity and the endemism that are unique to the Bangassou dense forest and its associated ecosystems;
- The maintenance of autonomous, protected ecosystems and the reserves of useable resources on which the human population of the area depends for its survival;
- Regulation of the use of such resources in order to maintain use at sustainable levels;
- Prevention of burning of the savanna and other modifications of the ecosystems;
- Conservation of endangered species of global significance, including the forest elephant and the savanna elephant, and protection of their corridors of migration.

The overall objective of the project is:

- Protection and stabilization of a key component of Central Africa's tropical forest system by making hunting and other forms of resource use more sustainable and by combating burning and

other activities which hamper natural regeneration of the forest, thereby preserving biological diversity that is of global importance.

The sub-objectives of the project are:

- The development and implementation of highly decentralized approaches to conservation which are sustainable in times of economic and political uncertainty;
- The testing of resource management and protection methods that are inspired by the interest of local communities and applied through traditional authority structures rather than by the formal administrative machinery of the State;
- The development of a framework for resource management and conservation under community control, including appropriate forms of protected areas;
- Encouragement of diversified economic activities in the project area with the aim of increasing local income and providing alternative solutions to unsustainable resource use, including through such activities as forest harvesting, harvesting of buffer zones, timber harvesting, and other means of increasing the economic value of forest resources and wildlife and wild plants;
- Strengthening of recent efforts of environmental policies dealing with the land tenure system and decentralization of authority over natural resource management;
- Improving knowledge of the Bangassou dense forest and the associated forest-savanna ecotones.

The project embodies two major innovations:

- Experimental testing of highly decentralized approaches to biological diversity management in a system of protected areas with a view to determining methods which are effective and sustainable in a period of economic and political instability. If the tests are conclusive, these methods will have immediate relevance for other countries in Africa, many of which are facing similar economic and political situations and the same problems of sustainable management of protected areas.
- The opportunity to guarantee conservation of an area endowed with an exceptional combination of species, ecosystems and ecotones, and to protect the natural forest regeneration. If this effort is successful, it will bring about significant improvements in the northern edge of one of the major dense rain forest systems in the world.

ANNEX 7. NOTES ON THE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING WORKSHOP HELD AT BANGASSOU IN AUGUST 1995

INTRODUCTION

The mission assistance team was composed of a heterogeneous and multisectoral group of seven persons, five men and two women, of various nationalities (Central African Republic, United States, Switzerland), and of different backgrounds and training (anthropologists, a biologist, sociologists). Each individual had a different level of understanding of the objective of the project and mission according to his or her training and experience, and according to the information acquired beforehand.

Consequently, a common language had to be found so that everyone would be on the same wavelength and be in agreement about the project's objective, namely, to identify appropriate management tools and techniques (strategy, methodology, technology) for the management of the renewable natural resources of the Bangassou dense forest, and about the purpose of the mission, i.e. to finalize the broad outline of a project document according to UNDP standards. The contribution of each participant could therefore only enrich the thinking and contribute to the development of this participatory undertaking, which is the policy on which the work of the assistance mission and the project design itself hinge.

PROCESS

The value of this undertaking is that it is used both at the level of the mission and at the level of the local population and of the village, local and national authorities. It takes into account the viewpoints of the natural resource user population, the authorities and outside parties (non-nationals). In this way it seeks to promote the exchange and circulation of information at all levels.

1. TERMINOLOGY

The definition of the terms used provides a common language, clarifies ideas and fosters better understanding of the messages communicated, whether within the group of GEF/UNDP consultants or between the latter and their interlocutors. The key words which constantly recur in the discussions are:

natural resources (NR): Renewable natural resources, such as plants (including trees, flowers...), animals (including birds and fish) and water.

As different from non-renewable natural resources such as minerals (gold, diamonds, petroleum...).

sustainable and rational management of NR: The use of natural resources in such a way as to allow for their renewal and foster greater well-being of the human population.

strategy: Actions and means envisaged to achieve a specific goal (Defined in the Larousse as "the art of coordinating actions, of manoeuvring skilfully to attain a goal.")

methodology: Systematic procedure for achieving certain objectives (dictionary definition: "systematic study, by observation, of scientific practice, its underlying principles and the research methods which it uses.")

technology: Instruments and types of intervention to achieve an objective (dictionary definition: "collection of knowledge and practices based on scientific principles, in a technical sphere.")

policy: In this context, use of the English word "policy" (or official policy): set of legal and legislative provisions put in effect to achieve one or more objectives (dictionary definition: "set of practices, facts, institutions and determinations of the government of a State or of a society.").

decentralization: (as defined in Larousse) system of organizing the administrative structures of the State which entrusts decision-making and management powers to regional or local autonomous bodies (local communities, public establishments).

local territory ("terroir"): (as defined in Larousse) land utilized by a village or rural community.

Apart from defining these terms, it seemed essential to clarify and distinguish in the minds of the participants between the purpose of the mission and that of the project. Since the undertaking was new, most of the participants saw a conventional project involving the establishment of a reserve or park, conceived outside the area concerned, hinging on economic activities intended to substitute for the traditional activities of hunting, fishing and logging. They thought that the mission had come to survey their needs, whereas its purpose was more to create awareness and provide tools for analysis and thinking so that the population could itself subsequently organize and test natural resources management (NRM), the very objective of the project.

2. FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

The terms of reference of the mission of assistance (pp. 22-27) provided basic materials to get the discussion going. Priorities were set: since certain terms of reference (p.25, points 5 to 8) could

be the subject of the project itself, they were deferred to the implementation of the project, whereas priority was focused on the framework of negotiations and NR use and on the framework for coordination at the institutional level. A brainstorming session for the team of consultants helped to produce a list of questions and concerns relating to threats to biodiversity, specifying the levels on which the project could hardly have any influence (e.g. climate) and those on which it could have an impact (e.g. brushfires). On that basis hypotheses were formed and ranked in order to determine the strategies, methodologies and technologies which the population would need to maintain biodiversity in the Bangassou dense forest.

2.1. General hypothesis

This hypothesis may be expressed in the following manner and corresponds to the content of the project itself:

"In the context of decentralization in Central Africa, management of the renewable natural resources of the Bangassou dense forest BY the local population will result in effective, sustainable and rational NRM."

2.2. Main hypotheses

The general hypothesis subsumes four main hypotheses or groups of hypotheses, which can, in turn, be subdivided into sub-hypotheses at a subsequent stage, namely the project stage. These main hypotheses have been worked out in terms of:

(a) The aspect of land and the land register, i.e. the **POLICY** level:

Hyp.: "A new land tenure system is an incentive to rational and sustainable NRM of the Bangassou dense forest, for it will promote improved standards of living."

(b) **PARTNERSHIP** between the various parties concerned:

Hyp.: "Effective collaboration between interested groups (traditional authorities¹ with competent technical, financial and legal partners²) will result in effective NRM of the Bangassou dense forest."

¹ Kingdoms, village chiefs, associations of age cohorts, hunting groups, etc.

² Technical services, NGOs, private sector.

(c) The socio-economic aspect of the **ECONOMY**

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- (c) The socio-economic aspect of the **ECONOMY**

Hyp.: " Poverty among households (families) in the Bangassou dense forest is the primary cause of NRM behaviours that are inappropriate to local conditions. Stimulation of alternative income-producing economic activities will produce a rational and sustainable NRM of the forest."

(d) Traditional knowledge and **INFORMATION** from the outside:

Hyp.: "Traditional knowledge and the spread of new knowledge about the environment are active factors in ensuring effective NRM of the Bangassou dense forest."

3. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

From each main hypothesis therefore can be derived more refined, more specific sub-hypotheses. The testing of these hypotheses and subsequent sub-hypotheses will be done through the project, which will be a test. Test of the capacity and/or incapacity of the population (groups, associations, organizations, administrative departments, authorities, etc.) to manage natural resources through certain activities.

There are close relationships between the main hypotheses. If one is interested in one of these hypotheses, there will of necessity be sub-hypotheses that emerge at the level of one and/or another main hypothesis. The potential partners are one of the focal points on which the GEF mission has concentrated, for decentralization and the redistribution of management and decision-making powers to the local level go hand in hand. But redistribution how and to whom?

	HYPOTHESES	RESULTS	NRM TO TEST
(a)	Policy	--> ? -->	sustainable and rational NRM
(b)	Partnership	--> ? -->	" "
(c)	Economy	--> ? -->	" "
(d)	Information	--> ? -->	" "

As regards the field mission, there is a need to define the strategy and methodology to be used to test this proposal for a framework for thinking with the population.

- Strategy:
- Clarify the purpose of the mission (gen. hyp.);
 - Clarify the expectations of the project in relation to the realities;
 - Designation of an interpreter by the local population;
 - Avoid speaking in terms of "needs";

- Methodology:
- Contacts with local authorities, designation of informants, explanation of the mission;
 - Contacts with NGOs, religious missions, government services;
 - Large meeting to spread information with the least possible distortion and gather information in one place and at one time;
 - Informal meetings to supplement and check information.

The method was refined as the mission progressed, adapting to the circumstances of the moment. The visits to Bangassou, Rafaï and several villages provided an opportunity for testing, and the outcome of these meetings made it possible to prepare a framework for the organization of the workshop to be held at Bangassou.

3.1 Necessary conditions

The necessary conditions for testing these hypotheses, namely to attain the objective of the project and conserve renewable natural resources, are:

- To see what already exists;
- What to do, how (or with whom), where and why?

For example, in the case of the PARTNERSHIP hypothesis, the mission and the project must identify:

- (1) The interested groups that can play a role in the project;
- (2) The relationships between the different groups and the power relationships;
- (3) The state of the population's knowledge about NR.

3.2. Criteria for the selection of sites

The selection of one or more sites depends on several factors: geographical, financial and logistical.

(a) Geographical; distribution according to the following kinds of criteria:

- biophysical: dense forest, gallery forest, transitional area;
- demographic: populated area, underpopulated area;
- administrative: five sub-prefectures;
- thematic: threats (poaching...);
- controlled comparison (monitoring);
- biodiversity (biological): intact areas, threatened areas.

(b) Costs entailed by the various activities

(c) Logistical factors:

- safety
- accessibility
- presence of several partners

These criteria are situated at the level of the Bangassou dense forest.

3.3 Criteria for the choice of potential partners

- Representativeness
- Capacity to mobilize
- Spirit of initiative and creativity
- Involvement with the population
- Work in direct relationship with natural resources

At the local level these criteria provide tools for supervision and reflection.

4. WORKSHOP ON 14-15 AUGUST 1995

The mission needed information of the management model(s) corresponding to the hypotheses formulated, hence it also needed a decision-making framework for the authorities, government, communes and villages. This information need not be specific, but rather should fit under broad headings.

In order to have a coherent basis for work, it was proposed to the villagers during the field visits that they should draw a map of their local territory, with its boundaries, the situation of natural resources used and their system of operation. This material served as a basis for deliberations in the committees.

4.1. Agenda of the workshop

4.1.1 Presentation of the context

The individuals attending the workshop did not all possess the same level of information and knowledge about the content of the project and the purpose of the mission. It was therefore useful to review the background of the project, and the notion of biodiversity and conservation. Translation into Sango was provided by one of the participants.

The need was to demonstrate the change that had been introduced into the undertaking: the "park and reserve" approach imposed on the population was transformed into a participatory approach in which the inhabitants and the authorities were associated in the development of the project. Since the undertaking was new, the project would be tried on an experimental basis over a four-year period.

The results of the contacts and field visits are clustered around four hypotheses. The micro-activities carried out as part of the project will serve as a test and to gather information and data needed to determine what policy will make for a sustainable and rational management of renewable natural resources. The project will forge a link between the inhabitants of the Bangassou dense forest and their capacity for sustainable NRM.

4.1.2. Presentation of case studies, comments and questions

Four case studies were presented (Fodé, Yangosaba, Yongofongo and Rafai), two of which were submitted in the form of a map (see annexes...). The few women were not associated by the men in the preparation of this study. However, they asked at what level the project would benefit them, since they felt concerned by the presence of the project in view of the fact that they were the ones who marketed meat obtained from hunting and fish.

4.1.3. Deliberations in committees

The participants were divided up into four committees, each corresponding to one of the main hypotheses, namely NRM POLICY, PARTNERSHIP, ECONOMY (use of natural resources), and INFORMATION. The consultants in groups of two moderated each committee, with the committee dealing with policy moderated by the sub-prefect of Bangassou and the chief of the GEF mission.

Within each committee the aim of the project (test) was spelled out once again, and terms such as strategy, methodology and technology were defined. The work of each committee consisted in seeking the tools and models for NR management at the level of the local territory (strategy, methodology) according to the hypothesis considered. Four hours of discussion and debate led to certain results. These were presented in a plenary meeting.

4.1.4. Plenary meeting

Each committee reported on the results of its deliberations. Questions and clarifications supplemented the presentations.

Example of the "Economy" Committee Goal to be achieved: *Wildlife must remain a sustainable resource if the economic activity of hunting is to be maintained.*

STRATEGY	METHODOLOGY	TECHNOLOGY
Involvement of inhabitants and local authorities	Zoning	Hunting and net fishing
Promotion of economic activities to take the place of hunting	Regulate hunting and fishing Regulate burning	Wildlife ranching
Encourage the use of traditional hunting gear	Identify income-producing activities	selective hunting and fishing
Support for groups of traditional hunters	Identify traditional regulations	Traditional trapping

Example of the "NRM Policy" committee

Salient points:

- (1) Water and Forest Officers: role as trainers
- (2) Decentralization and resources
- (3) Prepare the ground for decentralization
- (4) Delimit the areas for stockraising and farming

4.1.5. Decision-making

It was important to recall that the project had not yet been given concrete form. The task of the mission is to present and defend valid ideas in the form of a logical framework.

WHAT TO DO AND HOW?

WHAT HOW	POLICY	PARTNERSHIP	ECONOMY	INFORMATION
Strategy to be tested				
Methodology to be tested				
Technology to be tested				
Means to be used				
At what level to appeal				

Through this workshop, the mission was able to define a guiding framework -- a sort of matrix -- which will be used in developing the project. The different cells of this framework could have been filled in non-exhaustively to give one example, but the purpose of the mission was to find an agreement with the population and the local authorities concerning this framework and the project undertaking. The participants unanimously accepted the principle.

Another table (still to be completed) was also proposed for the selection of sites:

Criteria for the selection of sites (where?)

		Dense forest	Gallery forest
Presence of administrative structures	yes/no		
Demographic pressure	strong/weak		
Threats	strong/weak		
Production system	agricultural/non-		

	agricultural		
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2. Prior conditions

Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Presence of potential partners?								
Effective costs?								
Logistic-ally feasible?								
Safety?								

Criteria for choice of potential partners

Representativeness
Capacity to mobilize
Spirit of initiative and creativity
Involvement with the population
Work directly related to natural resources

4.1.6. Evaluation

The evaluation of the work done during the workshop was concerned with form and content, as well as with technical and material organization. In general, the participants were very satisfied with the package, with the exception of supplies (no notebooks, pencils, no coffee, no schedule arranged in advance...).

What is certain is that the participants were genuinely involved in the workshop and demonstrated a keen interest in the work to be done.

CONCLUSION

Not only will the project be a test, but it will also be a means for gathering the data and information necessary for testing. The project is a form of **action-research**. First and foremost, it is action, since it operates on the environment by virtue of the very fact that it conducts participatory research, hence a form of creating awareness about the environment and resource management. Secondly, it is research, for the information collected will be necessary to carry out other activities. The table devised during the workshop will be supplemented by the project team. At the end of the four-year test period, each cell in the table should be filled in so that another large-scale project can eventually be proposed.

ANNEX 8: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE BRIEFING WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (3 AUGUST 1995)

Mr. Faustin N'TELNOUMBE	Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Tourism and Environment
Mr. François NDECKERE-ZANGA	Representative of the Minister (unable to attend), presiding officer
Mr. Gabriel MBOUSSA	Director-General, Ministry of Mineral and Energy Resources
Mr. Desiré YASSIGAO	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning
Mr. Etienne Francis KANDA	Ministry of Public Works, Habitat and Physical Planning
Mr. Clément Thyrol FEIZOURE	Director of Meteorology, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
Mr. Allard BLOM	Technical Adviser, WWF-US Dzanga-Sangha Project
Mr. Jacques KRENOZOU	UNDP/GEF consultant, President of Pavillon Vert
Mr. Zéphirin MOGBA	UNDP/GEF consultant
Mr. Maxime MBRINGA-TAKAMA	Consultant on environment, UNDP-Bangui
Ms. Célestine PIROUA-YATONGO	Ministry of Trade
Ms. Christine SCHILTER	UNDP/GEF consultant
Mr. Fred SWARTZENDRUBER	UNDP/GEF consultant, Chief of Mission
Mr. Michael BROWN	UNDP/GEF consultant
Ms. Danyelle O'HARA	UNDP/GEF consultant
Mr. Gustave DOUNGOUBE	UNDP/GEF consultant
Mr. Léon ANZITAGO-BENGAMEDE	National Committee to Combat Natural Disasters and Brushfires
Mr. Joël PAREFA	Advancement of Women
Mr. Michel SINIBOUAR	CEDIFOD
Mr. Marc KARANGAZE	CEDIFOD
Mr. Florent ZOWOYA	National Coordinator, PARN
Mr. Bertrand MONFORT	Chief, ECOFAC Component
Ms. Lucienne MBOKA	CIFAD/CAF
Mr. Léon Patrice NGUERETIA	CIONGCA

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ANNEX 10. MAPS

Several maps are included in the present annex, namely:

- Protected areas in the Central African Republic (WWF, 1993; 1/ 1 500 000)
- Area covered by the Bangassou Dense Forest Special Reserve, Nganga National Park (proposed) (1/1 000 000)
- Pilot project for natural resources conservation and management in Mbomou (Tandeu de Marsac 1994; working paper, scale not indicated)

The following maps were drawn by hand during the planning workshop for the GEF Bangassou project (August 1995) in the working meetings of the small groups and should be considered to have indicative value:

- Resource use map of Yongossaba village (drawn by hand, not to scale) (Sesekena Remi Benga and Maziavi Pierre)
- Resource use map of Fodé village (drawn by hand, not to scale) (Maurice Songopai 1995)
- Map of the Bangassou-Fodé-Rafaï area (drawn by hand, not to scale) (Anonymous 1995)
- Map of the GEF Bangassou project area (drawn by hand, not to scale) (Anonymous 1995)
- Map of the Rafaï-Djallat-Djema area (drawn by hand, not to scale) (Anonymous 1995)

In addition, a set of topographical maps (at 1/200 000 scale) covering the project area was purchased for use at the project planning workshop held at Bangassou in August 1995. These maps were placed in the files of the UNDP office in Bangui, which also has a series of documents which will form the nucleus of references for a project documentation centre. (Among the other documents in the possession of UNDP are pages of the tables on notebook paper from the plenary session, the small group sessions and the planning meetings of the project participatory planning workshop.) The maps, which were purchased from the offices of ORSTOM in Bangui (CFAF 21,200 for the set of four), cover the following areas: Bangassou, Rafaï, Bakouma and Fodé.

The 1/200 000 series of maps is still available from ORSTOM in Bangui, although future availability is uncertain since the maps have not been reprinted since the early 1990s. Another problem arises from the fact that this set of maps is based on aerial photographs dating from the mid-1950s, which have not been updated since that time. As a result, it is difficult to rely on them as basic maps since certain elements of plotting (roads, landing strips and even villages) have changed considerably over the years. In some cases, place names have also changed.