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**Proposal for Review**

<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Central African Republic: A Highly Decentralized Approach to Biodiversity Protection and Use: The Bangassou Dense Forest</b>
<b>GEF Focal Area:</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>
<b>Country Eligibility:</b>	<b>Convention Ratified March 15, 1995</b>
<b>Total Project Costs:</b>	<b>\$3.5 million</b>
<b>GEF Financing:</b>	<b>\$2.5 million</b>
<b>Government Counterpart Financing of GEF Component:</b>	<b>\$0.1</b>
<b>Cofinancing/Parallel Financing:</b>	<b>\$0.9</b>
<b>Associated Project:</b>	<b>various</b>
<b>GEF Implementing Agency:</b>	<b>UNDP</b>
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	<b>To be determined</b>
<b>Local Counterpart Agency:</b>	<b>Ministère des Eaux, Forêt, Chasses, Pêches, Tourisme et de l'Environnement (MEFCPTE); Government of CAR</b>
<b>Estimated Starting Date:</b>	<b>January 1, 1996</b>
<b>Project Duration:</b>	<b>Four Years</b>
<b>GEF Preparation Costs:</b>	<b>\$15,000 (Pilot Phase &amp; Admin costs Operational phase)</b>

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: A HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED APPROACH  
TO BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND USE: THE BANGASSOU DENSE FOREST**

**COUNTRY/SECTOR BACKGROUND/CONTEXT**

1. The Bangassou dense forest is a unique interface between Africa's Congo-Guinean and Sudano-Guinean domains, and also marks a transition between the continent's West Central and East Central biogeographical regions. Estimates of its area range between 9,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Pinglo 1988) and 16,600 km<sup>2</sup> (Doungoube-1991)- see map, attached;<sup>1</sup>. Bangassou has unusual ecosystem diversity by virtue of an extensive mosaic of primary and secondary semi- deciduous dense forests at varying stages of regeneration, and evergreen riparian forests and wetlands interspersed with islands of savanna habitat (Boulvert 1986).
2. Significant species richness is one result of these factors, and another is the presence of hybrid populations due to the mingling of subspecies. Bangassou has central Africa's northernmost population of common chimpanzees and endangered populations of wild dogs, and is a migration corridor for forest and savanna elephant sub-species. The area is also believed to be a refuge for large mammals fleeing intense poaching pressures in Sudan (pers. commun., R. Carroll; Fay 1991). Forest vegetation is found throughout the savanna communities, and forest and savanna fauna mingle extensively.
3. Land-use changes, late dry-season burning, indiscriminate hunting, and an apparent drying trend are placing pressure on the health of the Bangassou ecosystems. Pastoralists are reportedly moving herds into the Bangassou region for the first time in living memory, apparently as a result of deteriorating conditions in their customary lands to the north (pers. commun., M'Bringa-Takama). Yet despite these negative factors, the area remains relatively intact in comparison with other tropical forest zones.
4. The eastern half of C.A.R. is among the most remote regions of Africa. The human population in the proposed project area was below 1.4 persons per square kilometer (Ngounio-Gabia 1994). During the colonial era and the years immediately after independence, coffee plantations made Bangassou a minor economic and administrative center, but since the 1980's economic stagnation has been chronic. Plantations have declined due to the collapse of the agricultural marketing system and the advanced state of deterioration of the region's infrastructure, while some villages to the east have been abandoned because of cross-border raiding and related problems (Ngounio-Gabia 1994). With the exception of small-scale diamond mining in the Bakourna area, there is little economic activity to stimulate population growth. Commercial logging, which elsewhere has been invigorated by the recent CFA devaluation, remains impractical in isolated Bangassou.

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<sup>1</sup> information available from UNDP includes a map of the Bangassou region, a bibliography, and details of other environment projects in CAR.

5. Many government services have effectively ceased due to budgetary strangulation, including the management of protected areas and forest concessions. Recent political reforms and changes in economic policy have been positive developments, however, and the government is seeking cost-effective ways of protecting and managing the natural resource endowment. In October 1991, the Government of the C.A.R. published a major policy report, *Situation des Aires Protégées ou Proposées de la République Centrafricaine*. This document calls for the addition of several new sanctuaries and reserves (totalling over 2 million hectares), to incorporate ecosystems inadequately represented in the national protected area system. The plan also calls for the expansion of several existing sites, including the addition of multiple-use buffer zones, raising the total protected area system from 6.1 million hectares to 8.5 million hectares, a 34% increase. This plan will give the C.A.R. the highest percentage of national territory set aside for conservation within the central Africa region.

6. Since October 1993, the government has begun implementing a programme of decentralization and local empowerment together with down-scaling of the central administration. This provides an excellent opportunity to test innovative approaches which return control over natural resource use to the community level, together with sustainable methods for monitoring results and ensuring accountability.

7. Plans for a conservation project in Bangassou have been under development since 1991, based upon the concept of a multiple-use special forest reserve adjacent to a more strictly-managed national park. A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and rapid ecological assessment were conducted in Bangassou during March 1994, financed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This work will be followed-up by a more detailed ecological assessment and baseline data-collection effort, scheduled to begin during March - April 1995, also with funding from the USFWS. The field work will include transects to estimate chimpanzee and elephant populations, and to collect data on vegetation, terrain, soils, evidence of burning and other human impacts. This will provide a stronger basis for detailed project planning once the GEF has given its approval to the Bangassou proposal. The USFWS contribution toward planning of the Bangassou project has totalled \$122,000 during the 1994 and 1995 fiscal years.

8. Following the PRA mission, the U.S. Peace Corps has placed four volunteers in Bangassou, carrying out agroforestry extension activities as a means of reducing the tendency of local villages to rely exclusively upon natural forest for such products as fuelwood and building materials. USAID has also met with UNDP and WWF to discuss Bangassou, which has been identified as a high-priority site under the planned regional USAID project "CARPE". USAID would work closely with UNDP/GEF to coordinate funding and technical inputs as well as policy-level coordination with other donors involved in the country's forest sector. Such coordination efforts would build upon the NEAP (National Environmental Action Plan) process, which UNDP strongly supports. USAID also plans to operate a small grants program for NGOs and community groups active in areas such as agroforestry, research on indigenous landraces of food crops, and environmental education.

9. The European ECOFAC program has produced airborne radar imagery of numerous forest sites in the region, including Ngoto forest, which is the location of an ECOFAC sustainable forestry project in the C.A.R. Some of the characteristics of Ngoto forest may have relevance to Bangassou,

and data and experience from the ECOFAC activity could prove useful at both the technical and management levels in implementing the proposed GEF project in Bangassou. Also, a forest ecologist who has worked in the ECOFAC project in Gabon, located in the Lopé-Okanda Reserve, is scheduled to participate in the March 1995 ecological baseline assessment in Bangassou.

10. The presence of such projects makes it important to establish effective and regular channels for coordination and planning. Together with the recent initiation of a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) process in C.A.R., this situation offers an opportunity to establish the Bangassou project in a well-defined context of land-use planning and environmental policy reforms.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

11. The overall objective of this project is to protect and stabilize a key component of the tropical forest system of central Africa, by making hunting and other forms of resource use more sustainable, and controlling burning and other activities which inhibit natural forest regeneration, thereby protecting globally-significant biodiversity. Sub-objectives of the project are:

- To develop and test decentralized approaches to conservation which are sustainable in a context of economic and political uncertainty;
- To test methods of resource management and protection motivated by local community self-interest and executed through traditional authority structures rather than the formal administrative mechanisms of the state;
- To develop a framework for locally-controlled resource management and conservation, including appropriate forms of protected areas;
- To stimulate diversified economic activities in the project area in order to raise local incomes and provide alternatives to unsustainable resource exploitation, including activities such as forest crops, buffer zone crops, woody crops, and other means of increasing the economic value of sustainable use of the forest and wildlife resources;
- To strengthen recent environmental policy reform efforts with respect to land tenure and decentralization of authority for natural resource management; and
- To improve knowledge of the Bangassou dense forest and associated savanna - forest ecotones.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

12. The strategy of this project is to test a highly-decentralized approach to natural resource management in protected areas, with extensive local participation in decision-making and accountability. Local leadership and traditional knowledge will be fundamental to the development

and implementation of resource management plans in Bangassou. The proposed GEF project will test the hypothesis that this knowledge can become an effective basis for a long-term shift in natural-resource management responsibility back to local levels, with better outcomes for biodiversity conservation than direct management by central government agencies. The government has committed itself to the conservation of the Bangassou Dense Forest zone which will become the second largest protected area system in the country. It has also accepted that primary responsibility for this venture must be taken up by local communities, sub-prefecture authorities, and NGO's. The GEF project would combine traditional resource management with effective modern techniques, rather than relying exclusively upon one or the other. The project will implement the following activities:

- Agreements with local communities to manage clearly-delineated resource-use and protected zones, and effective mechanisms for local enforcement and control of exploitation;
- Modifications to the country's laws on tenure rights and access to natural resources, to provide a sound legal basis for local management, including procedures for mediation of disputes and clarification of roles of central and regional government agencies vis-à-vis local leadership;
- Protected Areas to preserve biodiversity, across a range of habitats from dense forest, through savanna woodlands, to wetlands, while at the same time assuring local communities' access to self-sustaining stocks of harvestable plants and animals for local use;
- Activities to protect and study forest regeneration in areas of anthropogenic savanna or abandoned farmland, for example through control of burning;
- Ecological inventory of the Bangassou dense forest and associated communities which determines the degree and distribution of endemic species and levels of biodiversity; and
- Research and education for continued inventory, monitoring, data-analysis and knowledge transfer, including such areas as ethnobotanical research and potential biodiversity prospecting.

13. The GEF project will negotiate agreements between the central government, sub-prefectures (Bangassou, Rafaï, and Bakouma), and community organizations such as the *Groupements d'Intérêts Ruraux* (GIR). This process will define the framework for local resource-management responsibility and for resolution of disputes, with full and effective participation by local communities, sub-prefectures, and the MEFCPTE. The NGO sector will play a vital role, including a major international conservation agency such as WWF, and national NGOs such as FOCSARENA, which has initiated dialogue with local residents on the proposed GEF project. The project will establish an experimental resource management approach, including communal resource-use zones and possible protected areas, in collaboration with the local communities which will be responsible to

manage these zones and guard the protected areas. Each community would be expected to control external encroachment, while regulating the forms and levels of resource use practiced by community members. The policing function of central government park wardens and forestry guards will be converted to one of monitoring and technical assistance for resource managers; enforcement will become primarily a local responsibility. The project will also initiate changes to the legal and tenure system needed to provide Bangassou communities explicit rights and responsibilities.

14. Baseline mapping and ecological inventory will be necessary because of the extreme scarcity of data concerning the Bangassou area. More data is needed on the biological diversity of the varied ecosystems of the Bangassou area, and on present and potential threats to its conservation. The ecological assessment scheduled for March - April 1995 provides a useful starting point for this work, which will directly influence the design and implementation of subsequent stages of the GEF project. Land-use planning and zoning will be introduced as the project develops.

15. Training will be an important activity in the GEF project. On-site training for project staff will be emphasized, although visits to other projects in C.A.R., such as Ngoto and Dzanga-Sangha, would be included. Study tours to other parts of the region might also prove useful, for example to ECOFAC and/or GEF projects in Gabon, Congo, or Cameroon. Local residents will also benefit from training activities conducted by the Bangassou project; for example, collaboration between local herbalists and outside researchers has been effectively developed in other projects. The GEF project will use its training resources to build local capacities, as this will make many of its interventions more sustainable over the long-term.

#### **RATIONALE FOR GEF FINANCING**

16. This is a "Selected Preferential Project" in line with the GEF Operational Guidance for the 1995 Biodiversity work plan, and is also one of the programme priorities identified in the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity document on Policy, Strategy, Programme Priorities and Eligibility Criteria (December 1994).

17. The government of the CAR set forth its intention to extend its protected area network in 1991, and in 1993 Bangassou was formally added to its list of newly established protected areas. However, the government also recognized the limitations of "formal protection status" from a distant central administration and in 1993 commenced a major programme of decentralization. Bangassou is its first major test in the area of protected areas and biodiversity and as such, this project is accorded high priority by the government as part of its National Strategy for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

18. The project strategy is highly innovative and is a test case in Africa for such a highly decentralized approach to protected areas management. The project involves significant leverage, cofinancing and cooperation in terms of resources committed by other agencies and institutions including USAID, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and WWF. All of these have already committed significant resources to project development and are awaiting an indication of GEF commitment before finalizing their plans.

19. From a global biological diversity perspective the forests of the Zaire river basin contain globally significant biodiversity, which is increasingly threatened by commercial logging, shifting cultivation, road-building, mining, and other human activities. Present GEF support in the central Africa region has focused on areas already experiencing significant human impacts, notably commercial logging. In Bangassou, in contrast, it is possible to test innovative biodiversity conservation strategies in an area which has not yet experienced some of the threats faced by many other parts of the region. The proposed GEF project will help to stabilize and protect a key component of the northern edge of the central African tropical forest, using highly decentralized approaches which can be effective, accountable, and sustainable even in the absence of effective intervention from government agencies or external support. Without GEF support, the Bangassou ecosystems will continue to be degraded, risking the loss of unique ecosystems and biodiversity. Alternative proposals envisage investments in various forms of small and medium-scale enterprises within the region, but without specific measures to conserve the region's biodiversity.

20. In comparison with other major concentrations of tropical moist forest (i.e., the Amazon Basin, insular and mainland Southeast Asia) the central African forest has been little studied. Forest inventories in central Africa have typically been limited to species of commercial value, and wider ecological studies have been comparatively rare (BSP 1992). Remote areas such as Bangassou have, until fairly recently, been overlooked by scientists and conservation organizations, in spite of the fact that they may well be among the most important zones on the African continent with respect to biodiversity. The IUCN review of central African forests (1989) identified Bangassou as a priority site for conservation.

#### SUSTAINABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

21. The project will demonstrate biodiversity conservation methods more sustainable than those presently in use, which assume unrealistic levels of governmental intervention and work at cross-purposes with local resource users. The Bangassou project, by regulating resource use at the local level, has the potential to be more effective, sustainable, and participatory. Local livelihoods have become increasingly dependent upon hunting and subsistence agriculture, as well as fishing and collection of various wild products, as the region's coffee sector has deteriorated in recent years.

22. Sustainability of the project will be directly linked with development of effective mechanisms for participation. Three missions have taken place in Bangassou since 1993, and a fourth is due in March/April 1995. These missions have conducted extensive consultations with local communities, and initial project concepts have been substantially revised as a consequence of this dialogue. Local communities will exercise an unprecedented level of authority for management of resource use zones and protected areas under this project, and the national legal and policy framework will be revised to acknowledge and protect their new status.

23. The discussions with Bangassou-area communities have identified a number of issues which have affected the design and will influence implementation of this project. For example, the ecotourism potential of the region is called into question by the extreme isolation of many potentially interesting sites. It also appears that relatively little wildlife of interest to visitors is presently found

in the few areas accessible by vehicle. For these reasons, the establishment of a revenue-generating national park in the northern portion of the Bangassou forest may not be feasible until more information is available with which to assess wildlife populations and the threats they face. These and other issues need to be addressed through appropriate phasing of the Bangassou project. For example, the early stages of the project will build upon and expand the ecological and socio-economic baseline studies which have been initiated by the USFWS and WWF, and also begin putting into place basic agreements on resource-use authority and responsibilities among the central government, the prefectures, and local communities. As these efforts progress, it will become possible to better address issues such as land-use zoning and permissible modes of resource use.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND TECHNICAL REVIEW

24. It is because of the failure of the "modern" resource management paradigm in central Africa - and the persistence of the traditional one - that the Bangassou project will focus on local communities and their leadership as the vehicle for conservation of the region's rich biodiversity. Conventional capacity building exercises, which focus upon improving the efficiency of state organisms, are insufficient, in part because of the severity of the economic crisis facing the country. Even in better economic times, conservation based upon the exercise of state authority had limited success. For these reasons the Bangassou project will build upon the more robust elements of African civil society and try to make these explicitly responsible - and accountable - for resource management.

25. Lessons will also be drawn from the various other conservation projects in CAR and the region (see section 1). All of these include significant training and capacity-building components, and establishing channels early-on for regional networking, information-sharing, and country-to-country study tours will be a valuable way of enhancing the aggregate impact of these initiatives. Policy-level consultations will be encouraged within the region, as GEF projects in neighboring countries offer an opportunity to initiate governmental contacts on a range of issues relevant to the conservation of biodiversity. These include such topics as common approaches to meeting national obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, policy reform issues related to the forest sector, land tenure, shifting agriculture, regulation of wildlife trade, common problems in control of cross-border trade in wildlife and timber, and a number of other important factors. As these projects proceed, the data and management experience they generate will represent an important resource which needs to be captured and made widely available.

26. Following STAP roster technical review in November 1994 this project has been extensively developed and rewritten, taking into account the recommendations of the technical reviewers as well as the results of the Participatory Rural Appraisals and discussions with government and community leaders. The technical reviews, by Gautier-Hion (Nov. 1994) and Harrison (Nov. 1994) focused particularly on the need for additional biological and socio-economic information, which has been added to the document. The same specialists have reviewed (Mar. 8, 1995) the modified proposal and further detail on the project activities and associated budget have been added to satisfy the concerns of Harrison. Further technical design will be carried out in consultation with the numerous

agencies and institutions involved in and co-sponsoring this project once an indication of GEF commitment is given.

## PROJECT FINANCING AND BUDGET<sup>2</sup>

### A. GEF Contribution - US\$:

	Yr.1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Total
<b>1. Personnel</b>					
a) national project manager	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	68,000
b) technical consultants	85,000	80,000	90,000	90,000	345,000
c) UN volunteers	30,000	60,000	60,000	75,000	225,000
d) DSS personnel	9,612	19,224	20,762	22,422	72,020
e) other staff	45,000	55,000	60,000	65,000	225,000
<b>2. Operating costs</b>	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	200,000
<b>3. Subcontracts (evaluations, audits, other services)</b>	75,000	75,000	100,000	100,000	350,000
<b>4. Training</b>					
a) travel	10,000	15,000	15,000	11,000	51,000
b) local training	56,000	56,000	56,000	56,000	224,000
c) materials and subsist.	39,000	40,000	41,000	42,000	162,000
<b>5. Equipment (buildings, vehicles, computer, etc.)</b>	11,6000	40,000	42,000	42,000	240,000
<b>6. Support costs</b>	28,761	25,361	27,588	28,521	110,231
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>561,373</b>	<b>532,585</b>	<b>579,350</b>	<b>598,943</b>	<b>2,272,251</b>
<b>Contingency @ 10%</b>	<b>56,137</b>	<b>53,259</b>	<b>57,935</b>	<b>59,894</b>	<b>227,225</b>
<b>GEF TOTAL, US\$</b>	<b>617,510</b>	<b>585,844</b>	<b>637,285</b>	<b>658,837</b>	<b>2,499,477</b>

### B. Government Contribution: CFA

1. Personnel	25,500,000	
2. Facilities & other support	11,940,000	
<b>C.A.R. TOTAL</b>	<b>37,440,000</b>	<b>(= \$72,000 at 520 CFA/\$)</b>

## INCREMENTAL COSTS

27. At a global level the Bangassou area is a critical site for conservation attention. This is noted in the external technical review, dated November 1994, by A. Gautier-Hion: "*Bangassou Forest thus has a great significance for the flora and fauna history in Central Africa and it merits a high priority conservation status.*" However, the planning missions have emphasized the serious isolation of this

<sup>2</sup> the budget has been expanded in response to the technical review

region, calling into question income-generating activities which had initially been proposed (ecotourism, game ranching, etc.). While it would be attractive to consider such investments as contributions toward the long-term sustainability of conservation activities in Bangassou, the absence of markets and the area's extremely poor infrastructure pose serious handicaps which will not be easily overcome. Hence it is highly unlikely that the private sector or the government will make the necessary investments to halt this trend. Further, due to the difficult economic situation in CAR the government is unable to allocate sufficient resources for biodiversity conservation in general. Hence, the baseline is zero government investment and the incremental cost of this project is equal to the full project cost. Without GEF financing, the area will almost certainly continue the present trend of resource misuse and ecological degradation.

28. Bangassou will become the C.A.R.'s second-largest protected area, covering some 1.6 million hectares. This area will be managed under an innovative approach which minimizes reliance upon direct government administration and enforcement, instead strengthening and supporting local community responsibility and authority. In the long-term this will have substantial implications for reduction in recurrent costs of operation of a protected area system, while also improving the effectiveness of conservation. If successfully implemented, the Bangassou GEF project would be the most cost-effective protected area in the country.

#### **ISSUES, ACTIONS AND RISKS**

29. Revision of tenure policy and law is an important aspect of the proposed GEF project, which will help to draft a set of policy reforms to support and protect the integrity of local resource management. Without such measures, the long-standing presumption of central government supremacy poses a constant risk of arbitrary action and undermining of local authority. An experience of this type recently occurred when a logging concession was suddenly renewed in an area of the Dzanga-Sangha forest in which GTZ was negotiating a complete ban on timber harvesting. Coordination with other donors involved in policy reform in the forest sector will also be necessary (i.e. GTZ, World Bank, Coopération Française) to ensure that projects do not work at cross-purposes.

30. Another issue concerns local incentives for sustainable management and related topics such as interaction between local residents and others such as pastoralists or migrants. These matters involve complex questions of competing use rights and will require that the project undertake careful socio-economic and anthropological assessments. Failure to adequately understand existing use patterns, or to make provision for the needs of groups not necessarily represented in existing authority structures (i.e. pastoralists) could seriously undermine the project.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

31. Primary collaboration will be between UNDP/GEF and the MEFCPTE, with a project oversight committee to be established in Bangui. UNDP/GEF's primary responsibilities will be to provide the financial support for the purchase of the proposed equipment, and for the costs of

consultants and researchers and other project running costs. This responsibility will include project back-stopping, logistical and administrative support, overall project monitoring, and donor coordination.

32. The project will also establish a local project advisory/consultation committee in Bangassou, providing a regular forum for consultation among the project's participants, including community organizations and local leaders. This body will provide feedback on project activities to project management, and will ensure that issues and disagreements concerning resource use and proposed interventions can be aired with full public participation. A project office will be established in the town of Bangassou in facilities provided by the MEFCPTE. Day-to-day responsibility for the project will rest with a national project manager. This office will coordinate the project activities, drawing upon the experience of a major international conservation organization, such as World Wildlife Fund, for ecological research and monitoring of the protected area system. It will work with regionally-based MEFCPTE personnel, the UNDP Sustainable Development Officer, and local communities to negotiate resource use agreements. The execution of these agreements will be the responsibility of the communities. The responsibility of the MEFCPTE and WWF will be to provide technical monitoring and to initiate corrective measures where problems arise.

33. Baseline data collected during the detailed project planning and in the early stages of the project will provide indicators which will be monitored over the course of the project. This will include items such as changes in the incidence and extent of fires, the incidence of wildlife poaching by non-residents, and population changes among selected indicator species. The project may also establish a set of ecological monitoring plots in order to better assess trends affecting Bangassou's vegetation. For example, the Missouri Botanical Garden has developed a relatively low-cost methodology based upon one-hectare botanical inventory plots which are subsequently used for monitoring project impacts on plant diversity, forest structure and dynamics. An appropriate and cost-effective technique of this type would be of great value not only for research, but also for assessment of project success and identification of problems.

## TECHNICAL REVIEW

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: A HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED APPROACH TO BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND USE: THE BANGASSOU DENSE FOREST

1. Two technical reviews of the Bangassou proposal were prepared in November 1994. These reviews raised the following concerns:

- insufficient information on the present status of the Bangassou habitat and human population;
- inadequate emphasis given to the area's exceptional biogeographical situation;
- insufficient discussion of threats to biodiversity;
- omission of explicit reference to the policy and legal context;
- insufficient information on the socio-economic context;
- lack of clarity and detail concerning outputs and activities; and
- the need for more detail in the project budget.

2. The project proposal was substantially revised in response to these points. Information generated by the Participatory Rural Appraisal and by the preliminary ecological reconnaissance was incorporated into the **Country/Sector/Background/Context** section. This material highlights the biological importance of the Bangassou region and briefly summarizes key aspects of the socio-economic situation and the threats to biodiversity in this region. The proposal now includes a phase of ecological assessment to precede demarcation of protected area boundaries (**Project Description**), as well as anthropological studies to better understand the role of pastoralist and other important socio-economic factors (**Sustainability and Participation**)

3. The description of project outputs and activities was also substantially revised and reorganized in response to the reviewer's comments. This material is found in the sections on **Project Objectives** and **Project Description**. Project interventions in the area of policy and legal framework have been more explicitly described, also in the section **Project Description**. Finally, the budget has been revised to show a greater level of detail (bearing in mind that the financial plan will be directly affected by the detailed project design stage as well as by agreements with co-sponsors and co-founders of the Bangassou project).

4. Copies of the November 1994 technical reviews are available from UNDP's GEF Unit, Regional Bureau for Africa. Following the revision of the Bangassou proposal, both reviewers provided a second assessment of the project brief; these are also available from UNDP. These reviews agreed that the current proposal has significantly addressed the earlier areas of concern, and noted that additional detail concerning budget, outputs, and activities should be a priority for the stage of detail concerning budget, outputs, and activities should be a priority for the stage of detailed project planning.