

BRIEFING NOTE n°03
Of the External¹ Independent Forest Monitoring Mission reports



<i>Period :</i>	<i>January 2017 – April 2017</i>
<i>Localities concerned :</i>	<i>Upper Nyong (Oboul 1, Akok Makak, Djouyaya) Ocean (Bissiang, Bela)</i>
<i>Author :</i>	<i>SNOIE Coordination</i>
<i>Date :</i>	<i>JULY 2017</i>

¹ External IFM is the IFM done by Civil Society organizations.

Table of contents and list of abbreviations

Introduction.....	3
1. OI missions conducted.....	4
2. Summary of achievements.....	54
2.1. Illégalities observed.....	4
2.2. Targeted species.....	5
2.3. Submission of reports and initiation of monitoring missions.....	6
2.4 Reaction from the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife.....	7
2.5 Publication of reports and results.....	7
Conclusion et recommandations.....	8

APV-FLEGT	Voluntary Partnership Agreement – Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
BNC	National Control Unit (MINFOF)
BRC	Regional Control Unit
CAE	Annual Certificate of Exploitation
CeDLA	Centre for Local Development Alternative
FC	Community Forest
FC^{le}	Communal Forest
FODER	Forest and Rural Development
MINFOF	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
NFE	National Forest Estate
OIE	External Independent Monitoring
PAPEL	Programme for Livestock and Biodiversity Conservation
RTM	Community-based Real Time Monitoring Forest
TI-C	Transparency International Cameroon
SNOIE	Standardized External Independent Monitoring System
VC	Sales of Standing Volume

Introduction

External independent monitoring is a means by which civil society organizations contribute to sustainable management of forests and improvement of forest governance. Indeed, participatory management and fight against poverty are pillars of forest reforms in Cameroon with the promulgation of law n°94/01 of January 20, 1994 on the regime of forestry, wildlife and fisheries, which, permits the implication of populations in the management of resources and forest income to ensure local sustainable and integrated development.

The Standardized External Independent Monitoring System (SNOIE) has then been developed by a group of civil society organizations from Cameroon involved in independent monitoring to make more efficient the activities of External Independent Monitoring (OIE), to increase the credibility of denunciations that emerge, and also to more orientate them to the principal recipients (competent authorities, technical and financial partners, private sector operators, etc...).

Since 2016, SNOIE has been deployed in the East, South, Centre, and Littoral regions through its local partners: PAPEL based in Messamena in the East region, CeDLA based in Kribi, SUHE based in Mapoubi, FODER and TI-C based in Yaounde. TI-C is the SCO playing the post-denunciation communication and lobbying role in the frame work of the SNOIE.

From January to April 2017, the SCO's members of the SNOIE continued to carry out OIE missions in their zone of intervention. Therefore, cases of alleged illegal logging were observed in Akok-Makak, Oboul1, Djouyaya localities (Upper-Nyong division), Bissiang and Bela (Ocean division). For these denunciations, the implication of local communities was effective through the Community-based Real Time Monitoring Forest (RTM) tool, a mobile application to collect and transmit in real time alerts on practices of alleged illegal logging via an innovative technology. Field missions carried out by these local partners led to the production of reports informing on the way forest legislations are applied in these different zones of intervention of the SNOIE. The reports therefore produced by SCO members of the SNOIE were submitted to the coordination (FODER) and were evaluated by the Technical and Ethical Evaluation Committee (CTE) and transmitted to Regional Delegations of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife concerned, with a copy sent to the Ministry. The objective is to draw the attention of competent national authorities on these cases of alleged illegal exploitation, and at the end provoke monitoring missions leading to sanctions against fraudulent operators. The Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), in charge of the implementation, the coordination, the monitoring-evaluation of forest policy, ensuring the application of rules on forestry and wildlife, started following up some denunciations after OIE reports sent by the coordination of the SNOIE.

But we observe that, in spite of forest administration's efforts to fight against illegal exploitation through actions and sanctions taken against illegal operators, the Ocean division and certain zones of the Upper-Nyong division are still facing the increase of illegal logging activities. This is observed in permanent and non-permanent forests domain, with a particular emphasis in the part of forest which are not as much as possible controlled by the sovereign missions of competent authorities.



1. OI missions conducted

Civil society organizations members of the SNOIE -PAPEL and CeDLA- carried out External Independent missions from January to April 2017. During four months, these two CSO conducted a total of five OIE missions, i.e. three (3) by PAPEL and two (2) by CeDLA. After alerts transmitted by Community Observers (OC) and denunciations by communities through RTM, accompanied with letters of denunciations, the teams of those two organizations carried out raids respectively in Akok Maka, Djouyaya, Oboul1 villages (Upper-Nyong division) and Bissiang, Bela villages (Ocean division)

2. Summary of achievements

2.1. illegalities observed

Main illegalities found during these missions are:

- Failure to comply with technical norms of logging by the Communal Forest of Messamena / Mindourou and its operating partner
- Non-compliance with the clauses of the specification of the temporary agreement with laundering of illegal timber
- Unauthorized exploitation in national forest estate

- Unauthorized operation with presumption of complicity in the FC of the GIC Bons Coeurs
- Fraudulent exploitation in UFA 10 049 attributed to SBAC by unidentified individuals,
- Failure to comply with technical norms of logging by the manager of UFA 10 049 and FC DEVAKOK,

These offences are repressed by Sections 65, 156 (4) and 157 of law 94/01 of January 20, 1994; sections 9, 134, 134-1 and 312 of the Cameroonian penal Code; 128 of law 81/013

2.2. Targeted species

Reports produced in the frame of OIE missions brought out few timber species that have been valued by operators found guilty of illegal logging, that is: Tali, Ayous, Okan, Dabema, Aningré, Fraket, iroko, Sapeli, Ekopbeli, Azobe, Moabi, Tiama, Acajou, Dibetou, Alep, Eyek, Makoré, Bossé Clair, Ilomba, Movingui, Padouck.

Fig1: Types and quantities of unmarked logs

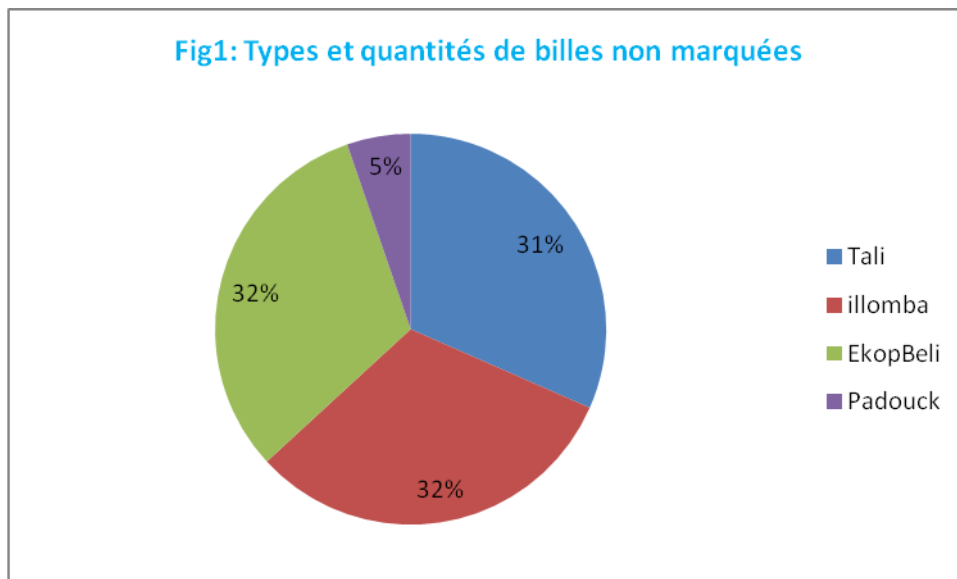
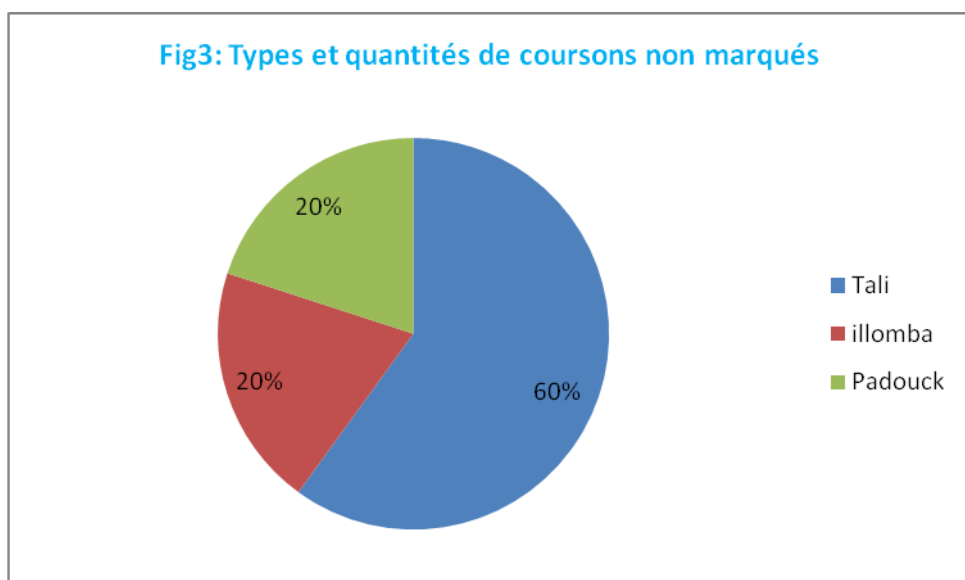
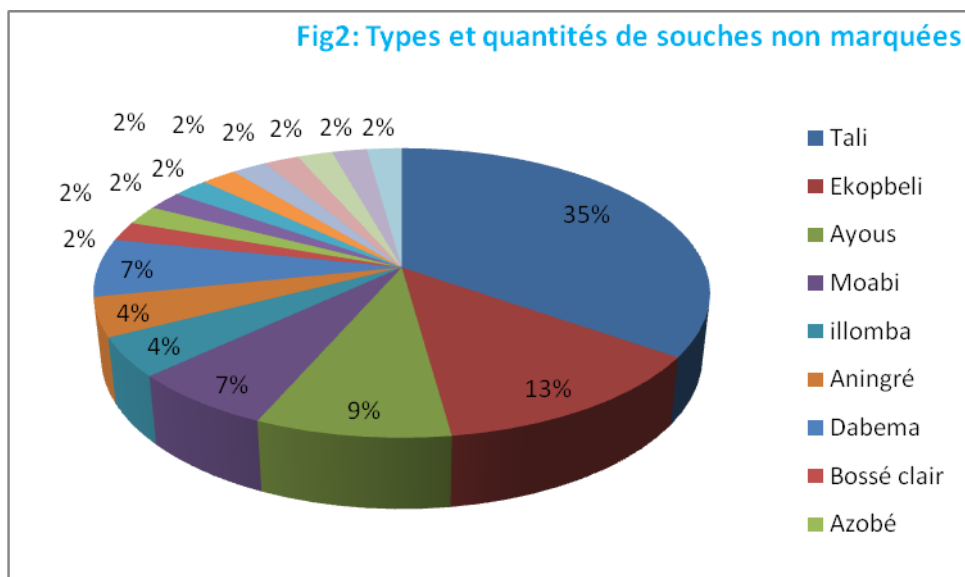


Fig2 & 3: Types and quantities of unmarked strains



2.3. Submission of reports and initiation of monitoring missions

After missions of verifications on illegal logging cases denounced in Bissiang, Bela, Akok-Makak, Djouyaya and Oboul 1 localities, reactions of the Ministry led to monitoring missions by the National Control Brigade (BNC) and Regional Control Brigades (BRC). Concerning Bela's case, a joint mission, Ocean² DDFOF and CeDLA, following the note N°0000249/NS/MINFOF/DRSU/DDOC/SF of 12/06/17 on the monitoring mission report of illegal forest allegations perpetrated in Bela and surrounding areas, was carried out in Lokoundje subdivision, Ocean division, South region on June 14, 2017.

² Divisional Delegation of forestry and wildlife

After this mission, the DDFOF notified M. NYEGYE Cyrille NIC N0115305697 at LT17 of the acquisition of 08 logs of Ekopbeli volume of 80,783m³ and 01 log of Azobe volume of 3,621m³. Concerning Bissiang's case, the OIE reports triggered a mission of verification by Regional control unit (BRC) controllers of the South region, with a verbal notification to the SNOIE coordination led by FODER.

OIE reports carried out in the Upper-Nyong division i.e. Oboul1, Akok Makak and Djouyaya, conducted to a mission of verification by Regional control unit (BRC) controllers of the East region with a written note addressed to the SNOIE coordination. The mission at Oboul1, made the MINFOF to notice illegal facts revealed in OIE reports produced by PAPEL. Considering the letter from the Ministry in charge of forestry addressed to the coordination of SNOIE, litigation has been opened against the firm "Oye & Compagnie", guilty of unauthorized logging in a National forest estate and communal forest. Also, a formal notice was addressed to the managers of the communal forest of Messamena-Mindourou, in order to engage corrective actions particularly the effective cessation of illegal logging and the implementation of the management plan.

2.4 Reaction from the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife

All the five missions carried out by SCO members of the SNOIE from January to April 2017, led to reactions from the Ministry. Till now, we register 82% of reactions from the Ministry concerning the OIE reports produced and transmitted in the frame of the SNOIE. Besides missions of verification by the BRC controllers of the East and South regions, forest administration has opened litigation against illegal forest operators.

2.5 Publication of reports and results

A press conference organized by SNOIE coordination on July 12, 2017 was an opportunity to publicize the results obtained after OIE missions carried out by CSO members of the SNOIE. 20 journalists from the written press, radio and television (**Le Quotidien de l'Economie, Mutations, Le Messenger, La nouvelle Expression, Œil du sahel, Eden Newspaper, Magic FM, Kalak FM, RTS, Radio Environnement, Canal2 International, Equinoxe TV, Vision 4, Camer.be, Camerooninfo.net, Le quotidien Emergence,**) took part in this conference. The five mission reports (Akok Makak, Oboul 1, Djouyaya, Bisiang, Bela) were published on the OIE website. A summary table of denunciations –reactions from the administration obtained in the frame of the implementation of the standardized External Independent Monitoring System (SNOIE) was produced and distributed to journalists. Posts on the press conference and results obtained were made on Twitter and Facebook.



Press conference on the publications of OIE reports published between January and April



SCO members of the SNOIE constituting the panel during the press conference (CEDLA, SUHE, PAPEL, FODER)

Conclusion et recommandations

OIE Missions carried out by SCO members of the SNOIE (PAPEL and CedLA) and also the lobbying post denunciation action done by Transparency International-Cameroon, from January and April 2017, contributed to perceptible changes. So, both in the the Ocean and Upper-Nyong divisions, one of the changes noticed is the decreasing of illegal forest activities in the areas currently covered by the SNOIE, and the relocation to other areas. In Messamena subdivision, we noted since January 2017 till date no activity in the Community Forests of the locality, except an isolated case of unauthorized exploitation in the national forest estate (exploitation of Ayous). The new areas where illegal operators relocated in the Upper-Nyong division, are among others Bonando and surrounding areas (Doume subdivision) and Nkoulkwa village and surrounding areas (Somalomo). If the situation is not yet radical in the Ocean division, we note however a significant decline of illegalities in titles attributed though the actual context is still in favour of crooked operators that invade National Forest Estate.

Another change observed after the denunciations done by the civil society through the SNOIE is the implication of the local forest administration by organizing joint monitoring and verification missions of facts received directly from community alerts and alleged facts denounced in OIE reports. Despite the reaction of the forest administration was constant these last months, it is still important that the administration should carry out further investigations to know the destination of these timbers exploited fraudulently. The SNOIE coordination recommends and would like that the MINFOF:

- carry on with more promptness monitoring missions and take prominent measures to ensure law compliance in this different localities
- act promptly against the respondents by requiring the immediate cessation of exploitation, arrangements to prevent recidivism; and, finally, by taking responsibility for compliance with measures

- Initiate frequently monitoring missions in these different titles: FC, FC^{le}, VC and others attributed for exploitation, and participatory evaluation mission on the impact of the exploitation of communal forest on local communities and indigenous people
- Follow up on each OIE reports submitted to its attention and regularly communicate on the measures taken by its department after denunciations of various forms received from citizens, national and international organizations.

For more than 10 years, Forests and Rural Development (FODER) has been working for the protection of forests and the promotion of local and indigenous community rights depending on forests, trees and associated resources.