



REPORT ON THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION FOR THE TAÏ-SAPO FOREST COMPLEX BETWEEN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND LIBERIA



Prepared by Wild Chimpanzee Foundation.



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INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia have been working towards a transboundary collaboration for the Taï-Sapo Forest Complex (TSFC), which spans across the border of both countries and forms part of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspot. This region is extremely important for the conservation of numerous endangered and endemic species, such as the West-African chimpanzee, the red colobus, the pygmy hippopotamus, various exotic species of duikers, and the Liberian mongoose.

Overall, this remarkable tropical forest habitat harbors over 1,200 species of flora (300 of which are endemic), over 230 bird species, 145 mammal species, and countless other rare and endemic species. The Taï-Sapo Forest Complex represents the largest contiguous bloc of tropical rainforest within the Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem. In Côte d'Ivoire, it consists of Taï National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere reserve), , and three adjacent classified forests (Cavally, Goin-Débé, Haute-Dodo). In Liberia, it consists of Sapo National Park, Grebo National Forest (>900 km² of which is been proposed to be transformed into a national park) and several large forest concessions. The aim objective of this collaboration was to determine how to effectively manage the different forest fragments while encouraging the development or the maintenance of connectivity. The two governments have been working together with both local and international actors since 2009 to develop the Taï-Sapo transboundary collaboration.

In October 2009, during the first workshop it was agreed by all stakeholders that a steering committee would need to be set up in order to push forward the transboundary collaboration process. As such, focal members from both countries met on the 20th and 21st of March 2013, at Hotel Belle Côte, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to hold the first steering committee meeting, funded by the BMZ and organized by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and UNEP-GRASP. The representatives from the Ministry of Water and Forests opened the meeting along with opening speeches were done by the WCF, UNEP-GRASP, and the representative from the Ministry of Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development. After this, work began with presentations recapitulating the outcomes from the first workshop of 2009, the transboundary process and mechanism for the TSFC and the current status of the TSFC, following by open work sessions following the proposed terms of reference (ToR) for the first Steering Committee (SC), presented below.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (SCM)

In 2009, the participants from the initial workshop outlined the terms of reference for the first steering committee, which are as follows:

- Propose urgent actions
- Supervise the transboundary process
- Draft the ToRs for the mixed technical committees who work on landscape management, legal framework and economic incentives
- Develop a framework for transboundary collaboration

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The meeting was held on the 20th and 21st of March 2013 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. A total of 20 people participated, eight of which were formal members and 12 were observers. Since it had been four years since the initial workshop, which launched the transboundary process, it was agreed that the SC would begin by defining the global vision for the TSFC and redefine the Terms of Reference of the SC itself, as well as validate the formal members. A list of proposed urgent actions was then prepared, followed by discussions on the ToRs for the identified technical committees.

RECAP ON THE TSFC CONTEXT

Due to Côte d'Ivoire's political crises, it has been nearly four years since the first meeting, which launched the transboundary initiative for the TSFC. It was important to have a recap on both the context of the TSFC in relation to the current situation and transboundary mechanisms that were discussed and agreed upon in 2009. As such, Dr. Emmanuelle Normand, West African Director from the WCF, present as an observer, reported on the current situation of the TSFC, the work and results achieved since the end of 2009, and today's threats that weigh on the survival of the TSFC as a whole. The presentation will be available shortly on the Tai-Sapo Forest Complex website (www.tai-sapo.org).

In short, work led over the past four years has provided a baseline for most critical issues, such as animal distribution and abundance in five of the six protected areas of the TSFC, socio-economic data of the local populations living around Tai National Park (TNP), and the proposed Grebo National Park (GNP), plan of actions for the Classified Forests of Cavally and Goin-Débé in Côte d'Ivoire, a proposed transboundary bushmeat action plan, and finally, the presence of fauna and anthropogenic activities in the two corridors proposed to connect TNP with GNP. The main threats to the TSFC were related to the important transboundary bushmeat trade and the lack of alternatives in the region, the lack efficient law enforcement, the lack of land-use planning, a potential increase in deforestation from Cocoa plantations and unregulated mining activities.

RECAP ON THE TSFC TRANSBOUNDARY PROCESS, STRUCTURE AND MECHANISM

Dr. Johannes Refisch from UNEP-GRASP, an expert in transboundary collaboration and conservation, presented a recap on the results from the first workshop held in 2009, as well as a brief overview of the mechanisms proposed for transboundary collaboration between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia for the TSFC and the tools needed to achieve this which includes a transboundary agreement between the two governments and a transboundary plan. The presentation will be shortly available on the Tai-Sapo website (www.tai-sapo.org).

Dr. Refisch stressed that for the TSFC program to be successful, the process needs to be transparent and involve a participatory approach. Efforts from both countries and all stakeholders need to be harmonized and programs and actions set up need to be monitored and evaluated regularly. Furthermore, a clear difference between urgent actions and activities in the long-term need to be defined, so that they may run in parallel. The issues to be tackled are cross-sectoral which include: land

tenure and land use, monitoring, economic incentives and law enforcement. The countries may want to discuss how to ensure inter-ministerial collaboration; one option would be to negotiate an inter-ministerial decree.

FINAL LIST OF FORMAL MEMBERS OF THE TAI-SAPO FOREST COMPLEX STEERING COMMITTEE

Government:

- Forestry Development Authority (AFD), Liberia (2)
- Mano River Union (1)
- Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (OIPR), Côte d'Ivoire (1)
- Société de Développement des Forêts (SODEFOR), Côte d'Ivoire (1)

Non-governmental:

- Fauna and Flora International (1)
- Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (1)

Donor/Technical and financial partner:

- KfW/GIZ (1)
- Open seat (1 remaining)

Observers were also present at the meeting. They were from the Fondation des Parcs et Réserves de Côte d'Ivoire (FPRCI), NGOs (Afrique Nature International and WWF) and bilateral partners (GIZ, USAID). An expert in transboundary corridor management from UNEP/GRASP, Dr. Johannes Refisch, accompanied and facilitated the whole process. A full list of participants is presented in Annex 1.

GLOBAL VISION FOR THE TSFC

In a consensus vote, the global vision for the TSFC was defined as:

“Conservation of biodiversity and participatory sustainable management of natural resources of the ecosystems of the TSFC while taking into account the well-being of the local populations”

ROLE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

In order to ensure that all partners were clear on the role of the steering committee, the members agreed the Steering committee should:

Promote and encourage the transboundary collaboration to reach the objectives leading to the global vision

Throughout the transboundary process, the SC will develop and use various tools to assist in the transboundary agreement and implementation. The members are responsible for pushing for the implementation of urgent actions that should run in parallel with the overall transboundary program. They should also aim in the future towards a potential inter-ministerial collaboration, since the TSFC encompasses other ministries besides those responsible for environmental issues, (e.g. mines, planning,

foreign affairs, etc.), and as such, a communication scheme between all ministries will become vital for the running of the project and also to gain support at the presidential level.

REVISION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE'S COMPOSITION:

Since the workshop in 2009, a few changes had been proposed in relation to the composition of the SC. For this reason, discussions had to make sure all members agreed on the changes. It was thus agreed that:

- The MANO RIVER UNION would take one seat in the committee, to support both countries' governments.
- The German cooperation would take a seat as a technical and financial partner, and could be represented by either the KfW or the GIZ.
- Steering Committee members represent a sector (government/NGO and donor) and consult with other stakeholders of their respective sector
- The chairing of the meetings would be done on a rotational basis, and that the location of the meetings should rotate between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, so that each government representation chairs the meetings every 2 years. The next meeting should thus take place in Liberia. The chairing country holds this position for one year and is responsible for the tasks set during the SC meetings. Côte d'Ivoire, represented by OIPR at this meeting this time around, is the chair for the first TSFC Steering Committee Meeting.
- If needs be, the MRU Secretariat can also organise the meeting at the request of the two countries.
- It was also suggested that in the future, the private sector working in the TSFC should at least be invited to participate as an observer at future meetings.

DEVELOPMENT OF URGENT ACTIONS

Over the past four years, the region where the TSFC is situated has undergone some major changes in relation to its status, biodiversity and management. For example, the crisis and ensuing violence related to the Ivorian elections of 2010 led to the protected areas on the Côte d'Ivoire side being unmanaged for some time, leading to an increase in poaching, an increase in encroachment in the classified forests and in the NPT and an overall decrease in animal abundance.

On the Liberian side, an influx of Ivorian Refugees has also had its impact on the region, while the FDA has started to work on upgrading the Grebo National Forest to a National Park. A list of potential threats to the region was presented during the presentation made by Dr. Emmanuelle Normand from the WCF. These were then discussed in more detail with all participants and urgent actions to mitigate these threats were suggested and listed together, with the aim of implementing them in no more than 24 months. The urgent actions are critical to carry out if the TSFC is to remain viable for West African biodiversity and livelihoods. A table is presented below showing the threats, urgent actions proposed and expected results (Table 1).

Table 1: Proposed urgent actions for the TSFC to be implemented within 24 months

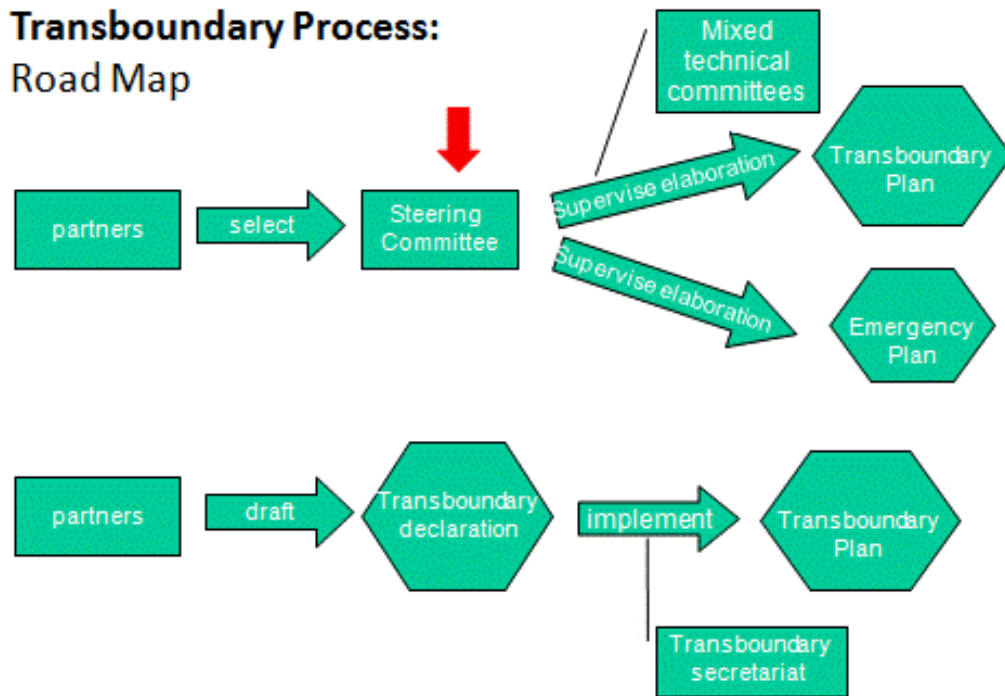
Threats	Expected Result	Activities	Responsible
Transboundary bushmeat markets	Protected species of Liberia are no longer sold on the market	Station two FDA officers at Tempo and Tassara to confiscate bushmeat of protected species.	FDA
		Lead sensitization campaigns in Djouroutou, Tai, Tempo and Tassara	WCF, FFI, OIPR, FDA ,SODEFOR
		Station two Water and Forestry agents in Daobly and Djouroutou to confiscate protected species of Liberia.	OIPR
Illegal Human pressure on PAs	Signs of hunting decrease by 50%	Increase the presence of anti-poaching teams	FDA,OIPR
		Increase the field personnel	FDA,OIPR,SODEFOR
	All illegal mining activities in PAs are stopped	Stop illegal mining activities through law enforcement and sensitization	FDA,OIPR,SODEFOR
	The forest damaged by these illegal plantations are rehabilitated and reforested	Rehabilitate forest by cutting illegal plantations and developing reforestation programs	FDA,OIPR,SODEFOR
Lack of land-use planning	Land-use plans are in place	Clarify the locations of official mining sites	FDA
		Clarify the situation of Concession F and the planning of land to the north of	FDA

		Grebo NF	
		Develop land-use plans with all stakeholders	FDA
Lack of management plans	Management plans are developed and updated	Validate management plans of Cavally and Goin-Debe CF	SODEFOR
Inadequate implementation of law	Official laws are applied	Support implementation of law through training of prosecutors, magistrates, wildlife authorities, police and customs	FDA,SODEFOR OIPR

ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Dr. Johannes Refisch from UNEP/GRASP in the morning of the first day presented a recap on the transboundary process which reiterated the need for the TSFC technical committees (see Figure 1) seeing the importance of these committees, the SC worked together to define the ToRs for the various committees, all the while agreeing that the transboundary process is not a closed initiative and if the future new technical committees are needed, they can be created. Below each Committee is presented.

Figure 1 – diagram showing the transboundary process



The SC suggested to put in place several technical committees to address specific issues that was felt was important to hold external expertise to advance our analysis of the situation within the TSFC. These technical committee’s work is going to be supported and funded by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation and the WCF will hire international expert consultants to propose reports to advance the reflexions. The results of the consultancies will then be presented to the partners in 2013. The following tables outline the expectED results and activities from each of the technical committees

A). LEGISLATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TC

Expected Results	Activities
Review and gap analysis of existing legislation relevant for the conservation of the transboundary landscape	Develop ToRs for legal expert and conduct technical study
	Suggestions of harmonized laws to facilitate transboundary collaboration
Transboundary agreement is signed	Develop a bi-partite agreement to show and ensure commitment from the two countries
Stopping of the trade of Liberian protected species in the TB bushmeat market	Clarify the legality of the bushmeat trade between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire
	Encourage the control of the trade of Liberian protected species in Transboundary markets
	Propose trade and consumption alternatives to bushmeat in the TSFC

B). LAND USE AND TENURE OF THE TC

Expected Results	Activities
A land-use plan which allows for increasing the size of protected and sustainably managed forests	Clarify land-use in the complex (cartography)
	Identify land use in the identified corridors
	Propose location of new potential corridors
	Identify limits of the TSFC maximizing protected and sustainably managed area
	Re-evaluate commercial Vs conservation use of the forest

C). PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES TC

Expected Results	Activities
Payment for Environmental services (PES) are identified and contribute to a sustainable funding for the TSFC	Identify potential PES
	Launch a feasibility study for REDD in the TSFC
	Analyze land tenure systems, challenges and elaborate solutions

D). CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION PLATFORM

Conflict is a cross-cutting issue for the TSFC and as such, it was proposed in 2009 to create a platform rather than a TC to work on conflict issues.

Expected Results	Activities
A platform is set up and conflicts are prevented/solved	Identify potential conflicts related to the conservation of the complex
	Propose a platform for resolution and prevention of conflicts
	Set-up a better communication between stakeholders, including local population

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

In the end, the first steering committee meeting for the Tai-Sapo Forest Complex enabled the committee to produce and agree upon the necessary framework for a transboundary process to take place. The vision of the steering committee was precisely defined to describe our expectations and goals for the fate of the TSFC. In order for the transboundary project to successfully implement its goals in conserving biodiversity in the Tai-Sapo region, various measures will need to be taken into account to ensure the well being of the local populations in the area. The SC feels the need to implement some of the urgent actions now to protect the TSFC and urgent funding is needed to allow both governments to implement these actions. The SC appeals to donors, including the KfW, to support the urgent actions listed.

Urgent actions were proposed that included the current threats facing biodiversity, activities to mitigate these treats and the expected results from conservation activities. It was agreed upon by all that the bushmeat market poses significant threats to wildlife and as such must be dealt with quickly. Lack of land use management and planning, inadequate legislation and insufficient implementation of law

ensuring the viability of the forests also contribute to the ongoing destruction of habitats in this region. Action plans regarding these factors were created but will require the development of the land use technical committee and the legislation committee to successfully carry out its objectives. Now that the political climate has been relatively stable following the post-election crises, the steering committee will act steadfast and promptly in continuing on to the next steps in the transboundary collaboration process.

At the end of the meeting, KfW presented the ToR (which had been developed in collaboration with the Ivorian and Liberian partners) for a feasibility and preparation study for the implementation of biological corridors in the Space Tai-Grebo-Sapo. This study will be carried out between June and July 2013.

The structure and role of the steering committee was also established during this meeting and agreed upon by all members. The committee's mandate will be discussed during the next meeting. The steering committee is a diverse group consisting of governmental agencies, technical and financial partners, and non-governmental organizations. Legitimacy issues of the committee were discussed, which led to remember that each member represents his sector rather his organization, whether for the states' institutions or the NGOs. Regarding financial support, the problem has not been resolved because KfW, representing the technical and financial support, can not represent different donors according to the mandate assigned to him. The role of the steering committee is one of guidance and facilitation. Steering Committee Members should facilitate contact to new partners and donors, and help to link the transboundary process to other large-scale national and international processes such as FLEG-T, REDD, etc.

ANNEX1: List of participants present at the first steering committee meeting for the TSFC

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