

# Synergies between IFM and other state institutions: experience of the consultation platform for the fight against environmental crime: *forest, wildlife and other similar crime*

Webinaires CV4C : Réalisations,  
Perspectives et Réflexions

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# 1. Context of synergy

- In order to improve the governance of its natural resources, the CAR Government has embarked on a vast project to reform the regulatory and institutional framework;
- Signature in 2011 of the VPA which enshrines IFM and entrusts it to the CAR civil society united within the GDRNE platform.
- IFM intervenes in addition to forest control.
- In 2017, CIEDD negotiated and obtained from the government (i) *A Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of IFM*, (ii) *An order establishing the reading and approvals committee and designating its members.*

## 2. Establishment of a consultation platform for the fight against environmental crime: *forestry, wildlife and similar crimes*

The CAR is part of the INTERPOL Central African Police Chiefs Committee (CCPAC) which has had legal status and internal regulations since 1997. The INTERPOL CCPAC aims to support member countries to fight against environmental crime in all its forms.

In 2015, a program of activities for the year 2016 had been drawn up by the INTERPOL Regional Office for Central Africa in Yaoundé which had taken into account various operations related to the activities of police (police, customs, water and forestry, justice, etc.) trainings and meetings in member countries.

## 2. Establishment of a consultation platform for the fight against environmental crime: *forestry, wildlife and similar crimes (cont'd...)*

Following the 2017 workshop organised by the Interpol regional office in Yaoundé, and in accordance with its action plan, the INTERPOL focal point (CCPAC) of the Ministry of Water and Forests harnessed the good collaboration between the INTERPOL Regional Office for the Central Africa and the CV4C project to propose the idea of a Consultation Platform for the Fight against Environmental Crime: forestry, wildlife and similar crimes (PCLCE) in the CAR.

This is how in 2020, by decree n° *25/MEFCP/DIRCAB/PFCCPAC/20* ordered by the Minister of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing, it will see the light of day.

### 3. Civil society figures prominently on the platform

- It is made up of representatives from several ministries:
- Presidency of the Republic;
- National Assembly
- The Economic and Social Council
- Primature;
- Good Governance Authority
- Police BCN INTERPOL
- Platform of Religious Denominations
- Civil Society Organisations

### 3. The platform's coordinating bodies

The platform's activities are coordinated by an executive office set up by the members for a term of five (05) years, renewable once:

•**Executive Bureau:** (*President, Rapporteur, Legal Advisor, Technical Advisor*): leads and coordinates the activities of the platform.

•**Working Group:** implementing body for the platform's missions. The missions are determined by the plenary.

**NB:** *This platform is placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries*

## 4. Objectives and missions:

### *4.1. Objectives:*

Placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries, the consultation platform for the fight against environmental crime: forestry, wildlife and similar crimes aims to support the efforts of the government through the Department of Water and Forests in the fight against environmental crime by monitoring logging companies.

## 4. Objectives et Missions :

### *4.2 Missions*

- Create a bond of trust between the populations and the actors of public and private life: it is a question of highlighting good examples of good governance in Central African forests in order to preserve the environment and the forest resources;
- Prevent forest, wildlife, environmental crime and similar crimes: this involves denouncing to the authorities, Water and Forest agents and NGOs (Independent Observers) the crimes observed in forestry, wildlife and environmental matters.

## 5. First experience of synergy (IFM-Platform) and results:

### **Technical and financial support from CV4C for the organisation of joint control missions:**

- Meetings and capacity building on the technique of collecting and processing data on environmental crime;
- Field mission for an inventory of the exports of three logging companies operating in the CAR
- Provision of mission report: Forest control report and Observer: Detailed report of the IFM mission.

## 6. Practical results of a joint mission with the platform:

- a) A 21-day mission was carried out;
- b) Two reports (IFM and forest control) are produced and published;
- c) Three reports drawn up;
- d) A total fine of 478,000,000 FCFA is imposed on the three logging companies;
- e) A payment notification is sent to each of these companies;
- f) The Timberland company was refused the export discharge for timber for the month of December 2020 for non-payment of fines;
- g) The seizure of 16 vehicles (loggers) carrying 57 logs (Pachiloba), the total volume of which is 316,386 m<sup>3</sup> from the IFB company to the Border Inspectorate of Beloko on 12th December 2020. Reason: Fraudulent export for failing to declare the movement of timber and non-payment of forest taxes.

## 6. Lessons learned:

The first joint IFM and platform missions demonstrated that:

- IFM's role was not well understood by all actors in forest governance in CAR (especially those of the working in the administrations involved);
- Resumption of forest control in the PEAs by ministry of forest officials through joint missions;
- Good collaboration between civil society and the forestry administration in terms of monitoring legality: a space for sharing information on the exploitation of natural resources, defining a strategy to respond to the problems observed;
- Need for better coordination in the preparation of future missions;
- Need to maintain the momentum within the platform after CV4C;

## 7. A new innovative approach

With the participation of other law enforcement actors:

- **Customs:** Use of machines not declared to customs;
- **Gendarmerie:** Identify cases of employment of illegal immigrant workers

## 8. Synergy weaknesses:

This first experience, although appreciated by all stakeholders in forest governance and with very promising results, some weaknesses were revealed in its implementation:

- Poor capacity of forest agents to characterise illegalities observed in the field;
- Low participation of agents from the Ministry of Forests who took part in the mission on the Reading and Approvals Committee;
- Absence of actions to be taken by the forestry department after the IFM reports Reading and Approvals Committee of;
- Lack of follow-up of recommendations by civil society;
- External dependence in financial terms (CV4C);

## Conclusion:

**The consultation platform for the fight against environmental crime: forestry, wildlife and similar crimes (PCLCE)** is an asset and an opportunity to improve the governance of natural resources in the CAR. Despite the many opportunities offered by this platform, weaknesses in the preparation and conduct of missions, qualification of facts observed and reporting were noted.

It remains a one partner that can be counted on to move forward.

But will this platform last long after CV4C which was its only financial partner?



*Singuila !*