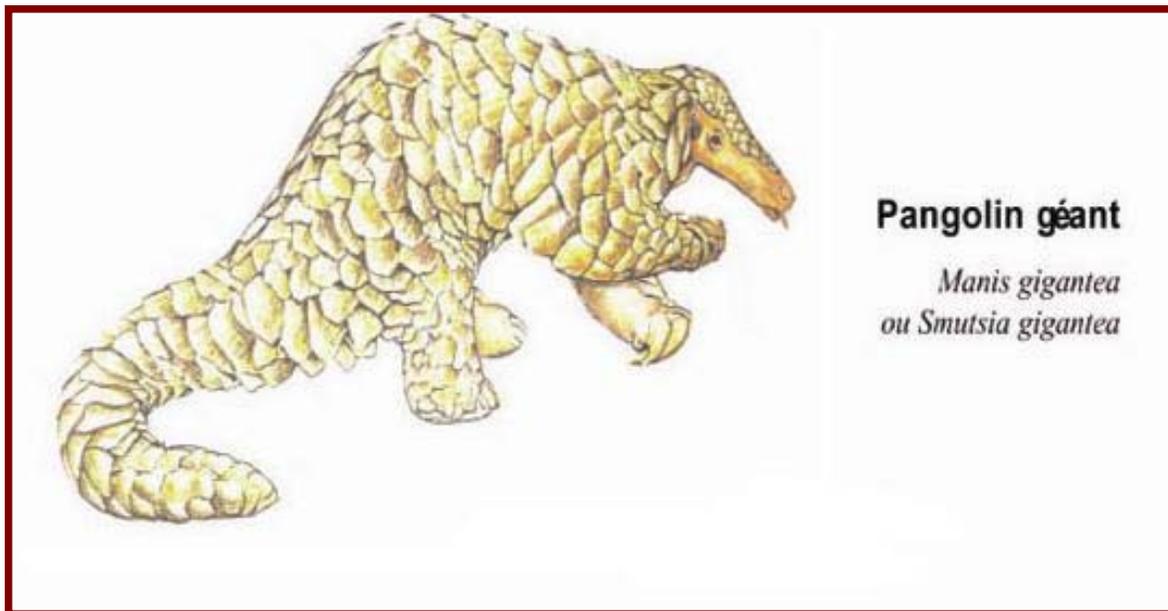


Implementation Plan

Monts de Cristal National Park



HEGA Martin Fridolin

Monts de Cristal National Park, UICN critical site

Libreville, 2008



Project Site Summary

Gabon is one of tropical Africa's biologically richest countries and maybe the most botanically diverse tropical African countries (Pomeroy, 1993). Covering an area of 267,660 km², it is home to an estimated 6,000-10,000 plant species (Breteler, 1989; Christy *et al.*, 2003). Relatively little is known about Gabon plant diversity and it is probably the least botanically known area in tropical Africa (Campbell and Hammond 1989). There are several mountain chains where plant diversity is recognized to be very high. The "Monte-Alen - Monts de Cristal" landscape of Equatorial Guinea and Gabon probably possess the greatest botanical wealth. The "Mont de Cristal" forest is very rich in biological diversity and for some it's the most remarkable wildlife and intact wild land.

This forest needs a strong support to reduce the rate of forest degradation and the loss of biodiversity by strengthening the protected area of the region. The annual deforestation rate is estimated between 0.1% (Christy *et al.*, 2003) and 0.5% (FAO, 1999), the latter figure being one of the highest for the region. It's very important to address the complementary issues of forest resource exploitation by promoting community co-management of natural resources. In the past, conservation strategies were typically developed to fit within protected areas. Now we are increasingly recognizing that wildlife movements, ecological processes, and human influences spill across such borders. As a result, conservation efforts that focus only within the boundaries of national parks may not succeed. There is no doubt that natural resources management at a landscape level makes sense from an ecological perspective.

In Gabon, forest resources are the second important contributor to the national economy after mining for oil and minerals. Closed canopy forest still covers an estimated 21,190,000 ha (over 80% of the country) (Mayaux *et al.*, 2004), although up to 70% of these remaining forests are currently allocated as logging concessions (Collomb *et al.*, 2000). Timber exploitation represents a major contribution to the country's economy, valued at some 400 millions USD per annum (Christy *et al.*, 2003). All rural families and many urban families' subsistence depends on small-scale commercial agriculture, hunting, fishing and non-timber forest products. These products from the forest are connected to the health, diversity and productivity of natural systems. The absence of employment and alternative generating revenues contribute to loss or degradation of natural resources. The effort we can make to ensure conservation and wise use of natural resources will directly benefit rural families, often marginalized, and will ensure that the urban poor have access to affordable foodstuffs and building materials.

Preliminary botanical inventories and biogeographically analysis have identified the Monts de Cristal region as a key area for biodiversity conservation (Reitsma, 1988; Sosef, 1994; Wilks, 1990; Grubb, in press). Many botanists think it is the richest area for plant diversity in tropical Africa. However, the area remains poorly known. Plant endemism is high in Gabon at an estimated 22% (Breteler, 1989) and new species are still being regularly discovered (Breteler, 2001). Many species are limited to remote mountain ranges such as the Monts de Cristal, Monts Doudou and the Massif du Chaillu. A recent analysis of collecting density in Gabon shows that many such areas are poorly known botanically and have no known collections (Sosef, 2001).

The recent creation of 13 national parks in the country in 2002 by the head of state in collaboration with WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) is a strong signal which shows the determination of the government to take in consideration the world conservation issues. The two national parks created in the Monts de Cristal forest (Mont SENI and MBE national parks)

will help us in our efforts for conservation of this forest block. It is clear that to conserve biodiversity within a landscape we must reconcile conflicting policies and practices across jurisdictions and land-use regimes. For all those reasons, we need to:

- develop and adopt a participatory strategy to reduce threats to natural resources and human welfare
- implement mechanisms to strategically address conflicts between biological conservation and human welfare
- develop and implement locally appropriate tools to measure conservation effectiveness and adapt the conservation strategy as the context changes.

Those three ideas take in consideration the three cooking stones of conservation (conservation- social – economy). Without which the pot will likely topple, spilling our efforts and investments into the fire. Despite one of the lowest population densities in the Congo Basin (4.3 people per km² (FAO, 1999), the challenge now is to manage these parks and this will require the provision of extensive biological, ecological and socio-economic baseline information as well as management capacity and financial commitment.

GOAL

To protect the biodiversity of the MONTS DE CRISTAL region in order to benefit both the Monts de Cristal national park, and the local community for today and tomorrow.

Objectives 1: *Stop the commercial bush meat trade in and around the Monts de Cristal National Park.*

Objectives 2: *Manage traditional hunting in the villages around the Monts de Cristal National Park.*

Objectives 3: *Increase pride in the wildlife that is found in Gabon and the Monts de Cristal National Park*

Actions

- Giving people knowledge
- Helping people develop positive attitude for conservation
- Helping people develop good practices to protect the park

Activities

Posters (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of posters with catching information's on the national park.

- **Activity responsible:** Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.
- **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**
- **Approximative budget:** 1,000 US\$

Calendars (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of a calendar for 2009 with key messages for each month and blank space to put activities done by any one for conservation

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 800 us\$**

Bumper Sticker (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of catchy bumper stickers

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Fact Sheet (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of Monts de Cristal National Park and protected animals fact sheet.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Sermon sheet production (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of sermon sheet within religious meeting event to evoke God's view to take care about living things for the benefit of human being, particularly local community.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- We need the strong involvement of catholic priest (70% of population)

• **Approximative budget: 500 US\$**

T-shirts (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of tee shirts with Giant pangolin's pictures and protected animals will be exciting for general public.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 1,500 US\$**

Button badges (September – October 2008)

Realization, production and distribution of Giant pangolin's pin are exciting for school students and even for some adults. These button badges are mainly used as rewards during competition.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 1,200 US\$**

Radio Program (September 2008 – June 2009)

The production and airing on the radio of a special program for conservation to reinforce key message and the importance of wildlife, forest protection and conservation.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager and radio program responsible.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- Sometimes the antenna doesn't work
- The radio program doesn't covered all the villages

• **Approximative budget:**

Video production (November 2008 – February 2009)

Conception and production of a video on National park conservation based on the 3 songs produced the year before. The main theme will be to consider why conserving flora and fauna biodiversity and what can you do at your level to preserve your forest.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- That takes a lot of time and need many people and material

• **Approximative budget: 7,000 US\$**

Traditional board game competition (Songho) (November 2008 – March 2009)

Running Songho competition, which is a traditional game. The competition will be organized in Medouneu city with the best players coming from the villages. The Songho is a very popular game this fact will help to encourage people to get involved in learning about the environmental issues in the region and over the world. This will attract many people to participate and catch their attention

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager and community leaders.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- The players from each village will need transportation to go to Medouneu

• **Approximative budget: 800 US\$**

Football competition between specific groups (November 2008 – March 2009)

Running Football competition between focus groups is a very good way to make people involved in activities because people like football. The focus group players will come from any village .People will pay more attention on key messages

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 2,600 US\$**

Art competition at schools (February – April 2009)

Running art competition for school students is a creative way to express the children understanding and perception toward flora and fauna biodiversity and its threats to learn more about their environment.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager and teachers.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 600 US\$**

Environmental quiz (September 2008 – June 2009)

Conception, production and running environmental quizzes in each village to encourage people to get involved in learning about the environmental issues in the region and over the world. This will attract many villagers to participate and catch their attention. This quiz will have questions which relates to sustainable use of natural resources and the benefits for the community

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- **Approximative budget: 600 US\$**

Community Theater (September 2008 – June 2009)

The community theater is a good way to help people taking position on one issue. This kind of activity reinforces key messages and people are really paying attention on what it's said. They can identify themselves and recognize their culture and many aspects of their lives.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

- **Risks, Constraints and Assumptions:**

- It's not easy to find good actors and when it's possible the per diems are high
- We need also a good scene

- **Approximative budget: 2,000 US\$**

School Visits (September 2008 – June 2009)

School visit to primary school and speak to as many children as possible in target areas. The talks serve to introduce local children to giant pangolin and the impact of over hunting on nature as a whole.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

- **Risks, Constraints and Assumptions:**

- **Approximative budget: 400 US\$**

Training Sessions (teachers, women and community leaders and local government officials) (November 2008 – March 2009)

General workshop will serve as forum in which selected groups, from all the region will have an opportunity to be exposed to any information regarding Monts de Cristal national park biodiversity, best practices, tools on how to integrate the concept into class and daily life.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

- **Risks, Constraints and Assumptions:**

- **Approximative budget: 1,200 US\$**

Villages visit (September 2008 – June 2009)

Conduct community outreach activities in the 36 villages, by hosting discussion with all the community and also presenting the biological monitoring survey and delimitation result in Monts de Cristal national park the last 5 years.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Objectives 4: *Share alternatives for traditional hunting bush meat with the communities in the target area.*

Actions

- Fundraising about 3,000 US\$ for 2 small project in the region

Activities

Meeting with communities to identify project (September – october 2008)

We will organise meetings in villages to ask people about what kind of alternatives they ey think can help them and the National Park to survive. Those meetings will take place in the villages identified as very active in poaching. After collecting differents ideas, we will try to present the ideas in a project format.

The villagers will be sensitizing also on the importance to create lega associations before submitting proposal to sponsors.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA the Campaign manager.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- The choice of villages is not easy because we have about 30 villages around the National park.

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Helping villagers to build legal ASSOCIATIONS (november – december 2008)

The government had insisted to have legal associations in the country. We will try to help viollagers to create association in a democratic way and to give them information on how to legalise these associations. We can help them to organise general assembly of the association and organise democratic election to choose their leaders. We will also help hem to write their internal rules.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- Villagers have no idea and informations about association
- The region culture doesn't encourage people to work together for the same goal

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Writing a matching fund proposal (January 2009)

Writing a matching fund proposal is not easy for them. That requires some skills that they do not have. We will try to train their leaders on that process and write together a matching fund proposal for sponsors. The production and distribution of legislation booklets to government officials, law enforcers, community leaders, teachers, focus groups members and community watch group to let them have at anytime on them responses to environmental questions asked by villagers.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA and associations leaders

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- Many villagers have never been in school

• **Approximative budget: 500 US%**

Submitting proposals to sponsors (January - February 2009)

The submission to sponsor is a delicate process. We want our proposal to be considered so we need to select sponsors. The main sponsors we will select are : private companies from the region, embassies, international organisation. production and distribution of legislation booklets to government officials, law enforcers, community leaders, teachers, focus groups members and community watch group to let them have at anytime on them responses to environmental questions asked by villagers.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- many private companies have their main offices in Libreville
- many sponsors require experience on management a project

• **Approximative budget: 600 US\$**

Objectives 5: *Identify eco-tourism opportunities.*

Actions

- Taking information from hunters, loggers and miners on possible trails
- Assessing trails known

Activities

Meeting with focus groups (November – December 2008)

The main focus group that we will meet are hunters, loggers and miners. Those focus groups know the forest very well and they are always going in the bush for their activities. We will explain them the objective of the process and their interest in that process. We will try to gather a maximum of information and their feelings about the process. They will be considering as partners. We will give them cameras to take pictures.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- Hunters are sometimes afraid to work with conservation organization, they need to be convinced to work for the project.

• **Approximative budget: 1,000 US\$**

Visiting trails (February – April 2009)

The decision to visit trails will be taken after analysing comments and pictures. We will visit the entire trails step by step. We will take GPS points and see if the places identifying can be choosen. The visit of the trails will be assessed by sector and the proximity of the villages.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

- We need more people for this activity if we want to reduce time of the activity

• **Approximative budget: 2,500 US\$**

Maping trails (May – June 2009)

All the accurate information gathered will be mapped to see the links between trails and what can be our main product and our second product. This analysis will be made with expert before being published. After that we can have some experimental visits.

Activity responsible: Martin HEGA Leonard AKIE.

• **Risks, Constraintst and Assumptions:**

• **Approximative budget: 500 US\$**