

TFT-ALPI Partnership

For Responsible Forest Management & a Sustainable Timber Business

Highlights of work progress in Cameroon

Since February 2007, Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) and ALPI have been working together in Cameroon to implement a strategy for sustainable timber production. Proving legality of the timber or “legal verification” is the first step and will progress towards excellence in sustainable forest management and timber production.

Collaboration started with an evaluation of the current administrative and operational planning procedures and an assessment of the social and environmental gap between the company’s practices and Cameroonian forest laws and regulations. Requirements for responsible forest management were also evaluated against international principles for best practice such as those of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).



Based on the comprehensive evaluation of all forest operations and production sites, ALPI is now implementing an Action Plan focusing on:

- **Environment**
- **Forest Management**
- **Community Involvement**
- **Working conditions**

Since starting work with TFT substantial progress has been made by Alpi, in particular with the TTAP program (Timber Trade Action Plan); Alpi has scheduled a legality verification audit for June 2008, having completed a pre-audit assessment in February 2008.

This is a big and exciting step towards sustainable production, as Cameroonian laws and regulations include a number of environmental and social aspects as well as administrative requirements.

Both Alpi’s and TFT’s efforts focused on:

Environment

Between September 2007 and February 2008, as part of their forest management plans ALPI carried out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA’s) of all its forest operations. The assessments have provided valuable information showing the existence of significant biodiversity including rare species of mammals and birds and various species of trees and flora.

Forest Management

ALPI is focusing on:

- Updating the teams at all production sites on reduced impact logging techniques with the support of ONF-International (next session planned for November-December 2008).
- Formalization and harmonization of the reduced impact logging management procedures at all sites.
- The realisation of Forest Management Unit (FMU) borders and the establishment of gates at FMU boundaries in order to monitor people and vehicles access.

Community Involvement



Implementation of a participative mapping program to better involve local communities in forest management decision making and to protect their customary use and tenure rights. To achieve this, TFT are bringing their expertise in an innovative mapping technology allowing non literate populations to map their key resources including hunting zones, sacred places and even important individual trees. These sites are clearly identified and physically marked in order to help ALPI incorporate this information into their management plans. These community resources are consequently better preserved and protected.

At the *Mindourou* and *Kika* sites, work has already begun with:

- The identification and training at both sites of 6 Pygmy and Bantu community facilitators who will be trained in participative mapping techniques. They will relay information between communities and ALPI and help implement participative mapping among their communities.
- Establishment and activation of forest-farmers committees.



Working conditions:

- Staff health, security and safety are taken in consideration as they are an essential part of implementing sustainable forest management.

Staff accommodation

- Since work commenced at the two production sites (771 workers in total), 27 new houses have been built.

Staff safety and security

- Distribution of safety equipment, including anti-dust masks, leather gloves, new vests, protective boots, raincoats, helmets and protection glasses for the work teams in the forests and in the sawmills. More than 3800 items have been distributed to date.
- Installation of sign posts all along the roads used by the company vehicles, in the forest and at the production sites.

Staff health

- A new borehole is planned to facilitate worker's access to clean water.
- AIDS is a critical health problem that particularly affects all forest companies in Cameroon with a higher rate of prevalence (contamination) than the national average. The Groupement de la Filiere Bois du Cameroun (GFBC) and the German Cooperation (GTZ) through its sustainable forest management program (GTZ-PGDF) are bringing support to forest companies on this issue by implementing a program called 'MAINSTREAMING VIH-SIDA'. Through this initiative, ALPI

launched an awareness raising workshop on HIV/AIDS prevention with its entire field staff. The activities carried out since February include:

- Training of 20 peer educators working as training and information relays;
- HIV testing campaign of 85% of the staff at Kika and Bonabéri sites;
- HIV/AIDS awareness raising through the distribution of flyers to the workers and through discussions between the workers and the peer educators
- Throughout 2008, the awareness raising campaign will continue with the help of the existing peer educators and the recruitment of new educators. Also, ALPI will establish a program to assist the HIV positive personnel