



global witness

Cameroon

Project of Independent Observation in Support of  
Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

**Approved by the Ministry of  
the Environment and Forests**

**Report No. 046 En**

*Joint mission : Central Control Unit – Independent Observer*

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<b>Title</b>	FMU 10 061
<b>Location</b>	Boumba and Ngoko Department, East Province
<b>Mission date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2003
<b>Company</b>	PLACAM

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## 1. SUMMARY

The Central Control<sup>1</sup> Unit (CCU) of the Ministry of the Environment and Forests (MINEF), accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness), carried out a mission in the Forest Management Unit (FMU) 10 061, located in the Boumba and Ngoko Department, East Province, on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

The objective of this mission was to research, note and prosecute the possible cases of irregularity and illegality within the mentioned FMU.

The main conclusions of the Independent Observer in relation to this mission are as follows:

- PLACAM is the beneficiary of two Annual Cutting Permits (ACP) currently valid and the company exploits them simultaneously;
- The inspection of the field documents revealed a bad processing of the exploitation documents;
- The limits of the ACPs undergoing exploitation were opened but not materialised by paint markings.
- The CCU considered the facts observed in this worksite documents as minor. Consequently, it did not establish an official statement in the examined case.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

- that, despite being minor, the breaches of the forest legislation observed during this mission should be the subject of a litigation in order to prevent this type of situation from reoccurring in the future;
- that the next missions carried out in FMU 10 061 ensure that PLACAM scrupulously respects the norms of intervention in forests and the stipulations of the 2003 finance law.

## 2. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

The mission was composed of Ms. Essono Danièle and Mr. Mamene Pierre Marcel, CCU controllers; Afene Obam James, civil servant of the Direction of Forests; the Head of the East forest law enforcement Provincial Brigade, and two members of the Independent Observer technical team.

## 3. RESOURCES USED

- 1 4x4 pick-up truck
- 1 motorbike
- 3 GPS
- 1 video camera
- 2 cameras
- 1 Laptop

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<sup>1</sup> “Control” in the context of this report means “Law Enforcement” or to “check compliance with law”.

## 4. CONSTRAINTS

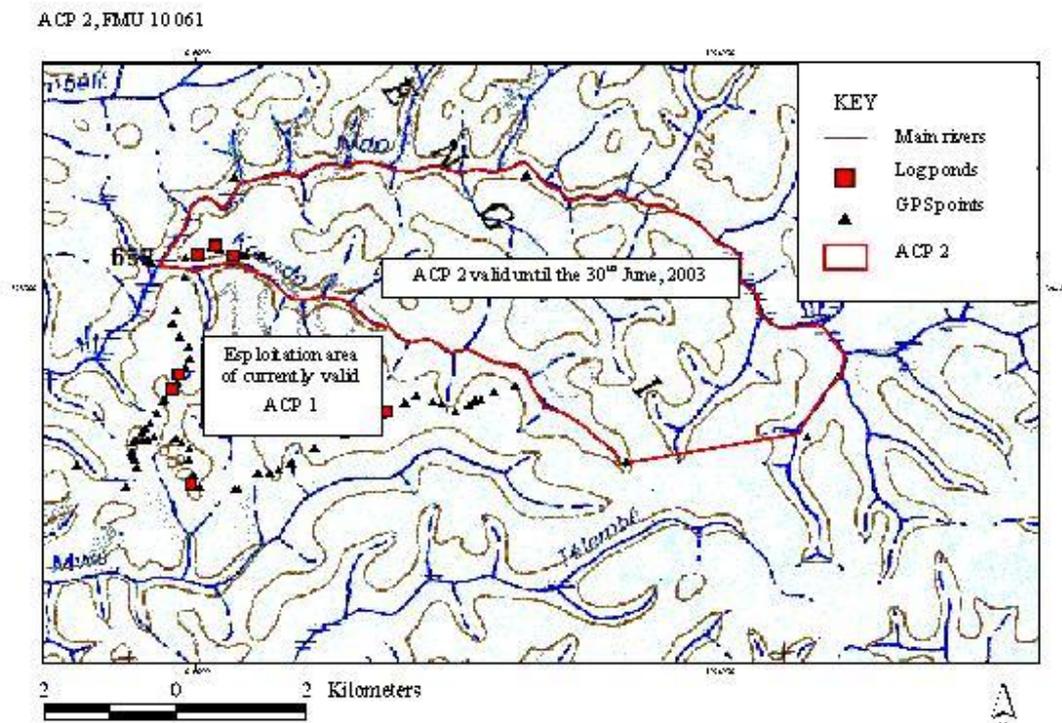
The visual data gathered during this mission are part of the content of the video tape seized by Ingénierie Forestière (see Independent Observer Report No. 055 En). This incident, whose negative impacts on the transparency and good governance within the forestry sector is major, took place just as the Independent Observer had documented large-scale illegal logging carried out by Ingénierie Forestière.

## 5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION

### 5.1 Non-marking with red paint of the limits of ACP No.02 in FMU 10 061

The Independent Observer noticed that the exploitation is carried out within the limits of ACP No.02 allocated to PLACAM for the operating year 2002-2003. The transfer of the limits to a map (scale 1/200,000) and of GPS (Global Positioning System) points also transferred to the same map, confirm this conclusion (see map). However, the limits were opened but not marked with red paint as stipulated in paragraph (3), article 4 of the Order No.222 of the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2001 which establishes the procedures for elaborating, monitoring and controlling the implementation of forest management plans in production forests in the permanent forest estate.

**Map :** exploitation roads of ACP No.02, FMU 10 061



## 5.2 Question in relation to the marking of felled trees stumps

The inspection of exploitation documents allowed the mission to note an irregularity in relation to the register of timber (red *padouk*) which was cut for opening a road. Indeed, the DF 10<sup>2</sup> number found on the stump concerned (415708) did not correspond to the DF 10 number where the *padouk* was registered (415709). Questioned on this issue, PLACAM's Head of exploitation stated that it was an error made when the concerned stump was marked. A verification of nearby the *padouk* stump was carried out by the mission and the hypothesis of the error in marking was kept. In conclusion, the mission recommended the logger to better monitor the exploiting activities.

**Photo 1 :** *padouk* stump marked 415709

**Photo 2 :** DF10 form 415708

*N.B. : These pictures are part of the content of the Independent Observer's video tape seized by Ingénierie Forestière (see Independent Observer report No. 055En) – for this reason, the Independent Observer is not able to show them here as material evidence*

## 5.3 Question in relation to the co-existence of two valid ACPs for the same operating year

PLACAM, as many other companies, currently has two valid ACPs for the ongoing operating year. The first runs until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2003 and the second until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2003. This almost generalized situation is a consequence of MINEF's option to align the forest exploitation operating year with the civil year. MINEF indeed gave the forest companies the option to either wait until the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2004 to request a new ACP or to be granted a valid ACP for six months only. A good number of companies chose the second alternative.

The Independent Observer wonders about the conformity of this practice with the terms of article 40, Decree No.222 of the 25<sup>th</sup> May of 2001, which establishes the procedures for elaborating, monitoring and controlling the implementation of forest management plans in production forests of the permanent estate. This article indeed establishes that an ACP cannot be renewed during the provisional Convention, which PLACAM has not yet completed.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It emerges from this mission that PLACAM did not mark with red paint the limits of one of its ACPs at the time of the verification. An irregularity was also noted in this company's field documents. The CCU qualified these facts as minor and consequently did not establish any official statement.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

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<sup>2</sup> Document detailing volume of wood extracted from the forest for a valid title.

- that, despite being minor, the breaches of the forest legislation observed during this mission should be the subject of a litigation in order to prevent this type of situation from reoccurring in the future;
- that the next missions carried out in FMU 10 061 ensure that PLACAM scrupulously respects the norms of intervention in forests and the stipulations of the 2003 finance law.

**Results of the investigation regarding Paragraph 5.3.**

*In relation to the question of PLACAM's possession of two valid ACPs for the operating year (2002-2003), an analysis made with the members of the Reading Committee brought up the following precision:*

According to the stipulations of article 9 of the 2003 finance law, a forest company can obtain two valid ACPs for the current operating year, the first one running until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2003 and the second one until the 31<sup>st</sup> December of 2003.

It was nevertheless agreed that a logging company cannot open the second ACP until the activity ends in the first ACP and a harvesting inventory is produced for it. In other words, the two ACPs cannot be exploited simultaneously.