



global witness

Cameroon

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

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

Report of the Independent Observer

No. 062En

Central Control Unit – Independent Observer Joint Mission

Title	FMU 09 005b
Location	Mintom Sub-Division, Dja and Lobo Division, South Province
Mission date	23 April 2003
Companies	SOCIB (Holder) SFID (Partner)

Independent Observer Team (Global Witness):

*Mr. Reiner Tegtmeyer, Project Director
Mr. Serge C. Moukouri, Technical Assistant
Mr. Tangyie Che Célestine, Driver*

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Independent Observer (Global Witness) accompanied a team of the Central Control Unit (CCU) on a mission, on 23 April 2003. The mission visited Forest Concession No. 1034 located in Mintom Sub-Division in the Dja and Lobo Division of the South Province.

Forest Concession No. 1034 based on Forest Management Unit (FMU) 09 005b was granted to the company Société Commerciale et Industrielle des Bois (SOBIC) on 20 October 2000. This logging company subcontracts operations of the Annual Standing Volume (ASV) No.03, currently under exploitation, to the company Société Forestière et Industrielle de la Doume (SFID). The provisional agreement on this FMU expires 20 October 2003 (4 months after the completion of this mission).

The company SFID also has a subcontract with the LOREMA logging company, holder of Forest Concession No. 1032 that is contiguous to the above-mentioned title. To facilitate a more efficient exploitation of these two Forest Concessions sub-contracted to her, the SFID logging company has applied for authorisation to open a road to link the two concessions traversing a standing volume within FMU 09 005b, a request which has not yet been granted.

The mission inspection of ASV No.03 revealed that the SOCIB company, via its subcontract with the SFID logging company, has committed several forestry law offences, notably unauthorised logging in a state forest and logging outside the boundaries of ASV No.03. It was also confirmed that this company has opened a road without prior authorisation.

Pursuant to the mission's findings, the CCU was to have filed an official statement of offence naming the SOCIB logging company as offender and the SFID logging company as co-conductor of the unlawful activities. This seems not to have been completed, for only representatives of the SFID logging company were present at the reporting of the offences.

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

- Verification that the official statement of offence established by the CCU named the SOCIB logging company as offender and the SFID logging company as co-offender. Should this not be the case, both companies should be summoned in order to establish an official statement of offence in compliance with the law.

The **Reading Committee** has recommended the CCU summon officials of the SOCIB logging company for the reason of establishing an official statement of offence for logging out of the boundaries of ASV No.03.

2. EQUIPMENT USED

- 1 Toyota Hilux Pick Up
- 1 Digital camera
- 1 Video camera
- 2 GPS
- 1 laptop computer

3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

The mission was made up of Mrs Essono Danièle and Mr Mamene Pierre Marcel, Controllers at the CCU; Mr Afene Obam James, Senior staff at the Department of Forestry; Mr François Issola Dipanda, Head of the Provincial Control Brigade for the South, the Head of Local Forestry Post for Djoum and Messrs Reiner Tegtmeyer and Serge C. Moukouri of the Independent Observer.

4. CONSTRAINTS

The Independent Observer was not involved in the preparation of the various field trips. Its team was informed about the title to be visited only a few hours before the operation. This did not permit appropriate mission preparation by the Independent Observer.

5. MISSION FINDINGS

5.1 Case summary

The company Société Commerciale et Industrielle des Bois (SOCIB) is holder of Forest Concession No. 1034 whose provisional agreement was signed on 20 October 2000. This forest concession covers 44.698 ha and is based in Forest Management Unit (FMU) 09 005b covering 44,698 ha.

The SOCIB logging company sub-contracts operations in the Annual Sales of Volume (ASV) No.03 to the company Société Forestière et Industrielle de la Doume (SFID). The SFID logging company has also been subcontracted by the LOREMA logging company for operations in its Concession No. 1032, contiguous to FMU 09 005b of the SOCIB logging company.

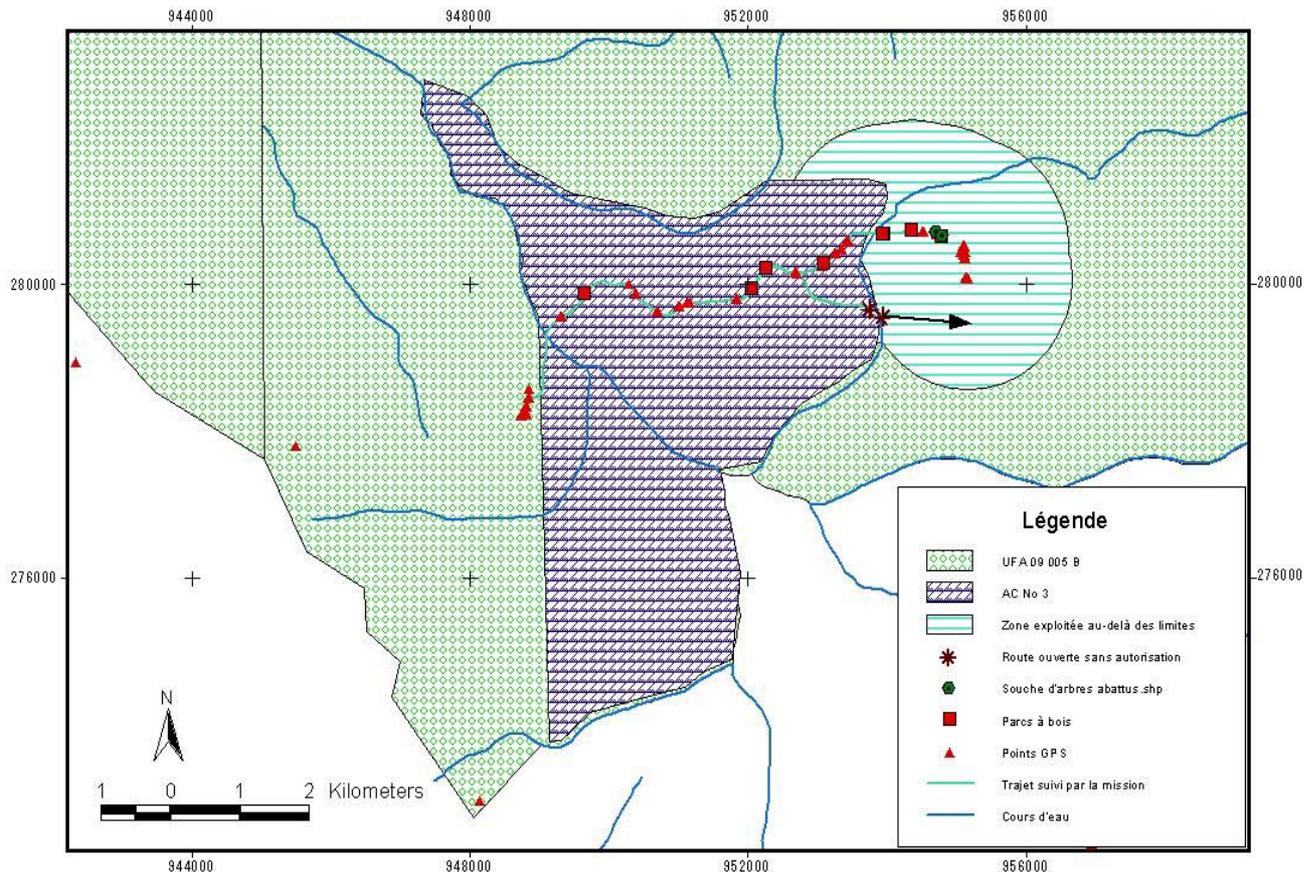
5.2 Mission's observations

a. Logging outside of the boundaries of Operations Permit No. 3 of FMU 09 005b

The mission transposed the sketch of the Standing Volume onto a 1/200,000^e map. Members of the mission then determined the geographic coordinates of this ASV and transferred them into the GPS (Global Positioning System) devices. In addition, the mission took geo-reference (GPS) points along the main road of ASV No.03.

These procedures allowed the mission to detect logging out of boundaries of the standing volume by the SOCIB logging company, as shown on the map and photograph below. This act is punishable under Section 158 of the Law which stipulates penalties of up to three years of imprisonment, in addition to administrative and civil sanctions.

Map: Logging out of boundaries of ASV No.03 of FMU 09 005b



b. Unauthorised logging in a permanent forest and unauthorised opening of a road

As a sub-contractor of the SOCIB and LOREMA logging companies, concessionaires of the two contiguous FMUs, the SFID logging company planned to evacuate timber felled in the concession of the LOREMA company across the concession of the SOCIB logging company. To this end, on 3 April 2003, the SFID logging company requested MINEF to authorize the opening of a road traversing the still-to-be-granted ASV No.01 of the FMU of the SOCIB logging company (see Appendix).

Even before the Minister could examine the application of the SFID logging company, the company opened the said road based upon a memo issued by the Provincial Delegate of the Environment and Forestry for the South and addressed to his collaborators (Divisional Delegation of the Environment and Forestry of Dja and Lobo and the Head of Local Forestry Post for Djoum). The CCU refused to give a copy of the memo to the Independent Observer.

During the opening of the road, the SFID logging company felled trees. Such felling constitutes an act of unauthorised logging in a state forest, an offence addressed in Section 158 of the 1994 Forestry Law.

The opening of a road without authorisation is not addressed by the current laws. However, it can be interpreted as moving within a state forest without authorisation, an offence addressed in Section 154 of the Law.

Photo 2: Log pond out of boundaries of ASV No.03



6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mission's activities concluded that the SOCIB company, through its sub-contractor, the SFID logging company, is guilty of several forestry law offences, notably unauthorised logging in a state forest and logging outside the boundaries of Annual Standing Volume No.03. This logging company is also guilty of opening a road without prior authorisation.

Pursuant to the mission's findings, the CCU was to have filed an official statement of offence naming the SOCIB logging company as offender and the SFID logging company as co-conductor of the unlawful activities. This seems not to have been completed, for only representatives of the SFID logging company were present at the reporting of the offences.

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APPENDICES



SFID S.A.

Société Forestière et Industrielle de la Doumé

jeudi 3 avril 2003

Objet : ouverture
de route

A Monsieur **TANYI-MBIANYOR C.O**
Ministre de l'environnement et des forêts.

03 AVRIL 2003

Yaoundé.

Excellence,

Nous avons l'honneur de solliciter de votre haute bienveillance l'autorisation d'une ouverture de route pour traverser l'assiette n° 1 de SOCIB dont le dossier de demande de certificat est en cours d'élaboration pour être déposé au mois de Mai 2003 dans vos services. Cette route est indispensable pour l'évacuation du bois que nous allons exploiter dans l'assiette de coupe n° 4 de LOREMA, dont la demande est déjà déposée dans vos services, et dont nous attendons le certificat d'assiette de coupe. Comme vous pourrez le constater sur le document joint, la route est déjà existante sur les 65 kilomètres reliant la route de DJOUM-MINTOM à l'assiette n° 1 de SOCIB. L'autre assiette de SOCIB, traversée par la route a déjà été exploitée l'an passé et la route à l'intérieure de celle-ci est déjà existante. Le Tronçon dont nous sollicitons l'ouverture fait 8 kilomètres et se trouve situé entre les points D et B sur la carte jointe.

Nous précisons que les Sociétés SOCIB et LOREMA sont en partenariat avec nous.

En vous remerciant par avance de la bienveillante attention que vous accorderez à notre demande, Dans cette attente,

Veuillez agréer Excellence, l'expression de notre parfaite considération

P. JEAN

DÉCHARGE COURRIER

A Nous retourner signé et daté.