

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

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

Report of the Independent Observer

No. 094En

Central Control Unit – Independent Observer Joint Mission

Title	FMU 10 005
Location	Yokadouma Sub-Division Boumba and Ngoko Division, East Province
Mission date	10 May 2004
Company	SFIW (Title Holder)

Independent Observer Team (Global Witness):

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. RESOURCES USED	2
3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION	2
4. CONSTRAINTS	2
5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION	2
5.1 Non-marking of a log and stump observed by the Independent Observer	2
5.2 Hiring of IngF equipment by SFIW	2
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	3

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Control Unit (CCU), accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness), carried out a mission to the Forest Management Unit (FMU) 10 022 on 10 May 2004. The mission was part of a routine control programme started 6 May 2004. Located in the Yokadouma Sub-Division, Boumba and Ngoko Division, East Province, FMU 10 022 is only accessible via Messok in the Lomie Sub-Division, Haut Nyong Division. Initially, documented as covering an area of 48,864 ha, the final surface area declared in the draft classification decree of this FMU was reduced to 35,090 ha.

The objectives of this mission were to:

1. Control and evaluate logging activities;
2. Observe and investigate forest activities, and instigate legal proceedings if fraudulent logging activities were discovered.

The company Société Forestière et Industrielle du Wouri (SFIW) is the beneficiary of FMU 10 022 as declared in the Provisional Convention signed with the Ministry of the Environment and Forests (MINEF) on 16 November 2000. SFIW is conducting logging activities within the Annual Standing Volume (ASV) No.06 during the 2004 fiscal year. According to the Operations Manager, SFIW signed an equipment rental contract with the company Ingénierie Forestière (IngF), beneficiary of FMU 10 020, which borders FMU 10 022.

The Independent Observer made the following observations in relation to logging operations within ASV No.06:

- o The companies SFIW and IngF employ the same Foreman and utilize the same site as a base camp and office;
- o SFIW and IngF appear to justify their collaboration as an equipment rental arrangement
- o A *sapelli* log bearing no mark and the corresponding stump were found in the operation site.

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

- o The summoning of officials of the companies IngF and SFIW to produce contracts addressing their technical, industrial and equipment rental partnership;
- o The opening of a litigation if irregularities are discovered;
- o The summoning and sanctioning of officials of SFIW for the non-marking of a log and its corresponding stump.

2. RESOURCES USED

- 1 Toyota Land Cruiser
- 2 Garmin GPS
- 1 Sony laptop

3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

The mission was composed of Mrs. ESSONO and Mrs. NDZANA as well as Mr. NECKMEN of the CCU, Mr. BIKIE of the IT Unit of MINEF, and Messrs DJEUKAM and MOUKOURI of the Independent Observer. The representative of the Divisional Delegate for the Environment and Forests (DDEF) of Haut Nyong and the Head of the Local Forestry Post of Messok joined the mission.

4. CONSTRAINTS

The Independent Observer could not keep an appointment made with the company's Foreman the day following the site inspection because the CCU refused to return to the site. The Independent Observer had intended to carry out investigations relating to an unmarked log abandoned on the site at geographical coordinates N3.00609, E14.67146.

5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION

5.1 Non-marking of a log and stump observed by the Independent Observer

On the logging site, the Independent Observer found the abandoned log of a felled *sapelli* lying not far from its stump at geographical coordinates N2.99668; E14.67074. Both bore no official logging site markings.

In an attempt to justify the failure to mark the log and stump, the SFIW Foreman claimed that the *sapelli* concerned could neither be transported nor marked because it was felled towards the end of the workday. The CCU did not establish an official statement of offence relating to this violation of timber extraction regulations.

5.2 Hiring of IngF equipment by SFIW

From the information volunteered by the Foreman, the mission gathered that SFIW possesses no logging equipment. SFIW hires the equipment from the company Ingénierie Forestière (IngF). Several pieces of field evidence indicate that the two companies collaborate in other areas in addition to equipment rental in order to execute logging operations in FMU 10 022. For example, the two companies use the same site for their base camps and offices. The Interim Operations Manager of IngF claims to supervise two camps designated as camps I and II, in reference to the Annual Standing Volume No.23 and No.06 of FMU 10 020 and 10 022, respectively.

The logging company officials the control team met in the field refused the request of the Independent Observer to present a copy of the equipment rental contract.

These observations and incidents led the Independent Observer to question the nature of the relationship between the two companies. If the equipment rental contract exists, it could suggest active participation on the part of the equipment provider in the logging activities of the leasee.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the provisions outlined in Cameroonian Forestry Law, the company SFW has committed an offence by not marking logs and stumps, a violation punishable under Article 65 of the 1994 Law.

The Independent Observer recommends:

- o The summoning of officials of the companies IngF and SFIW to produce contracts addressing their technical, industrial and equipment rental partnership;
- o The opening of a litigation if irregularities are discovered;
- o The summoning and sanctioning of officials of SFIW for the non-marking of a log and its corresponding stump.