Training Guide on Independent Observation (IO)

Guide de formation sur l’Observation Indépendante (OI)

Guide for Independent Observation (OI) Training

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4 Presentation of Independent Observation i. What is Independent Observation? Independent Observation (OI) is defined as the set of activities for monitoring the management of natural resources and the environment conducted by third parties. ii. What is its objective? The objective of OI is to ensure better compliance with standards in order to contribute to: Improving governance; Preserving natural resources and the environment; Protecting social rights; Increasing and better distributing income. Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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5 iii. What are the different types of Observations? There are two main types of Independent Observation: Mandated Independent Observation and External or non-mandated Independent Observation. a) External Independent Observation (OIE) External Independent Observation refers to the monitoring of logging activities by organizations or individuals who do not have an official contract with the State. The main constraint of this form of independent observation is that access to activity sites and information is not guaranteed in most cases. b) Mandated Independent Observation (OIM) It is defined as the monitoring of logging activities by an organization that has an official contract with the State. OIM allows for both monitoring compliance and ensuring adherence to applicable laws in a previously defined sector. In other words, it allows for observing how the administration ensures the application of the law, as well as how other actors comply with the provisions of the legislation. iv. What should be observed? In the specific case of External Independent Observation, regardless of the type of exploitation (logging concession, community forest, cutting authorization, etc.), anyone can monitor the following cases:

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6 a) For logging concessions: If the stumps of the logged trees are marked: forestry hammer, forestry number, or tree number; Unmarked stump. If the logs are marked: forestry hammer

(initials of the operator or permit holder), forestry number or tree number, section number, type of permit: CFAD (Sustainable Management Logging Concession) or CPAET for Provisional Convention for Management-Exploitation-Transformation), annual cutting area; FDG: Operator CPAET: Type of permit (Provisional Convention for Supply Exploitation Transformation) AAC: Annual cutting area 2014: Year of exploitation 782: Forestry number 1: Log no. 1 of 782; Marked log. Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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7 If the company's employees practice hunting or if the company's vehicles transport game; If the company cuts wood less than 50 meters from a watercourse; If the company has not evacuated logged wood for more than 6 months; If the company has not evacuated logged wood for more than 6 months; Logged wood for more than 6 months (Abandoned wood) If the company has cut prohibited woods: Kevazingo, Moabi, Andock, Douka, Afo; If the company cuts wood in the same annual cutting area for more than 3 years; Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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8 If the company operates 2 annual cutting areas at the same time; If the company has not closed old roads after its exploitation; If the logging company or employees clean machines or handle lubricants or fuels less than 60 meters from watercourses; If the logging company cuts wood within the limits of its permit; If the operator buries stumps or logs in the forest; If the operator has signed contractual specifications with the villages impacted by its permit; If the operator complies with the contractual specifications: supply of the Local Development Fund (FDL), funding of projects validated by the Project Management and Monitoring Committee (CGSP), implementation of projects; If the operator respects the customary usage rights of the communities; If the logging company does not obstruct water bodies during exploitation (rivers, swamps, rivers, lakes, streams...);

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9 If the operator has not built a bridge to evacuate its wood; If the operator has planned agricultural series for the communities... b) For community forests: Check if the association has a receipt; Check if the association has a definitive management agreement; Check if the operator has a lease contract, in the case where the community forest is exploited by a logging company; Check if the operator pays the logging tax: payment order from the Water and Forests administration, receipt from the public treasury; If the community forest is exploited by the community itself (managed exploitation), check if it has a supply contract with a processing unit (sawmill); Check if the operator complies with the Simple Management Plan (PSG): order of passage of the five-year blocks defined by the communities, low-impact exploitation...; Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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10 Check if the operator has marked the cut wood: number of the felled tree, section number, type of permit (FC for community forests), five-year block, operator's hammer; c) For authorizations: special cutting authorization (ASC) and long wood cutting authorization (ACBSL): Check that the authorization has not been transferred to another person; Check that the interested party has the title in question and that the indicated period does not exceed 2 months; Check that significant volumes of wood are not being cut: a maximum of 5 trees for the special cutting authorization and 15 trees for the long wood cutting authorization; Check that the interested party only cuts trees previously identified and marked by the Water and Forests services; Check that the interested party does not deliver the wood to a buyer; v. What to do in

case of an infraction? When faced with an infraction, the observer can use 3 means to raise an alert to verify the incriminated fact: Telephone call: The observer can directly contact an NGO; Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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11 Indirect denunciation: Here, it involves contacting an NGO through a letter: the letter of suspicion; Direct denunciation: This involves the observer directly contacting the local Water and Forests service to report facts. This denunciation letter must be accompanied by an observation report in which the observer will take care to cite the observed facts with verification elements, such as GPS coordinates. Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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12 vi. Some examples of letters - Letter of suspicion (example)- village name, date a Mr. Executive Secretary of Brainforest -Libreville- Subject: Suspected illegal logging activity Mr. Executive Secretary, We, the community of the village (village name), have the honor to come to your benevolence to inform you of our suspicion of illegal logging activity conducted by the company (company name), which exploits the forest near our village. Indeed, we have noticed that since the twenty-sixth (26) of April, logging trucks loaded with logs have been leaving our forest around two (2) o'clock in the morning. This very concerning situation leads us to request a verification mission for the aforementioned facts. We are grateful for your interest in the strict respect of the forestry code in Gabon, as well as the preservation of our forest heritage. We remain at your disposal for any additional information you may deem necessary. Please accept, Mr. Executive Secretary, the expression of our deep respect. for the community The village chief Mr. (name) Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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13 - Letter of denunciation (example) - village name, date a Mr. Head of the Departmental Service of Water and Forests – Fougamou – Subject: Denunciation of illegal logging activity Mr. Head of the Departmental Service, We, the community of the village (village name), have the honor to come to your benevolence to denounce the illegal logging activity conducted by the company (company name), whose logging activities are taking place near our village territory. Indeed, we have observed the felling of several monumental trees, as presented in our attached observation report. Knowing the importance you attach to compliance with forestry legislation and the preservation of the environment, we felt it necessary to inform you. We remain at your disposal for any additional information you may deem necessary. Please accept, Mr. Head of the Departmental Service, the expression of our deep respect. for the community The village chief Mr. (name) attachments: - Observation report Copies to: - Departmental Council of Tsamba Magotsi - Prefecture of Fougamou - Brainforest Independent Observation Training Guide. Updated: July 2019

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14 - Observation Report (example) - Illegal logging activity Village: Date: Incriminated domain(s): Technical standards; Customary usage rights; Social; Workers' rights; Environment; Administrative procedures; Wildlife and hunting Company / Person incriminated: Company name BP 111 Fougamou Name and number of the person Contact Permit: CFAD Fougamou Details of the observation • Three (3) stumps of Kevazingo measuring more than two (2) meters in diameter. The bases of the trees exceed more than two (2) times my wingspan. I measure 1.76m • Crossing of a river to extract Kevazingo logs. The operator filled the river with soil to extract the wood. The river has not been reopened after the wood extraction. • GPS coordinates of the river filling and the Kevazingo stumps (recorded with my smartphone) River crossing: E

12° 09′ 33″ – N 00° 59′ 32″ Kevazingo 1: E 12° 10′ 34″ – N 00° 59′ 34″ Kevazingo 2: E 12° 10′ 34″ – N 00° 59′ 35″ Kevazingo 3: E 12° 11′ 35″ – N 00° 59′ 35″ The observer Name (Contact)

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