

Terms of Reference
Evaluation of the WWF NL funded Souanke Panhandle Conservation Program

Donor: WWF-Netherlands (NL)
ToRs by: Pauwel De Wachter
Date: 12 Oct. 15

1 Project background

Project Location	Republic of Congo, TRIDOM Congo Interzone, TRIDOM tri-national Landscape, Western Congo Basin Moist Forest Eco-region
Project Name	Souanke Panhandle Conservation Program
Project reference number	9F079607
Project Budget	WWF NL: €700,000 [April 2013 – July 2016] Total program co-funding raised from other donors for the period [FY14-FY16] is approximately €1,100,000
Donors/funding sources	Beside WWF NL, for [FY14 – FY16]: USFWS (\$725,000 or ≈ €580,000), EU TRIDOM (€117,272), CARPE/USAID (45,000€), Adelle Foundation (€62,500), UNOPS TRIDOM (88,414 €) and WWF Germany/BMZ (Bengo) €73,000.
Project Duration	April 2013 → July 2016 But note that this was preceded by a 1 st phase of NL funding covering January 2010 → March 2013
Implementing agency and partners	Implementing agency : WWF ROA/Yaounde Hub Main implementing partner: the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (RoC) & Congolese Agency for Protected Area's and Wildlife Other partners: CoForSet (CIRAD/Biotope), Congo Iron, WRI, APN, WCS, WWF Cameroon, ANPN, logging companies.
Project Manager	In the Netherlands: Jaap van der Waarde In Central Africa: Pauwel De Wachter

The Souanke Panhandle Conservation program is focussing on the “Espace TRIDOM Interzone Congo” (ETIC), located in between Odzala National Park (RoC), Nki NP (Cameroon) and Minkebe NP (Gabon). This 21,000 km² is almost completely forested, and thinly inhabited (≈ 1 inh/km²). The project area is of importance to WWF for two main reasons: (i) it is rich in high quality forest and wildlife (including elephants and great apes) and it is seriously threatened, and (ii) it is strategically wedged in between Odzala NP, Minkebe and other wilderness areas in Gabon, and Nki NP. This means that the conservation outcome in ETIC impacts also conservation in the wider TRIDOM landscape.

Thinly inhabited and until recently relatively inaccessible, the Souanke Panhandle is a wildlife rich area, though little information on wildlife populations was initially available. The area still has a large wildlife population as shown by recent WWF surveys: more than 10,000 great apes and a significant elephant population (in the range of 2000-4000 elephants). In particular elephants are declining and victim of intense ivory poaching in the heart of the Tridom (and driven by ivory prices that increased 10 fold over the last decennium).

In 2005, and *despite the fact that we do not have a country office in RoC*, WWF agreed to start conservation activities there, as a cross-border extension of our work in Gabon and within the context of development of the TRIDOM landscape program. A specific agreement for ETIC was signed with the RoC Government in August 2005 and (as we are writing these tor's) is currently being renewed. Work started with reconnaissance surveys in ETIC and critical support to the Odzala NP (which had a funding crisis). As from February 2008 the Sembe ETIC HQ were set up and a permanent team was build up on the ground. WWF

NL started providing funding as from January 2010 with a first phase covering (Jan. 2010- March 2013) and a second phase covering (April 2013- June 2016).

The area is composed of two logging concessions (Jua Ikié FMU (5740 km²) (timber company: SEFYD), and Tala Tala FMU (6211 km²) (timber company: SIFCO), and a large interzone forest (Djoua Ivindo (9432 km²) that is currently not attributed to a logging company. However, the Ministry of Forest Economy has created in 2104 the 6553 km² Karagoua FMU and launched a tender process for interested logging companies. The attribution process was suspended end of 2014, however this suspension is seen as temporary and attribution is still expected (and might include some conditions linked to large mammal corridors). In the Djoua Ivindo forest are also located three iron ore permits (Nabeba exploitation permit owned by Sundance Resources (Congo Iron); Avima exploitation permit owned by Core Mining; Badondo exploration permit owned by Equatorial Resources (Congo Mining)). The iron ore projects are currently on hold, hit hard by the fall of iron ore prices. The Sundance / Congo Iron is the most advanced (ready for development but lacking funding). Road infrastructure in the panhandle has tremendously improved since the end of 2011 (when the area was difficult to access), with in particular the improvement and partial paving of the Trans-Tridom highway (Sangmelima Ouessou) as well as the paving of the Ouessou Brazzaville road. Another large scale infrastructure project looming on the horizon is the proposed 600 MW Chollet hydrodam project. This project has not yet begun but, in particular because of its location in a remote pristine site rich in large mammals will have tremendous impact on key biodiversity values.

The project has engaged with these complex challenges through (i) supporting and building anti-poaching and law enforcement capacity; (ii) influencing private sector engagement, infrastructure plans and land use planning, (iii) promoting protected area creation (Messok Dja), (iv) monitoring wildlife populations to be able to document the significance of the area, (v) working on a Chollet dam strategy, and (v) participating in various stakeholder forums on (TRIDOM wide and northern Congo) landscape scale collaboration.

***The project/ program goal is:** By 2020, elephant and great ape populations in the Souanke Panhandle are understood and actively monitored and their effective conservation is enhanced through protected area creation, zoning, effective law enforcement and the involvement and significant contribution of mining, logging and infrastructure companies.*

The specific objectives are:

- Objective 1: Capacity for effective wildlife surveillance is considerably increased in the Souanke Panhandle through collaboration with the logging and mining companies
- Objective 2: The law against wildlife criminals is effectively applied through Congo's judicial system
- Objective 3: Protected Areas are created and key areas for great ape conservation in the Souanke Panhandle are proposed for protection through a zoning plan for the Djoua Ivindo Forest
- Objective 4: Commercial bushmeat hunting is minimized in the Souanke Panhandle

WWF NL support

WWF NL provided a first grant for the WWF Souanke Panhandle Conservation Program for January 2010-March 2013 (€600,000) followed by a second grant for April 2013- June 2016 (€700,000). WWF NL has also carried out regular field missions to the site. This support comes in addition to WWF NL support to TRIDOM Cameroon (€300,000/year) and TRIDOM Gabon (€100,000/Y), and to APN/Odzala NP (approx. €200,000/Y). The Souanke grant is thus a component in a wider WWF NL support strategy to conservation of the TRIDOM landscape.

2 Evaluation Purpose and Use, Objectives and Scope

The primary client of the evaluation is WWF Netherlands, who formally requested the evaluation (as the program funding is higher than €500,000 threshold). The timing of the evaluation is *triggered* by the coming end of the current phase of WWF NL funding (June 2016).

WWF NL has agreed “in principle” to a new 3Y phase of funding, and a proposal will be developed in February-May 2016.

In general the evaluation should have the following purposes:

- 1) An evaluation of what has been achieved and what not in the Souanke Panhandle Conservation program so far (and WWF’s role in this) and what lessons can be learnt
- 2) The drafting of recommendations for a new WWF NL funded phase of the program that will continue to focus on conservation of the TRIDOM Congo Interzone, as a critical component of a wider TRIDOM conservation program.
- 3) An analysis of the ETIC agreement (WWF-MEFDD): a good model of co-management? Replicable? Suitability to deliver conservation impact over the long term?

Other users of the evaluation include:

- 1) WWF US / USFWS, as an equally important donor;
- 2) The EU (as a co-funder of the program and a strategic player).
- 3) The Ministry of Forest Economy and the PA agency of RoC, as the main implementing partner.
- 4) WWF Gabon (as the managing office)
- 5) WWF ROA (to guide also its RoC strategy)
- 6) UNDP - as we are possible implementing partner in next phase of GEF funding.

Individuals who have commissioned the evaluation:	Gunilla Kuperus & Jaap van der Waarde, WWF NL
Those responsible for the oversight of the evaluation:	Pauwel De Wachter, WWF TRIDOM Coordinator, WWF GHOA/Gabon
Those responsible to act on the results, including the writing of a management response:	- Marc Languy, Deputy Director ROA in charge of Central African Offices - Pauwel De Wachter
Secondary audiences that benefit from learning generated by the evaluation:	WWF US, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ministry of Forest Economy (RoC) & ACFAP
Dissemination of results:	WWF Gabon, WWF ROA, WWF NL, WWF US, US Fish & Wildlife Service, UNDP
Scope: Period of project implementation: Geographical scope Funders:	April 2013- June 2016 project implementation period Espace TRIDOM Congo Interzone Multiple donor program level (WWF NL, UNDP, USFWS, EU) (multiple projects)

3 Evaluation Criteria and Guiding Questions

It will be necessary to evaluate the extent to which activities conducted between April 2013 up to date were able to make progress towards the project goal and the project objectives. The evaluation should adhere to the following criteria:

The evaluator will use the WWF Evaluation Guidance for report structure and performance rating.

3.1 Relevance and Quality of Design

“A measure of the extent to which the conservation programme design represents a necessary, sufficient, appropriate, and well- founded approach to bring about positive changes in targeted issues (e.g. species, ecosystems, ecological processes)”

Assess the quality of design and the relevance of decisions and plans with regard to the following factors:

- Appropriateness of the project with respect to the challenges confronting the governmental administrations legally responsible for the sustainable management of natural resources in the ETIC area taking into account the current capacities and limitations for these administrations,
- Appropriateness of the project with respect to the halting of unsustainable harvesting of wildlife in the ETIC zone
- Coherence and/or complementarity of the project with respect to other initiatives, such as the ongoing conservation efforts in Odzala, Nki and Minkebe, the planned development of iron ore mines, logging concessions, the Chollet dam, the TransTridom road.

3.2 Efficiency

A measure of the relationship between outputs—the products or services of the intervention—and inputs—the human and financial resources the intervention uses.

- Appropriateness of the resources (both material and human) used for the programme ;
- An analysis of whether certain costs could be reduced without threatening the programmes key objectives and goals?
- An analysis of the results achieved in relation to the duration of the project.
- Analysis in how far the project has been successful in raising other funding for the program

3.3 Effectiveness

A measure of the extent- to which the intervention’s intended outcomes — its specific objectives or intermediate results — have been achieved.

- What has and has not been achieved (both intended and non-intended).
- The project’s contribution to regional objectives (e.g. Green Heart of Africa, TRIDOM conservation);
- Identification of possible external factors that may have impeded successful management of the project and achievement of objectives, including working relationships with partners;
- Quality of the monitoring during implementation (including large mammal monitoring, law enforcement monitoring).
- Evaluation of the ETIC agreement as it has operated and as it is currently proposed (new agreement). Will this legal framework be sufficient for delivering durable conservation impact in the future, taking into account major challenges (hydro, mining, poaching) and government commitment? Is it a good model to operate in a site such as ETIC?
- If funding were to be added to the program, what would be the priority?

3.4 Impact

A measure of all significant effects of the conservation intervention, positive or negative, expected or unforeseen, on targeted biodiversity and/or footprint issues.

- Analysis of the project’s contribution to the protection of elephants and great apes;
- Analysis of the project’s impact on the application of wildlife law in northern Congo;

- Analysis of the project's perceived impact on the capacity of the Ministry of Forest Economy & Congolese Agency for wildlife and protected areas to engage in wildlife conservation;
- Analysis of the project's contribution to the delivery of the UNDP GEF TRIDOM project;
- Analysis of the project's impact on the involvement of private sector in the sustainable management of natural resources;
- Analysis of secondary/unintended impacts of the project – both negative and positive;
- How might the project increase its impact and what would be associated human and financial capacity needs?

3.5 Sustainability

A measure of whether the benefits of a conservation intervention are likely to continue after external support has ended.

- Does the programme have the right measures in place to ensure our conservation work is sustainable?
- What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of program outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?
- Based upon existing plans and observations made during the evaluation, what are the key strategic options for the future of the project/programme (e.g. exit, scale down, replicate, scale-up, continue business-as-usual, major changes to approach)?

3.6 Adaptive Capacity

A measure of the extent to which the project or programme applies strong adaptive management practice to ensure continued relevance, strong performance, and learning.

- Did the team examine good practice lessons from other conservation/ development experiences (ex. Infrastructure or mining projects) and consider these experiences in the project/programme design?

4 Methodology Considerations

4.1 Qualifications of Evaluator

The Evaluator should be bilingual (English/French) in order to be able to evaluate all of the texts and reports, as well as to communicate with WWF staff and relevant stakeholders/partners of the project. The evaluator should also have proven experience with the evaluation of conservation projects implemented by non-governmental organisations, as well as familiarity with the issues surrounding wildlife conservation, PA management, and fight against wildlife crime. Central African experience would be much appreciated but is not obligatory.

4.2 WWF Support.

Pauwel De Wachter will consolidate the necessary information (documents) for the evaluation. Additional information (example SMART reports) will be provided by Cedric Sepulcre and Victor Mbolo. Cedric will be responsible for planning meetings in BZV and logistical arrangements to get to Ouessou. Victor Mbolo will be responsible for logistical arrangements in Ouessou & ETIC zone.

4.3 Proposed Evaluation timeline

Activity	Target Date (Duration)
Selection of Evaluator	Before November 15
Start date	January 10, 2016
Review of WWF materials provided	(1.5 days)
- Interviews with WWF management (phone/skype)	(0.5 days)
Visit to RoC and the TRIDOM Congo interzone	15 January 2016 (10 days)
Debriefing meeting with management	(1 day)
Preparation of draft report	(3 days)
Submission of Draft report to WWF	February 15, 2016
(allow 5 days for comments by WWF ROA and WWF NL)	
Preparation of final report	(1 day) February 22, 2016
Total number of professional days	17 days

The following indicative 10-day itinerary would allow the evaluator to visit the project site as well as to conduct in-depth discussions with the project manager, field staff, partners and stakeholders.

Location	Activity	Days									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Travel to BZV	<i>Arrival in RoC (evening probably)</i>										
Brazzaville	Interviews with WWF staff and in depth presentation and discussion on the program (program manager, conservation advisor). Visit Government Partners and other partners (Congo Iron, WCS, APN) and donor agencies.										
Brazzaville – Ouessou	Flight to Ouessou. Discussion with northern Congo landscape partners (if present in Ouessou) and continuation to Sembe.										
Sembe	Presentation by full project team followed by questions and one to ones.										
Messok Dja & Chollet	Field site visit to the Messok Dja / Chollet site (anti-poaching patrol, visit of clearings and appreciation of natural values) accompanied by ETIC team (2 nights camping)										
Souanke / Kaboss	Visit to authorities & SEFYD concession.										
Sembe-Ouessou-BZV	Return to BZV, other meetings in BZV										
BZV	Last meetings with staff/ govt officials/ partners in BZV & debriefing with project team. Return at night.										

4.4 Preparation and organisation of Evaluation

The following should be required pre-reading material for the evaluator:

- Project Description (appendix 1);
- Technical and Financial reports for FY13, FY14, FY15, and mid-term FY16 (if already available)
- Report of the last on-site evaluation of the project (2012).
- Other technical reports (ETIC technical reports, large mammal inventory report, Messok Dja reports, and strategic documents (Chollet paper, Karagoua advocacy docs, ETIC law enforcement strategies, wildlife management plans, USFWS proposal, EU TRIDOM proposal, key powerpoints used for advocacy).

The evaluator will conduct a preparatory briefing meeting by phone/skype with relevant WWF Netherlands staff charged with overseeing the Souanke project prior to his/her site visit to RoC.

The evaluation will be based in great part on interviews and discussions with the following individuals and organisations including:

- WWF staff responsible for the management and implementation of the project both in the Netherlands and Central Africa (Jaap van der Waarde, Pauwel De Wachter)
- Key WWF network staff (IWT Coordinator, GHOA leader, Bio-monitoring coordinator)
- ETIC technical team (Technical assistant, Government Coordinator, Conservation advisor, survey coordinator, legal expert, logistical and financial assistant).
- WWF partners in government administrations, including the Ministry of Forest Economy, the Congolese Agency for Protected Areas and Wildlife and the Ministry of Energy.
- Private sector players (Congo Iron, SEFYD and/or SIFCO);
- Other conservation NGO's active in Congo (APN, WCS, PALF)

Depending on availability, some of these meetings could take place by skype or telephone.

At the end of the site visit, and before taking off a feedback meeting in Brazzaville will take place with the program manager responsible for implementation and monitoring of the project. A debriefing meeting with WWF Netherlands staff (with skype) will be scheduled following the site visit. A first draft of the evaluation report should be submitted no longer than two weeks following the site visit.

4.5 Financial Terms

The costs of an international flight will be covered by the project. All domestic travel within Congo will also be arranged and paid for by the project transport, hotel, food (based on WWF per diem rates)). An honorarium will be offered based on the estimated number of days of work. Visa cost will be reimbursed based on real cost.

4.6 Deliverables

1. Draft and Final Reports, 25 pages (maximum), with clear, tangible recommendations for the next phase conform chapter 6.1.
2. Feedback session on First Draft Report with WWF management

5 Expression of Interest

All candidates interested in conducting this evaluation on a consultant basis should submit, no later than **November 30, 2015** a detailed technical proposal including:

- A curriculum vitae detailing his/her experience in project evaluation and NGO led conservation project implementation in Africa;

- The proposed evaluation plan (description of approach, suggestions for interview questions, timeline and time allocation, etc.) and comments on the Terms of Reference;
- A proposed date for the site visit in Congo
- The length of time the proposal will be valid.
- A detailed budget proposal which takes into account the financial conditions specified in these ToR and specifies the honorarium (daily rate) as well as any other costs.

The estimated end date of the study will be February 22, 2016.

All applications should be sent to recruit-roaydehub@wwfafrica.org and CC to pdewachter@wwfgab.org with reference “Souanke Evaluation”

6 Report template and ratings table

To support more systematic recording of evaluation findings to advance WWF's broader organisational learning, all evaluators should follow, to the extent possible, the evaluation report structure below and complete the following table (Part B), to be attached to the evaluation report.

6.1 Report Table of Contents Template

The following provides a basic outline for an evaluation report. While this should be easily applied to evaluations of simpler projects or programmes, adaptation will be needed to ensure reports of more complex programmes (e.g. Country Offices, multi-country regions, eco-regions, Network Initiatives) are well organised, easy to read and navigate, and not too lengthy.

Title Page

- ♦ Report title, project or programme title, and contract number (if appropriate), Date of report, Authors and their affiliation, Locator map (if appropriate)

Executive Summary (*between 2 to 4 pages*)

- ♦ Principal findings and recommendations, organised by the six core evaluation criteria
- ♦ Summary of lessons learned

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Body of the report (no more than 25 pages)

- A. Introduction (max 3 pages)
 - Concise presentation of the project/programme characteristics
 - Purpose, objectives, and intended use of the evaluation (reference and attach the ToR as an annex)
 - Evaluation methodology and rationale for approach (reference and attach as annexes the mission itinerary; names of key informants; a list of consulted documents; and any synthesis tables containing project/programme information used in the exercise)
 - Composition of the evaluation team, including any specific roles of team members
- B. Project/Programme Overview (max 5 pages)
 - Concise summary of the project or programme's history, evolution, purpose, objectives, and strategies to achieve conservation goals (attach theory of change including conceptual model, results chain or logical framework and project monitoring system as annexes)
 - Essential characteristics: context, underlying rationale, stakeholders and beneficiaries
 - Summarise WWF's main interest in this project or programme
- C. Evaluation Findings (3-5 pages)
 - Findings organised by each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale.
 - Tables, graphics, and other figures to help convey key findings
- D. Recommendations (3-5pages)
 - Recommendation organised each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale – recommendations should be specific, actionable and numbered.
 - Project/programme performance rating tables to provide a quick summary of performance and to facilitate comparison with other projects/programmes (see the Summary Table Part B, below).
- E. Overall Lessons Learned (max 3 pages)
 - Lessons learned regarding what worked, what didn't work, and why
 - Lessons learned with wider relevance, that can be generalised beyond the project
- F. Conclusions
 - General summation of key findings and recommendations

Annexes

- ♦ Terms of Reference
- ♦ Evaluation methodology detail
- ♦ Itinerary with key informants
- ♦ Documents consulted
- ♦ Project/programme theory of change/ logical framework/ conceptual model/ list of primary goals and objectives
- ♦ Specific project/programme and monitoring data, as appropriate
- ♦ Summary tables of progress towards outputs, objectives, and goals
- ♦ Maps
- ♦ Recommendations summary table

6.2 Evaluation Summary Table – scoring against core evaluation criteria

Evaluators are to assign the project/programme a Rating and Score for each criterion as follows:

- Very Good/4: The project/programme embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *very good* extent.
- Good/3: The project/programme embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *good* extent.
- Fair/2: The project/programme embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *fair* extent.
- Poor/1: The project/programme embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *poor* extent.
- N/A: The criterion was *not assessed* (in the 'Justification,' explain why).
- D/I: The criterion was considered but *data were insufficient* to assign a rating or score (in the 'Justification,' elaborate).

Evaluators are also to provide a brief justification for the rating and score assigned. Identify most notable strengths to build upon as well as highest priority issues or obstacles to overcome. Note that this table should not be a comprehensive summary of findings and recommendations, but an overview only. A more comprehensive presentation should be captured in the evaluation report and the management response document. Even if the report itself contains sensitive information, the table should be completed in a manner that can be readily shared with any internal WWF audience.

Rating/Score	Description of Strong Performance	Evaluator Rating/ Score	Evaluator Brief Justification
Relevance	The project/programme addresses the necessary factors in the specific programme context to bring about positive changes in conservation targets – biodiversity and/or footprint issues (i.e. species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services supporting human wellbeing).		
Quality of Design	1. The project/programme has rigorously applied key design tools (e.g. the WWF PPMS).		
	2. The project/programme is hitting the right 'pressure points' to meet necessary and sufficient conditions for success		
Efficiency	1. Most/all programme activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources and with strong value for money.		
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.		
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outcomes—stated objectives/intermediate results regarding key threats and other factors affecting project/programme targets—were attained.		
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or programme		
Impact	1. Most/all goals—stated desired changes in the status of species, ecosystems, and ecological processes—were realised.		
	2. Evidence indicates that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or programme.		
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of results/impacts are being or have been established.		
	2. Scaling up mechanisms have been put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed.		
Adaptive Management	1. Project/programme results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.		
	2. The project/programme team uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/ efforts, to strengthen its work and performance		
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project/programme and organisational learning		