



**Under the Patronage of the
Commission for Central African Forests
(COMIFAC)**



SECOND CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

THEME:

**« FOREST GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT IN CENTRAL AFRICA »**

25 -26 November 2010, Brazzaville-Congo

Co-organised by:

***SECRETARIAT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IN CENTRAL
AFRICA (SEACA)***

and

THE CONGO ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ACEIE)

Supported by :



Netherlands Commission for
Environmental Assessment



Capacity Development and Linkages for
Environmental Assessment in Africa



**Rijksoverheid
Zaken**

Netherlands Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

INTRODUCTION

In order to better address Environmental Assessment (EA) capacity development challenges in Central Africa, and its promotion as a privileged tool for the integration of environmental concerns in the decision making for the improvement of the living conditions of populations within a sustainable development perspective, environmental assessment professionals from 10 Central African countries : Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Chad, Sao Tomé and Principe decided in 1998 to organize themselves in national associations for environmental assessment under the coordination of the Secretariat for Environmental Assessment in Central Africa (SEACA).

SEACA is the sub-regional focal point for Capacity Development and Linkages for Environmental Assessment in Central Africa (CLEEA) and at the same time benefits from the Program of Support to National Associations for Environmental Assessment in Central Africa (PAANEEAC) sponsored by the Netherlands.

SEEAC seeks to contribute to reflections on the advancement of the environmental assessment in Central Africa and also to the optimisation of its potential as a sustainable development tool. It is in this context that the international seminar on "*Forest Governance and Environmental Assessment in Central Africa is organised*".

CONFORMITY WITH THE CONVERGENCE PLAN OF COMIFAC

The organization of this international seminar is in line with the convergence plan of COMIFAC for which one of the outcomes of its strategic plan No 1 is realisations of impact assessments for major interventions in the forestry milieu. The operational plan 2009-2011 of this convergence plan provides to this effect for a project whose goal is to create measures favourable for impact assessments to precede projects and giant activities in the forest milieu.

Through this international workshop, SEEAC, by aligning with the guidelines of the strategic plan number 7 of the COMIFAC plan of Convergence will contribute to the meeting of expected results through the organization, information, training and concertation of stakeholders involved in the management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The forests of the Congo Basin are the second largest tropical forest with an important position after the Amazon. Despite its determining role for the international community, the sub region, countries concerned, the private sector, and the local community for the preservation of the biological diversity, the regulation of climatic conditions, sub regional integration, budget entries, economic activities, jobs, forest products, and a subsistence base, they face a deforestation rate variable according to countries with a net value of 0.16%.

To the overall reduction in surface area is added the loss in terms of quality (structure, composition; density, biological diversity and vitality) with consequences that at the moment cannot be totally

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evaluated. This degradation often results from the impact on the forest as a result of the development of non forest sectors (mining, infrastructure, industries, urbanisation, agriculture, and livestock) and at the base the question of space management.

Meantime, literature on the populations of the forests of the Congo Basin reveal that they suffer and continue to suffer from all sorts of activities that lead to social breakdown in this milieu (Colchester et al 1998). This is as a result of imbalances created by persistent forces, and political structures that disregard the rights of local populations to their land and reduce their participation in the decision making thereby compromising the effort of sustainable forestry development. This is particularly preoccupying to local indigenous populations who are threatened and discriminated in political and civil rights (Luling and Kendrick, 1998).

This situation brings to light the problematic of forest governance. In fact, despite the multiple use of the word governance, there is a dynamic move towards its usage so that “governance” should be the putting in place of efficient, transparent, participatory and responsible management practices.

Deriving inspiration from the World Bank’s translation of the word we can say that forest governance refers to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of forest resources for sustainable development. From this stand point, it appears that one of the major challenges at the level of public administration, private operators, civil society organisations, populations, resides in reaching a balance between socioeconomic development and the necessity for forest preservation. It is at this level that environmental assessment comes in. This challenge is integrated at the sub regional level by the COMIFAC convergence Plan adopted by Central African Heads of States in 2005.

It is in this context that the international seminar on Forest Governance and Environmental Assessment aims at examining the place and importance of this tool for forest governance in central Africa and for its reinforcement.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this seminar is to sort out the role of environmental assessment as a tool for the promotion of good forest governance in Central Africa in order to propose alternatives for the full expression of its potential in this domain.

SCIENTIFIC STANDING OF THE SEMINAR

Several themes will be examined:

- COMIFAC Plan of Convergence in matters of environmental assessment;
- Relationship between the environmental assessment of forest management in central Africa : Legal and institutional contexts, practical experiences, state of affairs and perspective for the harmonisation;
- Environmental Assessment, the development of non forest sectors ((Mining, industries, urbanisation, agriculture, livestock, etc.); and impact on forests
- Pertinence and/or associating environmental assessment to other tools set aside for the management of sustainable forest ecosystems: Forest Management Plans, Criteria and

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Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management, Low Impact Logging, Forest Certification, Ecological Reports, FLEGT, etc.;

- Perception of environmental assessment by forest management actors: opportunities and threats;
- Environmental Assessment in support of the decentralisation of forest management;
- Environmental Assessment and transparency, fight against poverty, the consideration of the local populations in forest resources management;
- Balance between short term local interest and long term preservation interests (biodiversity, fighting climate change, sustainable land management, etc.);
- Needs and response to capacity building of different actors : state of affairs and experiences;
- Towards applied research on environmental assessment and sustainable management of forest ecosystems.

OUTCOME OF THE SEMINAR

The outcome of this seminar on the forests of the Congo Basin and populations concerned are numerous given that the themes discussed will be aimed at contributing concrete answers for their amelioration and their management in order to quantitatively and qualitatively multiply socio economic and environmental services contribution.

It will create the opportunity for professionals in the sub region to participate in the international seminar and to enhance their capacity on the one hand and to gain an insight into the actions of the COMIFAC plan of convergence to be implemented in relation to environmental assessment in the sub region.

The results, scientific and technical presentations, as well as debates shall be published as acts from this seminar. At the same time, they will serve as a base for a scientific publication on the themes of the seminar.

PHASES OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar will hold on the 25 and 26th of November 2010 in Brazzaville Congo. There will be plenary sessions, in groups, and also group work on specific themes. A synthesis of the seminar will be made at the end of the seminar to capitalise discussion outcomes and explore possible areas of collaboration between stakeholders in the seminar.

TARGET GROUP

Following the principle that the success of environmental assessments essentially depends on the collaboration between stakeholders, this seminar aims at bringing answers to the preoccupations of the different actors concerned: public administration, regional, sub regional, national and international institutions, forest promoters, environmental assessment professionals, donors, civil society organisations and also the general public.

SUBMISSION OF A PRESENTATION

Presentations for submission should comprise the following:

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- Title of the paper
- Address of author(s)
- A summary of 300 words (maximum)
- 5 key words (maximum)

These presentations must be forwarded latest the **30th of October 2010** to the following email address:
seeac1998@yahoo.fr.

PARTICIPATION/ ALLOWANCES

The organising committee offers a limited number of partial or complete accommodation allowances to some participants depending on the quality of their presentations.

Interested candidates should forward their applications to the following address: Seeac1998@yahoo.fr.