

Project Update: November 2021

This preliminary report covers most of the research project activities conducted by Dr. CHIMI DJOMO Cédric and her team, within the framework of the 1st Small Rufford Grant under the theme: **“Improvement of ecological knowledge of threatened species and behavioural change concerning their conservation in Cameroon’s Doumaintang communal forest”**. Despite the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this project started with a slight delay (July instead of April 2021). However, the final schedule of activities will be respected. The objectives of the project were:

- i. Investigate studied species goods and services and associated human well-being provided to managers and local communities in the Doumaintang Communal Forest (DCF).
- ii. Determine the spatial distribution, habitat, population size of each target species.
- iii. Develop and implement outreach activities material to change the local communities and forest manager's behaviour towards best practices for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management (CSM).
- iv. Project management, communication, and dissemination of the project results.

1. Activities conducted

The activities carried out during the first 8 months (July to November 2021) of the project consisted primarily in starting the project and achieving objective 1, which was to Investigate studied species goods and services and associated human well-being provided to managers and local communities in the Doumaintang Communal Forest (DCF). Thus, to achieve the first objective, the following sub-activities were carried out:

- a. **Design the data collection tools (interview guide, focus groups, questionnaires, participatory mapping, and field inventory sheet).** A working session supervised by Dr CHIMI Djomo Cedric and all the members involved in the project and some resource persons from the CSNRM-NET Association worked on the design of the questionnaires for the semi-structured surveys, the focus groups, and the participatory mapping. During this meeting, it was a question of answering all the misunderstandings and also allowing the capacity building of young students and volunteers involved in the project.
- b. **Meeting with the administrative and traditional authorities of the Doumaintang district for the administrative formalities of deployment on the field for a socio-economic survey.** Firstly, an effective request for the start of the project has been submitted to the Sub-Prefect of the Doumaintang district. In addition, we also requested an audience with him to explain more the merits of this project for the present and future generations as well as for the commune of Doumaintang. At the end of this exchange, we received not only the approval of the sub-prefect but also his support in case of difficulties on the ground.

Secondly, we met with the mayor of the commune of Doumaintang with whom we had a particularly enriching exchange. During this second exchange, we reiterated our desire to work with them for the conservation and sustainable management of their forest resources.

Thirdly, once we obtained written authorisation from the Sub-Prefect and the Mayor of Doumaintang, we met with the nine different traditional chiefs of the villages bordering the Doumaintang community forest. Among other things, the purpose of our exchanges with the traditional chiefs was to agree with them on a date so that we could exchange with their populations.

- c. Recruit and train local interviewers and field team members to use data collection tools.** Within the framework of this project, and during our exchanges with the various traditional chiefs, we asked if there were young people who had knowledge of the forest and who could speak French and the local language. Once the local youth was selected, we explained clearly the expectations of the project.
- d. Conduct a household survey to identify essential studied species goods and services and associated human well-being in DCF.** Once all the administrative and traditional authorities had been met and dates had been set, we conducted the socio-economic surveys. To do this, semi-structured interviews were conducted in each village, and between two and three focus groups were conducted.
- e. Conduct a participatory community mapping to identify habitat and area where local communities harvest the species ecosystems services in the DCF.** During the focus groups in the different villages, we asked the different households where and how far away they were going to get the goods and services in the forest. They were also asked to indicate this location on a map so that we could draw up a participatory map identifying the ecosystem services and the habitats that characterise them.
- f. Conduct quantitative and spatial analyses.** The processing and analysis of the data from this first field phase have already begun.

2. NEXT STEPS

At the end of our stay in Doumaintang, the results of this study have been analysed and used to prepare the next steps of this research project. Upon our return to Yaoundé, we will prepare a 3-month botanical inventory mission from December 4th, 2021, to 04th February 2022 in the Doumaintang communal forest.



Images of some focus groups with populations.





Images of some semi-structured interviews with populations



Socio-economic surveys team