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Improvement of the Perception Index of  
**CORRUPTION** in the Forestry and Wildlife  
Sector : Glimmer of Hope or Illusion?

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACU</b>	Anti-corruption Unit
<b>CHOC</b>	«Change Habits, Oppose Corruption Project
<b>BCAC</b>	Business Coalition Against Corruption
<b>CF</b>	Community Forest
<b>CONSUPE</b>	Supreme State Control
<b>FAC</b>	Fight Against Corruption
<b>FODER</b>	Forêts et Développement Rural
<b>JPO</b>	Judicial Police Officer
<b>MINFOF</b>	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
<b>MOFAC</b>	Module on the Training on the Fight Against Corruption
<b>NACS</b>	National Anti-corruption Strategy
<b>NTFP</b>	Non-Timber Forest Product
<b>PRECIS</b>	Prévention – Education – Condition- Incentives- Sanction
<b>RRA</b>	Rapid Result Approach
<b>RRI</b>	Rapid Result Initiative
<b>ITAC</b>	Transparency and Anti-corruption Initiative
<b>UNCAC</b>	United Nations Convention against Corruption
<b>TI-C</b>	Transparency International Cameroun
<b>VPA-FLEGT</b>	Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the European Union and Cameroon on the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade



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# Introduction

Corruption is the act of abusing an official position for private gains<sup>1</sup>. Defined as such, this phenomenon is a reality in Cameroon according to the doctrine<sup>2</sup>. In order to stop this scourge public authorities have adopted legal, institutional and strategic measures. Legally, Cameroon has ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)<sup>3</sup> and the African Union Convention on the prevention and repression of Corruption. At the institutional level, organisations totally dedicated to the Fight against Corruption have been created. They are notably Anti-corruption Units (ACU), the National Anti-corruption Commission (NAC), and the Supreme State Control (CONSUPE). Finally, Cameroon on 08 February 2011 was endowed with a National Anti-corruption Strategy (NACS) at the strategic level.

The National Anti-corruption Strategy expressively is made up of sector-related strategies and development strategies of pillars of integrity. The sector-related strategies has as goal to fight corruption in the various sectors, where as the development strategies of pillars of integrity targets to develop know-how and the wellbeing of these pillars of integrity in order to make actors part and parcel of the fight against corruption.

Figuring amongst these sector-related strategies is

*1 Talla M., Le Glossaire de la lutte contre la corruption: Explication des principaux concepts utilisés dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre la Corruption au Cameroun, Luppepo International, 2013.*

*2 Read on this subject Titi Nwell Pierre, La lutte contre la corruption au Cameroun de 1999 à 2008, Presse Universitaires d'Afrique, Yaoundé 2009, p. 93.*

*3 Cameroon ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2006 and the African Union Convention on Prevention and the fight against corruption in 2011.*

that of the forest and environment sector applicable to the forestry and wildlife sector. This sector-related strategy poses a diagnosis of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector. It brings out the manifestation and causes of corruption, analyses the factors favourable and difficulties of the fight against corruption in the sector and informs on the perception of actors on the intensity of corruption in the sector. On this point, it indicates that the perception of corruption by actors of the sector is 2.7/10. In applying the same methodology in 2013 like the one used during the elaboration of the National Anti-corruption Strategy in the forestry and wildlife sector FODER proceeded with the updating of the index of the intensity of the perception of corruption in the said sector. The score obtained was 6.44/10 what meant that there was an improvement by 0. 83. The same exercise was realized during the year 2014 after all the remarks made on the methodology on the activity of 2013 were considered. This time the score 5.13/10 was obtained.

Face with this evolution of the index of the intensity of the perception of corruption by the actors of the forestry and wildlife sector, the issue is related to the efficiency and durability of the clean-up process of the sector in Cameroon. In other words the improvement expresses the beginning of real change or it is just an expression of a short term popular result obtained at the end of some actions of the Anti-corruption Unit of MINFOF, the National Anti-corruption Commission and actors of the civil society (in this case, FODER through its project “the Anti-corruption and Transparency Initiative” (ITAC)? An attempted response to this question shall be provided by precisizing that the improvement of the perception index of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector is due to progress in governance of the sector(I) and by recalling that the durability of this progress is conditioned by an extension of actions at all levels (II).





## I. Sure Glimmers of Hope from the viewpoint of Forest Governance

The improvement of the perception index of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector is certainly the expression of the dynamism of the Anti-corruption Unit of MINFOF during these two years. This dynamism is expressed through the implementation of the NACS developed by the National Anti-corruption Commission, which has produced concrete results. Elsewhere, the actions of other actors like the FODER Association through its ITAC project enabled contributions to efforts of improving forest governance by introducing the fight against corruption and the reinforcement of integrity and probity values in the implementation of VPA-FLEGT.

### I.A. The Implementation of NACS in the Forestry and Wildlife Sector: Obtaining Concrete Results due to the application of fight against corruption measures and tools

The National Anti-corruption Strategy has been implemented in the forestry and wildlife sector under the coordination of the Anti-corruption Unit in collaboration with the NAC and so many organizations of the civil society. In terms of action; two Rapid Result Initiatives (RRI) were implemented. The first one carried out in Bertoua- Ngoundere axis constituted a trial while the second one was an extension of the process to other main roads axis of eight regions<sup>4</sup> of Cameroon. Encouraging results were obtained and are perceptible at the level of the adoption of new ways of delivering public services in the sector and at the level of the development of new tools of fighting corruption in the sector.

## Box 1 :

Rapid Result Initiative is an object of the RRA approach which is a methodology of action in favour of change based on results. In terms of actions, this approach recommend to impulse a rum-up on shared prior objectives from small scale initiatives; to reinforce the capacity of actors through the promotion of learning according to an experimental process ; to stimulate teams to become more performing through ambitious results but achievable in 100 days maximum and address major changes by institutionalizing efficient practices/behaviours.

<sup>4</sup> The Centre ,Littoral, South-west , South , East , Adamawa, North and Far-North



The Rapid Result Initiative of MINFOF had as objective to reduce from 30% the racketeering of wood processed transporters on the Bertoua-Ngoundere road axis<sup>5</sup>. This objective had made it possible for a problem both economic and social to be solved. To meet up with this challenge, preparations were made and adapted measures adopted and diffused to actors concerned (MINFOF officer affected to checkpoints and users) of the sector in order to make them adapt. These measures consist of:

- The restriction of forest control only to the verification of the wood driving sheet;
- The limitation of the period of control to 20 minutes. Beyond this period, a seizure notice must be given to the user;
- The requirement of wearing a green uniform and a badge allowing identification of the forestry control staff.

Rapid Result Initiative made it able to observe that the implementation of these initiatives of the fight against corruption is possible in the forestry and wildlife sector. That's why the reduction of the racketeering of transporter of processed wood issued from community forests is added to the reduction of the racketeering of transporter of Non-Timber Forest products (NTFP). In the same vein, new tools were developed. They are mainly:

- The policy of treatment of complaints and denunciations of corruption at MINFOF: It is the document that defines the attitude to adopt when dealing

with complaints and denunciations of corruption coming from the forestry and wildlife sector. This document also comprises mechanisms to protect the informer and/or plaintiff. "Le Guide de l'Agent Probe du MINFOF": This is a manual that defines the rules of probity to be observed by the MINFOF officer when delivering a public service. This manual proposes the behaviour to be adopted in case of an ethical dilemma.

- The forestry controllers Guide: This document describes the attitudes to be adopted by MINFOF officers during the control.
- The pact of Integrity: It is a tool prepared for MINFOF users and comprising all the rules which are to be respected by these users to benefit from the protection of the State.

The administration of all these tools during the Rapid Result Initiative made it possible to arrive at concrete results within a short period (200 days for the two RRI implemented in the sector). These results can be seen through the socio economic and legal plan:

### Socio economically :

Before the launching of the RRI, an inventory on the racketeering of heavy-duty cars was carried out. Following this inventory, it was discovered that 100% of heavy-duty transporting product coming from community forests were racketed both at the MINFOF and gendarmerie checkpoints. After the implementation of the RRI, the analyses of results indicated that the practice had been reduced to 66% during the first phase (on the Bertoua-Ngoundere road axis) and 61% during the second phase (extension of the RRI to eight regions)<sup>6</sup>.

These statistics are confirmed by testimonies of community forest administrators and transporters of products coming from these forests (including NTFP) which support the fact that the practice has been considerably reduced at the MINFOF checkpoints.

<sup>5</sup>Talla M. Calaque R. Durabilité de la foresterie en Afrique Centrale ? En luttant contre la corruption ! Leçons tirées des IRR du Cameroun, Yaoundé, Janvier 2014.

<sup>6</sup> MINFOF, Report on the Implementation of RRI, Yaoundé 2014. ns Clé, Yaoundé 2013.

<sup>7</sup> NAC, National Strategy against Corruption, Yaoundé 2011.

## Box 2:

As a reminder the law-maker had made community forests are a mechanism of the fight against poverty in forest zones by favouring the implication of the local population in the management of forests resources. This is the reason why these forms of production are exonerated from taxes. The racketing of transporters of Timber forest products and Non- Timber Forest products coming from these forests a real obstacle to the objectives targeted by the law-maker when instituting community forests.



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### Legally:

The good practices observed during control (those that led to change) were institutionalized by circular letter n° 0170/LC/MINFOF/P.CLCC/M. CLCC of 18 September 2014 establishing the rules of «Best practices» within the procedures and methods of roadside control of NTFP.

The circular letter list ten (10) rules to be respected by the MINFOF officers at checkpoints. These rules are related to putting on of the regulated green uniform, the putting on of a badge(to facilitate identification), the possession of a mission order duly signed by the competent authority, the display of a service note address to the attention of the public

making the mission official, the display at checkpoints of the phone number of the Anti-corruption Unit, the non-use of a volunteer at checkpoints, control carried only on the basis of the wood driving sheet, the certificate of origin or the sale by public auction record, the respect of the control period of 20minutes(beyond which a notification of seizure is delivered), inscription of control on the back of the wood driving sheet, and finally the transcription of information contained in the sheet, the certificate of origin or the sale by public auction record in the “Main courante” (register) for statistical needs.

## I.B. The Implementation of the Transparency and Anti-corruption Initiative (TAI); phases 1 & 2

TAC is a project developed by FODER in collaboration with MINFOF and implemented in two (02) phases; in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The first phase had as goal to put in place a participative process of reflection and constructive dialogue between different stakeholders involve in the implementation of Annex 7 of the VPA-FLEGT and the reinforcement of the Fight Against Corruption (FAC) measures. As for the second phase the purpose was to strengthen measures of transparency and the fight against corruption in the forestry sector through a participatory process.

This initiative brought in an innovative contribution to the efforts of improving forest governance by introducing the FAC and strengthening of the values of integrity and probity in the implementation of VPA-FLEGT. It falls within the framework of the contribution of the civil society in the implementation of the NACS promoted by the NAC and the application of the UNCAC.

Activities and FAC products developed through ITAC have enabled indeed to attract and keep the attention of stakeholders and VPA-FLEGT parties on the issue of corruption, mobilized actors on the understanding of in-depth causes of the phenomenon and to seek for appropriate solutions, to develop and deliver training module in order to strengthen ethi-

cal values and to initiate the creation of a network of honest officers and actors.

The PRECIS approach (Prevention-Education-Condition-Incentives-Sanction) of the NACS was used in the implementation of these activities. In fact the development of information and awareness tools (stickers and brochures) falls within the “Prevention” approach while the training session corresponds to the “Education” approach. The Anti-cor platform on its part embraces at the same time the approaches of “Prevention”, “Education”, and “Incentive”. The final development of the platform will enable the public to have a free and accessible tool through which they can contribute to the implementation of ‘Sanctions’ against practices of corruption. With the support of NAC and the “Change Habits, Oppose Corruption” (CHOC) project and Transparency International Cameroon (TI-C), training a module on the Fight Against Corruption( MOFAC) was developed and delivered to the local forest stakeholder in four regions. This figure below details the proportion of actors targeted by this process:

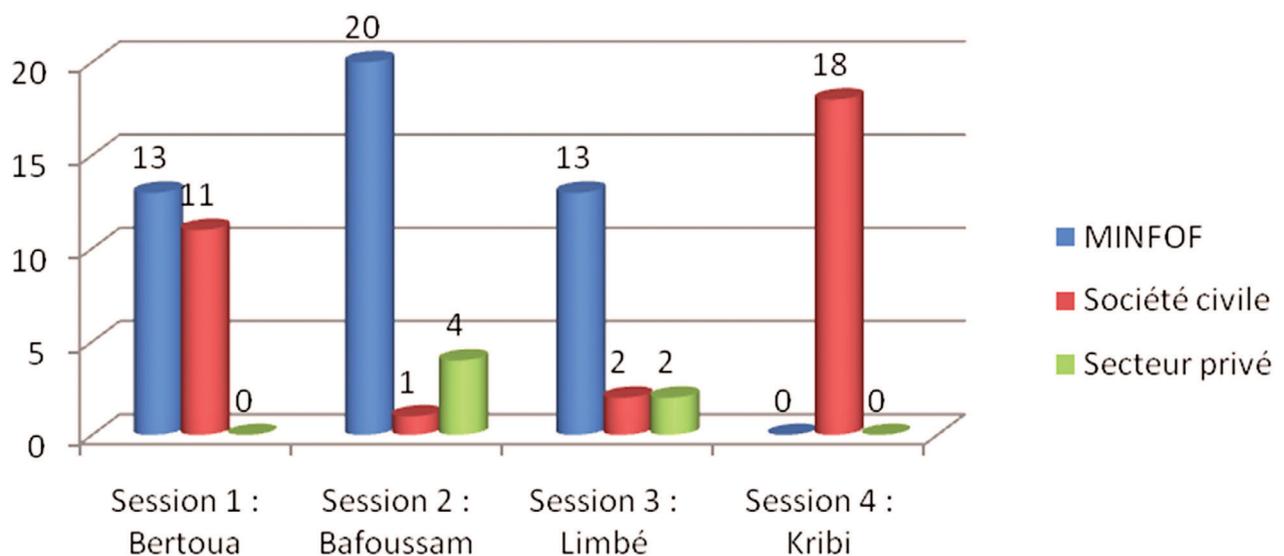


Figure 1 : Distribution of participants during training session on MOFAC (Source final report ITAC 2; 19 September 2013)



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## II. Possible illusions or short-lived glimmers of in the Absence of the intensification of the fight against Corruption.

The implementation of NACS in the forestry and wildlife sector has enabled concrete and encouraging results to be obtained in a relatively short period. However, to be sustainable, other complementary measures need to be considered. These measures consist of extending the fight against corruption from the periphery to the centre of decision and the reinforcement of mobilization of actors of the sector around efforts of the fight against corruption.

### II.A. The urgency of extending the fight against corruption from the periphery to the centre

The RRI and ITAC have been the main FAC initiatives in the forestry and wildlife sector over the past two years. They have consisted on one hand on the racketeering reduction of community forest products transporters on the main road axis in Cameroon and in the other hand innovation in efforts of improving forest governance by introducing the fight against corruption and the reinforcement of values of integrity and probity in the implementation of the VPA-FLEGT through information, sensitization and training. The initiatives of the fight

against corruption at MINFOF are until now concentrated on the periphery. It is important to pursue progressively the process towards the centre of decision. This can take the form of the extension of RRI to other services of MINFOF, the standardization of the process of deliverance of certain services or products of MINFOF or again the formal engagement of all the officials of MINFOF in favour of the fight against corruption.



### II.A.1. The extension of the fight against corruption to other services deliver by MINFOF

The National Anti-corruption Strategy identified a collection of infractions of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector<sup>7</sup>. Without making the list exhaustive, the practices are as follows:

- The corruption of public officials of the sector ;
- The embezzlement of revenue ;
- Traffic of all sort for the attribution of license of exploitation ;
- The granting and payment in cash and nature ungodly advantages to control teams ;
- The non-respect of regulations in the attribution secured documents of exploitation;
- The attribution of concessions willingly without recourse to call for tender;
- The falsification of technical reports.

The existence of these practices identified in the

<sup>7</sup>NAC, National Strategy against Corruption, Yaoundé 2011.

<sup>8</sup>This is about the workshop on the mobilization of inspectors, members of the control body and officials of deconcentrated services for the fight against corruption.

strategy document indicates that anti-corruption initiatives must be carried out at the level of central services of the ministry. Users interviewed during the implementation of RRI had suggested that similar initiatives should be carried out not only to clean-up the process of deliverance of secured documents (wood driving sheet) and the attribution of titles but also in the different check points (those of forest companies and those of services).

### II.A.2. The Formal Engagement of all officials of MINFOF in favour to the fight against corruption

The engagement and the political will is a fundamental aspect in the fight against corruption. This is translated by the firm expression of public officials or decision makers (for reasons of solemnity) in favour of the fight against corruption. Practically this engagement will be manifested by the adoption strong actions in favour of the fight against corruption.

The engagement or expression of political will of MINFOF authorities in favour of the fight against corruption has been done in many occasions notably during the launching and the final evaluation of RRI and during a workshop held at Meyomessala where the goal was to engage the officials of MINFOF in the fight against corruption<sup>8</sup>. During this workshop presided by the Secretary of State, so many situations contrary to norms were identified. The participants of this workshop spoke of:

- The employment of non civil servant personnel ;
- Corruption/racketing ;
- Illegal exploitation ;
- Fraudulent exploitation in a State forest ;
- Traffic and use of multiple wood driving sheet;
- Complicity of MINFOF officers in a network of infractions ;
- Illegal collection of funds ;
- Reimbursement of mission allowances ;
- Impunity.

At the end of this workshop, strong resolutions were taken in order to reduce these practices. They are:

- The non-respect of non-official or non-written instructions;
- Denunciation to the Anti-corruption units of all



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forms of illegal pressure of the type “be prepared financially” ;

- 
- Sensitization on good practices ;
- Revision of the law in force ;
- Continuous training on change habits<sup>9</sup>.

However, in spite of this disposition, the will to fight against corruption is not sufficiently being relayed at the level of all officials of MINFOF. It is thus imperative to support the efforts of the fight against corruption as such engaged, in order to arrive at an important internal mobilization of main officials of MINFOF and actors of the civil society around the importance of the fight against corruption .

## II.B. The importance of the strengthening of the mobilization around efforts of the fight against corruption and the fight against impunity in the sector

The tendency observed throughout these first two years of the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy and more globally initiatives to fight against corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector is the existence of confidence building

crises between institutional actors and non institutional actors. Whereas the success of these initiatives of the fight against corruption, passes through the existence of a strong anti-corruption coalition involving institutional and non-institutional actors, and more especially the judicial system in the sanction of acts of corruption observed in the sector.

### II.B.1. Improve the Implication of Non-Institutional Actors

**N**on-institutional actors are those who do not depend on the state. In the forestry and wildlife sector, non-institutional actors are essentially the civil society and private sector enterprises. Their role in the fight against corruption is consecrated by international legal instruments approved by Cameroon in this case UNCAC and the African Union Convention on Prevention and the fight against Corruption. In these mechanisms it is clearly recommended to States to involve the Civil Society in the processes seeking to absorb corruption. This supposes that these categories of actors are involved not only at the level of the implementation of anti-corruption policies but also at the level of policy-making and evaluation.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. workshop on the mobilization of inspectors, members of control body and officials of deconcentrated services of the fight against corruption, Meyomessala 29-30 April 2014. Final Report

On these bases the Civil Society can play a triple role in matters of the fight against corruption. she could be a partner to the administration and relays actions or carry out public initiatives on its own. Finally she could act independently from public authorities and play the role of control and monitoring of actions of public authorities in matters of the fight against corruption.

The role of private enterprises in the fight against corruption is summarized essentially to resistance of calls made by dishonest public authorities and the denunciations of all the abuses to which they can be victims. To play its rightful role, private enterprises need to be protected from reprisals. They could be protected by respecting all the fiscal obligations and the dispositions of the agreement signed with public authorities and on the other hand by rejoining the coalition of enterprises having as goal to reduce the vulnerability of loyal enterprises.

Currently in Cameroon, there is a coalition of enterprises of the private sector against corruption, the Business Coalition Against Corruption (BCAC). The existence of such a mechanism can constitute a major advantage in the efforts to associate private sector enterprises in intervening in the forestry and wildlife sector around initiatives to fight against corruption.

Finally, in order to support the anti-corruption dynamism, MINFOF through its Anti-corruption Unit needs to reinforce the facilitation of the participation of the civil society and that of enterprises of the forestry and wildlife sector and initiatives to fight against corruption.

## II.B.2. The fight against Impunity in the sector

According to the Strategy document, impunity is one of the main causes of the rise of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector. Impunity is manifested through the absence of sanctions of negative behaviours. Its favours corrupt practices to the extent where in absence of appropriate sanctions of negative behaviours, other actors have the tendency to be engaged in corruption.

Efforts have been made in the sanction of corruption acts observed in the forestry and wildlife sec-



tor. So far, these sanctions in most cases have only been administrative. Furthermore, they are not sufficient enough to contribute in reversing in a significant manner trends from the viewpoint of corruption in the forestry and wildlife sector.

To effectively fight against impunity, three important provisions need to be adopted by authorities in charge of the forestry and wildlife sector. The first one consists of reinforcing administrative sanctions. The second one is to involve the judge so that custodial sentences under existing regulations are applied. The third one consists of the Anti-corruption Unit of MINFOF accompanying users who have been victims of abuses to courts if they wish to do so.

These efforts against impunity need to be extended to judicial police officers (JPO) with general competence who according to transporters when questioned say that the racketing of users continue under the pretext of controlling Timber forest products and non-timber forest products. A correspondence from the Secretary General of the Presidency was addressed to the Minister of Defense after an advocacy by the President of NAC but this measure is not enough to reduce effectively the practice of racketing by judicial police officials.



# CONCLUSION

With all said and done, in a particular context characterized by the existence of problems of governance in the forestry and wildlife sector, the improvement of the perception index of intensity of corruption is certainly a step forward when it comes to cleaning up of the sector. This improvement arises from the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy in the sector through RRI and ITAC.

However this step forward remain particularly fragile to the extent where it is an expression of actions carried out at the periphery, which is at the level of those implementing decisions and those who do not have power. In order to support these achievements and make them sustainable, it is necessary to take up complementary measures such as the extension of anti-corruption initiatives towards the centre of decisions, the reinforcement of the mobilization of non-institutional stakeholders towards anti-corruption efforts or the fight against impunity.



## GLOSSARY

**Strategy Document:** National Anti-corruption Strategy

**Anti-corruption fight:** Fight against corruption

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