

SUCCESS STORY



Bertille Mayen



From Knowledge to Action for a Protected Planet in Western and Central Africa

BIOPAMA aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in protected areas and surrounding communities. It is an initiative of the ACP Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund (EDF), jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC).

Effective management of transboundary protected areas

The experience of the BSB Yamoussa Binational Complex with the use of the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool

An integrated vision of the BSB Yamoussa Binational Complex, consisting of the parks of Bouba Ndjidda, in Cameroon, and Sena Oura, in Chad, followed by a critical analysis of the state of the sites, allowed efficient planning and the definition of tailor-made interventions.

Through this participatory and inclusive evaluation-planning-monitoring process, the management team of the Binational Complex, in consultation with the local community, state representatives, technical and financial partners, dialogued and prioritized actions, thus contributing to the improvement of management and governance of these protected areas.

For five consecutive years, *in situ* data collection followed by a structured and results oriented analysis using the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET), created in the context of the BIOPAMA Programme, has contributed to the management of these protected areas, particularly in the commitment of local community organizations to a structured protected area co-management system that greatly helps to stabilize illegal wildlife trade.

The innovation carried out in 2019 was the inclusion of two assessments, using the Site Level Governance and Equity Assessment Tool (SAGE) and the Social Assessment of Protected and conservation Areas methodology (SAPA) with the IMET modular approach campaign, in order to carry out cross-analyses to deepen the contextual understanding of the site in relation to community well-being and governance issues.

This exercise responds to concerns that some protected areas impose an overall negative impact on a few local stakeholder groups and facilitates a better understanding, promotion and enhancement of the positive contribution of protected areas to local livelihoods.

THE SENA OURA - BOUBA NDJIDDA BINATIONAL COMPLEX (BSB YAMOUSSA)

The Northern Savannah Ecosystem of Central Africa

This ecosystem includes vast areas covering northern Cameroon, north eastern Central African Republic and southern Chad. This region is ecologically diverse and contains an invaluable biological heritage.

Pressures and threats

However, these ecosystems are subject to pressures and threats - such as poaching, the invasion of this area by transhumant groups, semi-industrial gold panning, among others - which, combined with climate variability, contribute to the increase in anthropogenic pressure on natural resources.

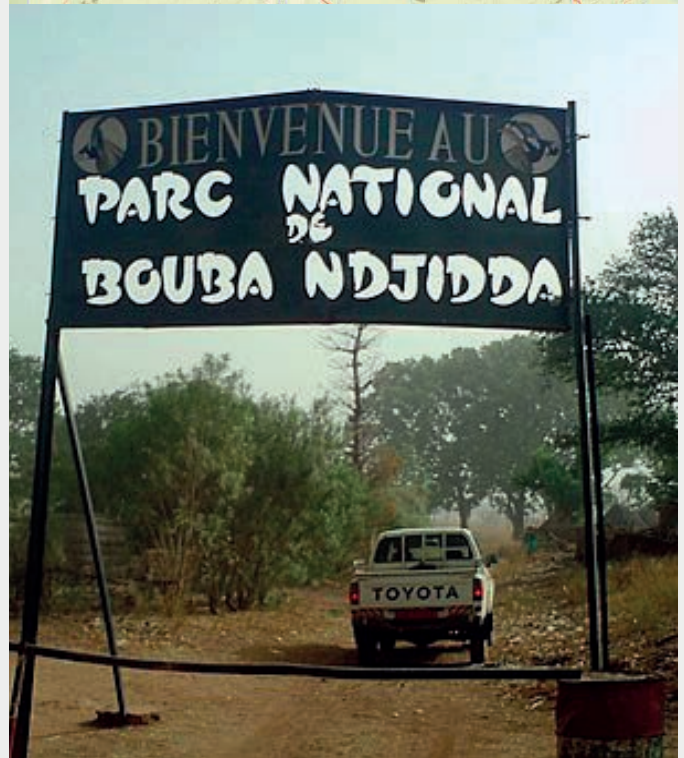
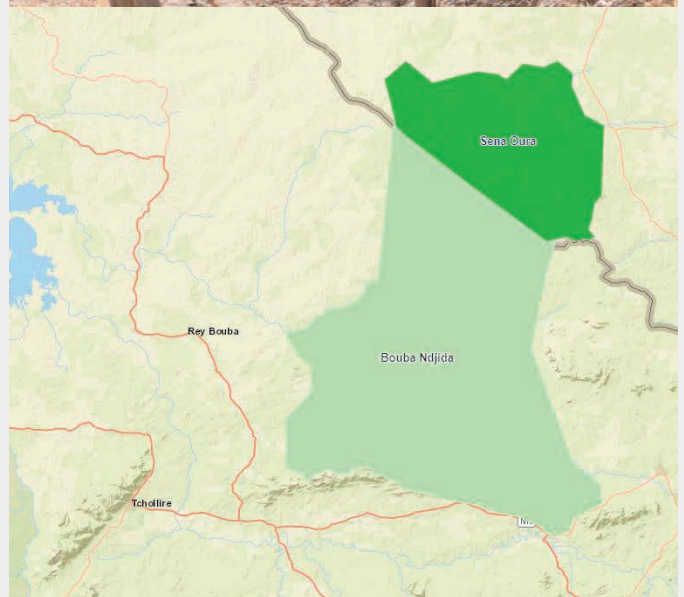
CREATION AND CONCERTED MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY COMPLEX

In order to face these challenges, the governments of Chad and Cameroon signed an agreement in 2011 on the creation and concerted management of the transboundary complex of protected areas Bouba Ndjidda and Sena Oura and in 2013 the Tripartite Transboundary Anti-Poaching agreement.

Federating partnership of regional synergies

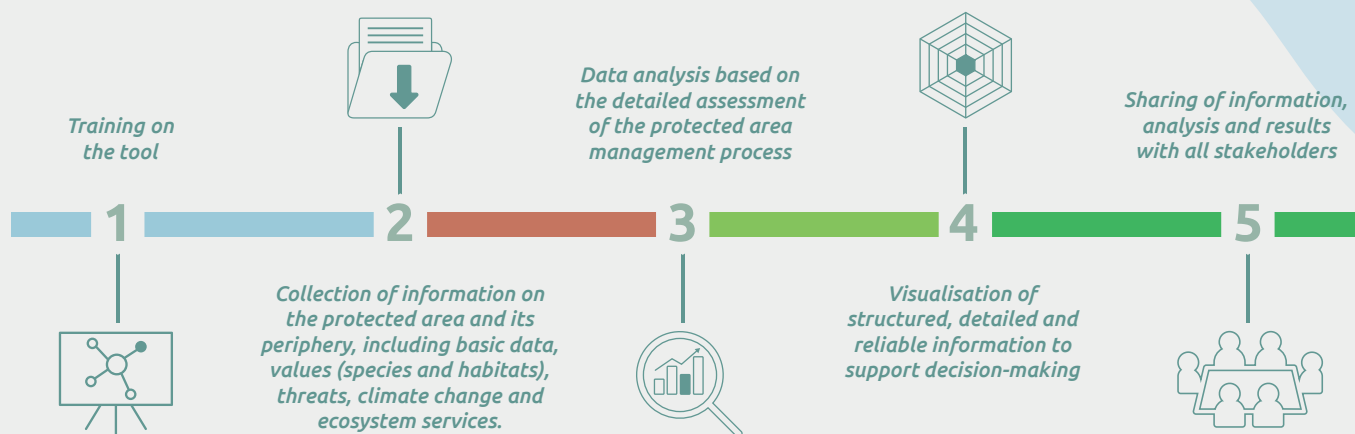
In March 2016, the German Cooperation, through the Support Project for the Yamoussa Binational BSB Complex, in partnership with the Observatory of Central African Forests (OFAC) and the BIOPAMA Programme, worked to introduce a decision support tool to improve the management of protected areas.

This capacity building process was followed by the introduction of the integrated management effectiveness tool (IMET), developed within the framework of the BIOPAMA Programme and implemented in Central Africa by OFAC. This tool offers national park managers and forest administrations operational support in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of protected areas.



THE IMET ASSESSMENT

The IMET Assessment is composed of several steps:



In the first stage of this partnership, a group of protected area managers participated in an IMET training and three protected areas were selected for the application of the tool: the two parks of the Binational Complex - Sena Oura National Park (PNSO), in Chad, Bouba Ndjidda National Park (PNBN) and Bénoué National Park (PNB), in Cameroon.

Bertille Mayen tells us about her experience

As a specialist in governance and public policy and technical expert for the German Cooperation (GIZ) Project to Support the Binational Complex for Planning, Co-management and Transboundary Dialogue, Bertille Mayen was trained as a coach by BIOPAMA and facilitated the use of the IMET tool for four consecutive years, starting in 2016, in the above mentioned protected areas.

In the field data collection stage, one of the major challenges was the filling in of the IMET forms due to the lack of statistical and reliable data on the sites. The challenge was partially met and, empirically, protected area managers were able to calculate the approximate percentages of land use, assess the implementation rate of the management plans, estimate the rate of control of the protected area by the conservation services and appreciate the volume of inputs from both partners and governments.

THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THIS EXPERIENCE

An integrated vision of the protected area and its periphery

The following steps were the analysis and visualization of the assessment results. The integrated analysis of the different factors gave managers the possibility to visualize the six elements of the management cycle of their protected areas (management context, planning, inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes), to appreciate the hierarchical structure of the main pressures and threats, to identify key points for improvement and

to determine management objectives for a better effectiveness of their protected areas, while considering the cultural, social and historical specificities of each protected area.

Results-based planning

The results of the IMET assessment were used to define an action plan for the Binational Complex, which was then integrated into the operational planning of the German Cooperation Support Project for the Binational Complex. In addition, the IMET enabled the Sena Oura Conservation Service to identify shortcomings in its management plan and to anticipate its revision. Some concrete actions were adopted, such as the inclusion of the Sena Oura protected area in the World Site of Protected Areas.



Ownership of results' assessment facilitated by a participatory process

The participatory nature of the IMET campaign should be highlighted. The approach ensures active leadership and ownership by the protected area stakeholders, focuses on self-assessment founded on evidence-based and empirical knowledge and a contextual appreciation of the dynamics. The attitude of protected area managers or conservation professionals in using the tool is decisive for the quality of the results.

Tailor-made interventions

The use of the tool contributed to the definition of tailor-made interventions, based on indicators and concrete data from the participatory and inclusive self-evaluation exercise of the protected area by the conservation services through the IMET. An example is the integration of specific aspects related to climate change and ecosystem services in the operational plan of the BSB Project.

A fluid dialogue between the local communities and the conservation services

The collection of data from the field and the restitution of information have created a platform for exchanges on the state of conservation, the management of natural resources and the sensitization of communities on the rules of use of natural resources.



The representatives of the associations of the local communities in Sena Oura expressed the wish to have usage rights on a certain number of the identified resources of the protected area, notably for sacred rites and the collection of non-timber forest products necessary for their well-being.

This experience has facilitated an innovation in 2019, when concurrently to the IMET campaign two other assessments related to governance and well-being of communities have been conducted using Social Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas (SAPA) and Site level assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE). These tools, were applied to identify positive and negative impacts of the parks and assess their contribution to the community well-being through a multi-stakeholder process in which all key actors were engaged, from designing through to analysing and interpreting the results in order to develop ideas for action to improve the situation. The results of all these assessments have been translated in an action plan and inserted in the operational plan for the second phase of the GIZ Support Project for the BSB Yamoussa.

If you would like to assess the management effectiveness of your protected area with the IMET tool, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Contacts

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