



## Press release

Paris, 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2016

### **WWF and Rougier take stock on the progress made after one year of partnership for sustainable forest management in Africa.**

In January 2015, WWF France and the Rougier Group initiated a three-year collaboration to promote sustainable forestry in Africa and to stimulate responsible practices throughout European supply chains. In this regard, WWF carried out a field mission in September 2015, providing a view on the extent of actions implemented at local level. Observations from this mission are detailed below.

#### **Partnership goals**

As a key player on the international timber market, Rougier has production forests and facilities in Cameroon, Gabon and in the Republic of Congo, as well as an import, trade and marketing branch in France. The company holds FSC® Forest Management Certificates for several concessions in Gabon and Cameroon, and its subsidiary Rougier Sylvaco-Panneaux holds FSC® and PEFC™ chain of custody certificates.

For the past year, WWF has through one of its leading initiatives to promote responsible forestry and trade, the Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN), supported Rougier to maintain and strengthen its objectives to increase volumes of certified products. WWF also makes sure that the company is successful in implementing responsible due diligence measures required by the EU Timber Regulation.

Rougier and WWF's collaboration has so far focused on 4 key areas:

- **development and implementation of relevant indicators** for wildlife management and monitoring in Rougier's concessions in Gabon,
- **establishment of effective mechanisms for local development** in Cameroon,
- **supporting the well-functioning of the anti-poaching unit (USLAB)** in Northern Congo
- **optimizing the local development fund** financed by Rougier and through which the company may contribute directly to local development in Congo.

#### **Monitoring and controlling step one year after the partnership launch**

During their visits, WWF teams were able to closely monitor the company's and its workers' commitment, the ambition of its strategy as well as concrete social, economic and environmental achievements. Even though most of the actions carried out are probably FSC certification-driven, the company's commitment sometimes goes beyond compulsory certification requirements.

*"The company's social activities and overall investments clearly show its sustainable implantation. The company is an excellent local employer and stands out by its logging practices and forest preservation through monitoring procedures and the social organisation around its facilities"* says Marie-Christine Korniloff, WWF France's Head of Corporate Engagement.



## **IN GABON**

In order to optimize monitoring and anti-poaching activities in Rougier's concessions in Gabon, and to show the benefits from measures of responsible management for more than ten years ago, it seemed vital to ensure regular monitoring of wildlife value and therefore to start by inventorying large mammals on the Haut-Abanga FCSM. A one-month preliminary inventory with an already existing methodology has been scheduled for the first quarter of 2016. Data from this inventory will contribute to the development of a methodology for the comprehensive inventory of the FCSM (Forest Concession under Sustainable Management). The next works aim to plan and organise the inventory, which will serve as comparative base for the monitoring of trends in wildlife density.

## **IN CONGO**

In view of improving the functioning of the local development fund financed by Rougier, a financial and functional assessment of this fund will be carried out shortly by a structure which is currently being selected.

Two training courses on the use of the SMART database were held on the Mokabi site during the 4th quarter. Thanks to these, the teams have acquired knowledge to handle the first level of this software designed to assist workers in monitoring and ensuring that the law is properly implemented. On this occasion, the data collection system used by WWF and models for monitoring were presented, and the SMART database designed for Rougier Mokabi-Dzanga was installed on the site. Feedback from its users will be regularly recorded over the following months.

## **IN CAMEROON**

After two field missions in Mbang, it became clear that the marketing framework for the sale of NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products) in the Mbang zone needs structuring. This will be carried out by supporting an already existing network of women (RAFAMBA). This support, of which the details remain to be determined, shall allow local communities to gradually increase marketed NTFP quantities, thus generating an increase in income and subsequently improved living conditions for local communities. There are two target products at this stage: wild mango and Djansang.

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**About Rougier**

Founded in 1923, the Rougier Group is a leading producer of certified African tropical timber. The Group operates around three activities: Rougier Afrique International (natural forests harvesting, industrial processing and international trade), Lignafrica (research, management and investment in industrial forest plantations in Africa), and Rougier Sylvaco Panneaux (importing and distribution in of timber products from all origins).

[www.rougier.fr](http://www.rougier.fr)

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**About WWF France**

WWF is one of the very first independent environmental-protection organizations in the world. With an active network in more than 100 countries and the support of 5 million members worldwide, the WWF works to halt the destruction of the planet's natural environment and to build a future where people live in harmony with nature by protecting global biological diversity, ensuring sustainable use of renewable natural resources and encouraging the reduction of pollution and waste.

Since 1973, WWF France has worked every day to ensure future generations enjoy a living planet. With the support of its volunteers and its 200,000 donors, WWF France organizes concrete actions to save natural ecosystems and their species, ensure the promotion of sustainable lifestyles, train decision-makers, help businesses reduce their environmental footprint and educate the young. But for change to be accepted, it must take place in a manner that respects each individual. That is why the philosophy of the WWF is based on dialogue and action.

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