

BAYANGA WORKSHOP SUMMARY

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

12-18th June



Dominique Endamana and Chris Elliot participating in a flashcard activity at the Bayanga workshop (Photograph: Lisa Petheram)

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Acronyms

CARPE	Central African Regional Program for the Environment
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
GTZ	Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit
PDS	The Dzanga Sangha Dense Forest Reserve
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Developing a ‘tracking tool’ framework for assessing the environment and livelihoods

Bayanga workshop summary, Central African Republic - 12-18th June 2005

Background: why develop and implement this framework?

Many field interventions in developing countries now operate at large spatial scales and deal with complex land cover mosaics. They frequently aspire to both improve local livelihoods and conserve the environment. However, there is little empirical evidence about the effectiveness of these approaches. Monitoring and evaluation methods typically emphasise either the state of species (or ecosystems), or simply project deliverables and outputs. The approaches used often have limited ability to address the issue of where the balance between conservation and development (improvement of livelihoods) should lie. Methods are needed to make the tradeoffs between conservation and development explicit, and to provide platforms for negotiation about these tradeoffs

The Bayanga workshop

The purpose of this workshop was to develop and implement a framework to evaluate project performance in the Dzanga Sangha region (see workshop summary in Table 1). Within the framework, indicators specific to this landscape and project were selected. The workshop was held at the Dolly Lodge in Bayanga and about 20 participants attended (see participant list in Appendix 1). However, many other people, particularly local people from communities in the Dzanga Sangha region were also involved in discussion and assessment of indicators throughout the workshop. Most of the formal participants were from WWF (Cameroon, Central African Republic and International). The main facilitators were Jeffery Sayer (WWF International), Bruce Campbell (CDU/CIFOR) and Manuel Ruiz (Autonomous University of Madrid/WWF).

This workshop was one of three in Africa coordinated by WWF (and funded by the World bank) to help explore and initiate a ‘tracking tool’ for monitoring project performance. The first workshop was held in Chefchaouen, Morocco, and the last in Amani, Tanzania. An initial exploratory workshop in Switzerland was also conducted to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts involved and discuss the successes and failures of past research (a report from the Switzerland workshop and a background literature review are available from Lisa Petheram)

Table 1. Brief description of workshop and location

Workshop location	Dzanga Sangha Reserve - Central African Republic
Workshop venue	Dolly Lodge –Bayanga
Workshop details and number/role of participants	20 people (combination of on and off-site WWF staff, other NGO staff), some local people. One week workshop focused on tracking tools
Brief description of landscape	A mosaic of terra firma and swamp forests with high populations of rare mammals and a low human population largely of forest dependent pygmies
Main issues in the landscape	Poaching bushmeat trade, over-logging, mining, high levels of poverty

The workshop process

The workshop began with an introduction by Jeff Sayer. In this introduction, Jeff described the importance of the need for a ‘tracking tool’ to measure project performance - for both livelihoods and conservation. He explained the previous workshop that was held in Chefchaouen, Morocco and used examples to describe the concept and task (the powerpoint presentation used for this introduction is available from Jeff Sayer). Introductory talks were also given by David Greer and Bruce Campbell.

Following this introduction, participants broke into groups to work on different activities and to partake in field and community site visits (explained in greater detail below). These activities and visits would occur in a relatively loose format each day – to encourage flexibility in the participatory process. At the end of each day participants would re-group and de-brief on the lessons learnt and issues that arose to the rest of the group.

Participatory tools

The tools used during activities included:

Historical trends analysis: In historical trend analysis; participants are invited to list, in chronological order, the major events that have led to the present state of the landscape. The time line used in this case was around 100 years and the technique was valuable in promoting discussion of major external and local factors that had led to the present situation. It also provided the basis for valuable discussion of possible future scenarios. The discussions provided insights into what had led to the present situation and what drivers of change would lead to both desirable and undesirable future outcomes. This led to the identification of indicators that might be used to track such changes.

Flash cards: At the beginning and the end of the workshop, flash cards were used on which each workshop participant wrote their suggestions for issues, concepts and criticisms, and recommendations. These were arranged under different categories on a cork board (see Appendix 3a-d). This activity helped reveal insights into the different perspectives of participants and how these changed throughout the process of the workshop. The flashcards were also used to brainstorm key indicators of landscape performance. These livelihood indicators were classified by arranging and re-arranging cards under the different capital assets on a cork board. This process generated valuable discussions about desirable and undesirable landscape scenarios and was especially valuable in casting the net wide in generating a “long-list” of potential indicators.

Participatory modelling: An exploratory model of the system was developed in a participatory manner using the software STELLA (High Performance Systems, Incorporated 2004). This exercise provided an important learning tool by challenging participants to think about the interactions between the different components of the landscape and of the ways that they contribute to conservation and livelihood outcomes (see Appendix 2).. The model was also valuable in helping to build consensus on the main drivers of land cover change and in identifying data needs for better measuring and understanding these changes. Additionally, as most participants were learning to use this tool for the first time together it helped foster greater team spirit and understanding between participants

Community and field site visits

The community and field site visits were instrumental in providing participants with a sense of context for developing indicators for the Dzanga Sangha landscape. These visits were also valuable in ground-truthing the indicators selected and involving local people in the indicator selection process.

Selection of indicators

At the Bayanga workshop, participants decided that the best way to select livelihood indicators was to follow the Capital Assets Framework (Carney et al. 1999). About 5 indicators were selected under each capital asset (see Table 1). After the selected indicators had been refined and ground-truthed by participants a procedure for measuring each of these indicators was designed. This involved assigning a scale from 1-5 (worst to best situation) to the indicators and deciding how each indicator could be measured and for each value from 1-5.

Conservation indicators were not developed at this initial workshop. But it was concluded that when these are to be selected in the future, they should be drawn from project objectives and there should be about 5-10 indicators.

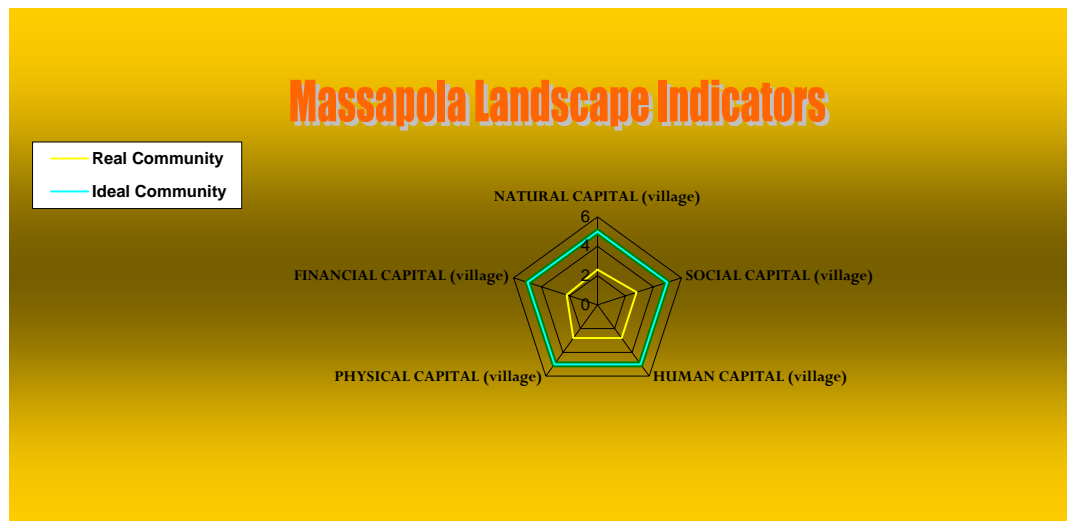
Table 2. Livelihood indicators selected for the Dzanga Sangha Reserve.

Social capital
Community based initiatives eg Community Based Natural Resource Management operating
State agencies effective
Traditional governance effective – dispute resolution mechanisms in place, community rules operating
Perceptions – levels of corruption of government officials
Local NGO and informal associations active
Human capital
Quality of clinics/health care
Quality of education
Number of qualified people
Infant mortality
Level and use of traditional knowledge
Financial capital
Formal sector employment
Household income
Changes in price of basic products
Number of local credit associations (known as “Tontines” in much of Francophone Africa)
Natural capital
Deforestation rate
Frequency and size of fires
Extent of certified forests
Quality of land available for agricultural production
Physical capital
Number of manioc mills per inhabitant
Housing quality
Number of kiosks selling basic products
Sources of drinking water
Village accessibility

Presentation of results

Within the workshop, the presentation of indicator results was also discussed as a major issue to consider. For indicator results to be communicated to project staff, managers, local people, funding agencies and other stakeholders an easy to understand, visual presentation of results is important. Therefore, participants experimented with radar diagrams for these purposes of communication (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Radar diagram of indicator results from a community (Massapola) and a hypothetical 'ideal' community (Scale is 1-5, worst to best scenario).



Conclusions and further research

While the measurement of performance of conservation and livelihood activities at a landscape scale represents an ambitious challenge, it is possible to develop simple indicator sets to provide very informative results. The capital assets approach, is a means of tracking livelihood outcomes that allows a more complete and holistic assessment of outcomes than the current generation of monitoring and evaluation tools that we have observed. Accompanied by the social learning techniques that we describe, this approach can help teams of conservation practitioners and local people to focus on desired project outcomes and to understand how they may be reached.

It is planned that WWF scientists continue to refine the livelihood indicator sets, develop conservation indicator sets and to collect baseline data in the Dzanga Sangha Reserve. The intention is to make this approach operational in a number of landscapes where WWF is operating in the Congo Basin and elsewhere.

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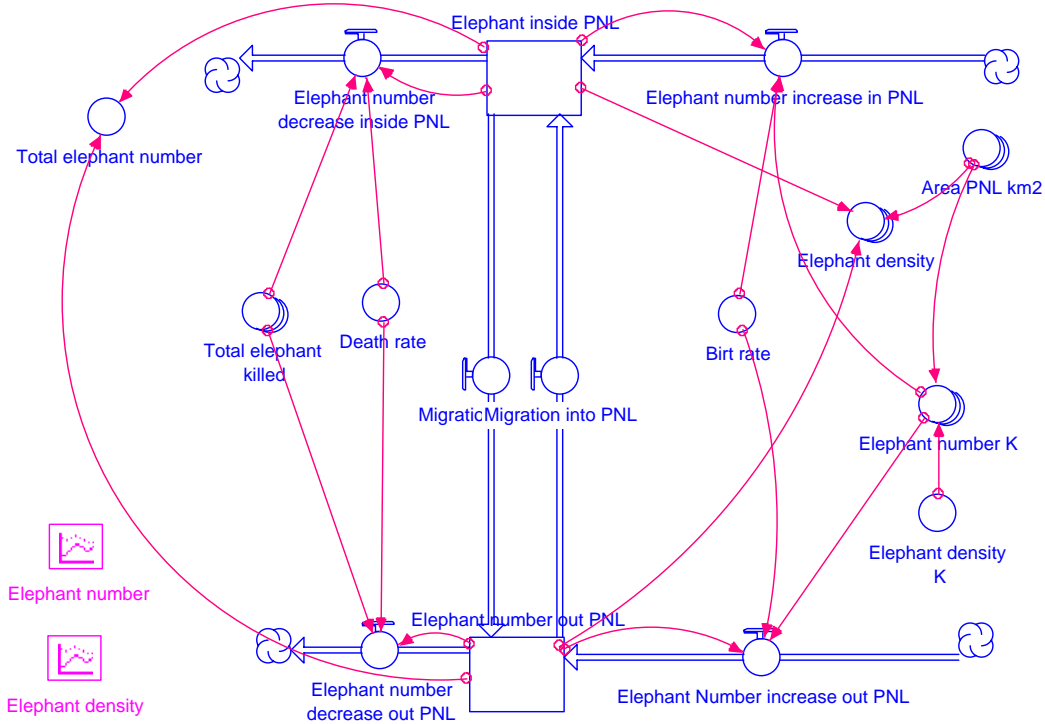
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Participant list

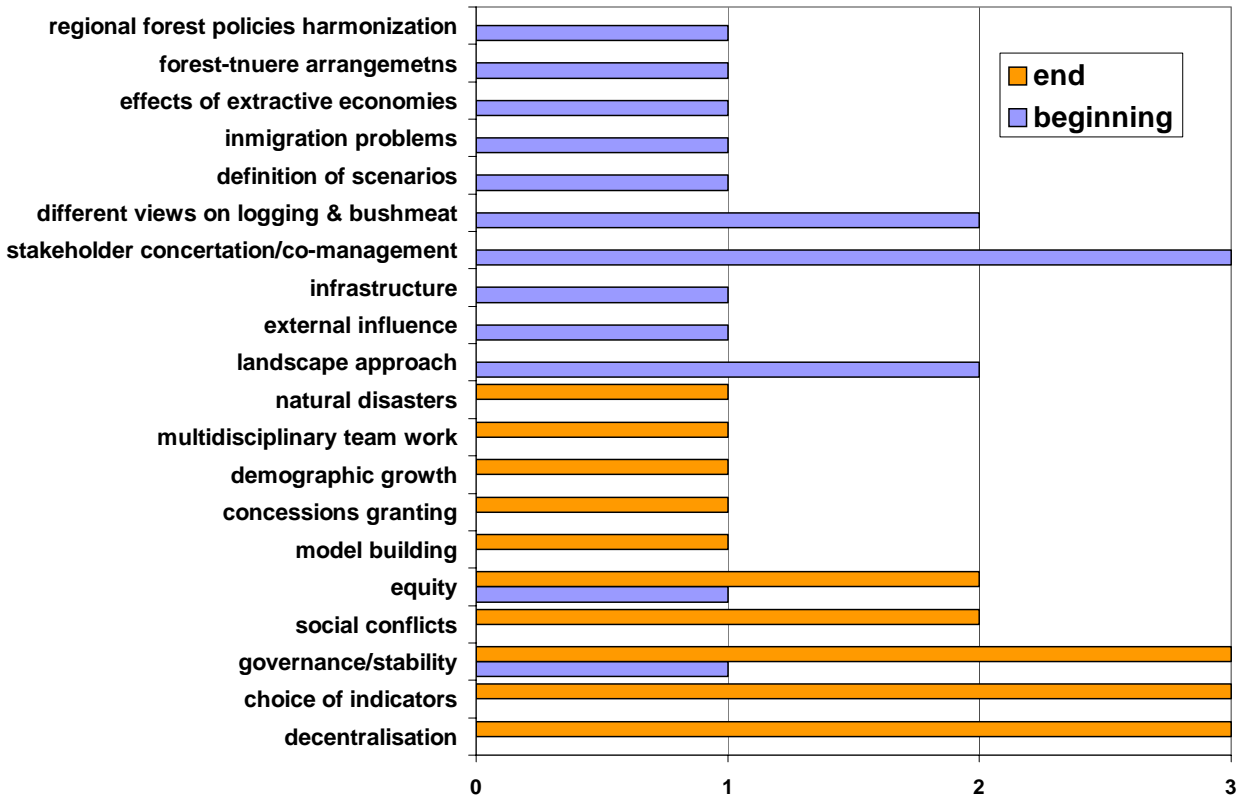
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Appendix 2. An example of a model produced by participants (using STELLA software). The model demonstrates different dynamics that could influence elephant populations in the reserve.

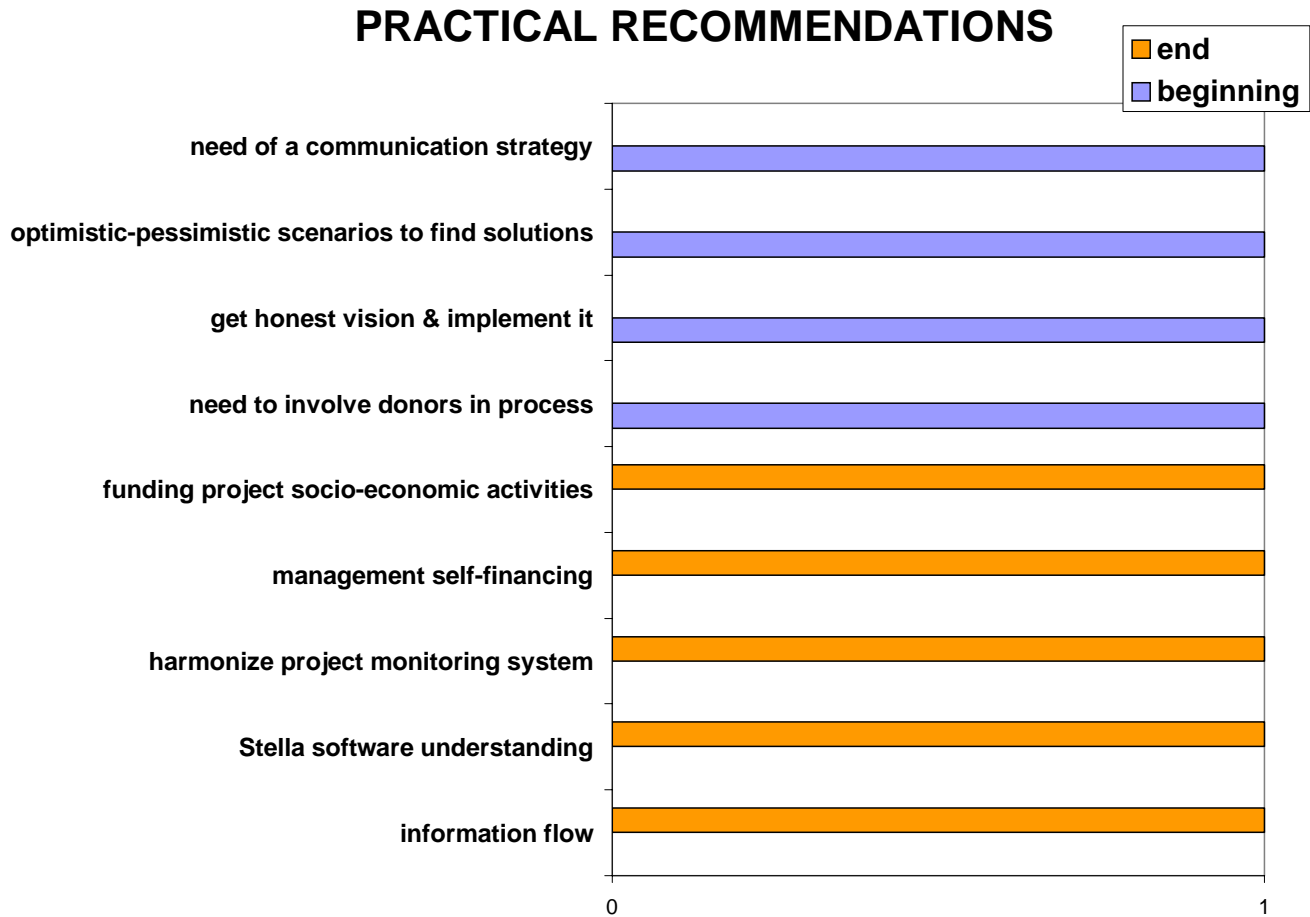


Appendix 3a: Participants new concepts of the workshop and monitoring process. Categories that arose from the flashcard activity (at the beginning and end of the workshop)

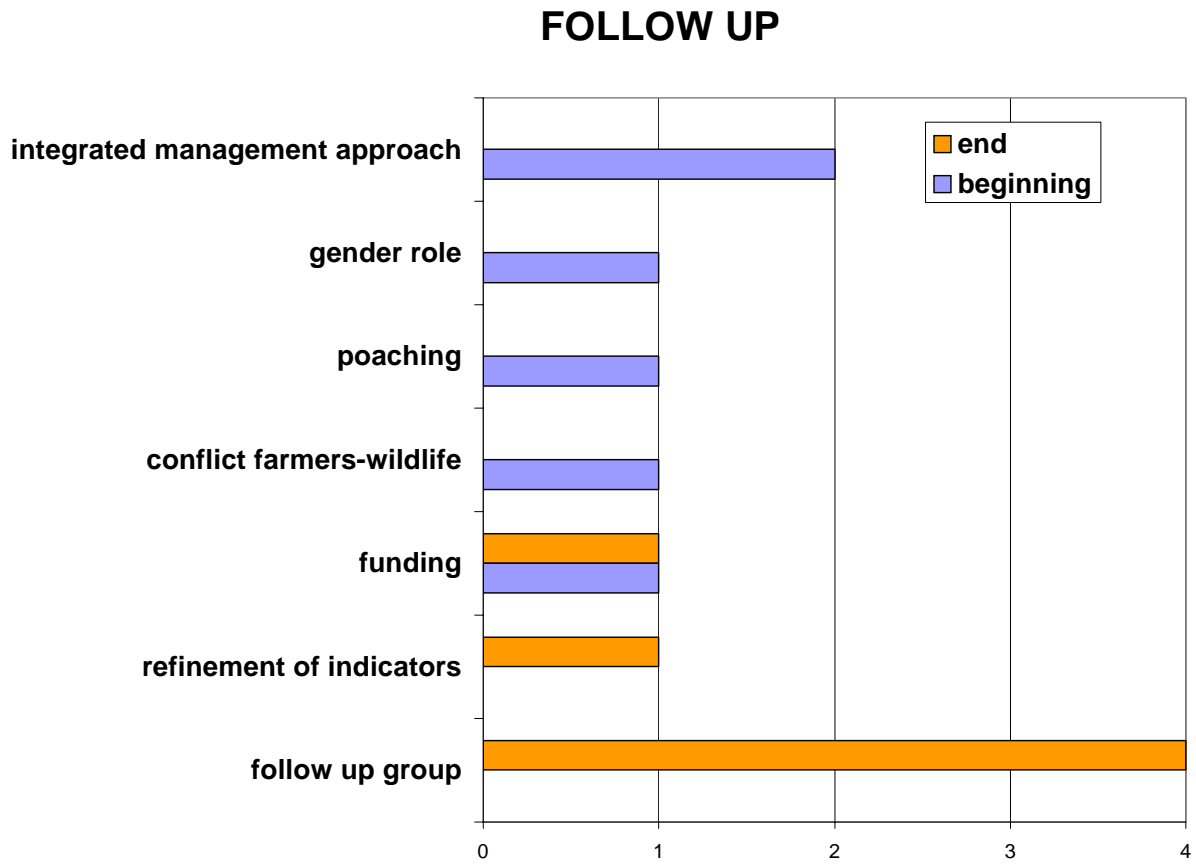
NEW CONCEPTS



Appendix 3b: Participants practical recommendations of the workshop and monitoring process. Categories that arose from the flashcard activity (at the beginning and end of the workshop)



Appendix 3c: Issues that participants believed needed ‘following up’ in relation to the workshop and monitoring process. Categories that arose from the flashcard activity (at the beginning and end of the workshop)



Appendix 3d: Participants doubts and criticisms of the workshop and monitoring process. Categories that arose from the flashcard activity (at the beginning and end of the workshop)

DOUBTS - CRITICISMS

