



A Critical Needs Assessment for Collaborative Ecotourism Development Linked to Protected Areas in Cross River State, Nigeria



**United States Forest Service International Collaboration with the Cross
River State Tourism Bureau, Cross River State Forestry Commission,
and Cross River National Park**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this US Forest Service Department of Agriculture International Programs Office (USFS/IP) mission was to assist government agency employees to refine and implement their vision for sustainable ecotourism development and related management issues linked to various protected areas in Cross River State, Nigeria (CRS). The objectives of the mission were to (1) conduct a participatory preliminary assessment of the needs of ecotourism developers and protected area managers and (2) provide a written report of observations, findings, recommendations, and implementation plans.

Method of Assessment

The USFS/IP technical assistance team dialogued with representatives from Nigerian natural resource and tourism management agencies and their key partners working in CRS. The Nigerian counterparts directly participated in the assessment to inform the reporting. Informal methods were used such as site visits; unstructured interviews; field observations and notes; and review of available documents, photos, and maps to gain a preliminary understanding of the issues, local geography, and critical needs of ecotourism developers and protected area managers.

Ecotourism for National and International Visitors

There is potential for successful ecotourism development in CRS. However, depending on the forces that drive ecotourism, it can have both positive and negative effects on society, economic stability, and ecology in CRS.

The concept of ecotourism in a Nigerian context may diverge, to some extent, from internationally recognized standards. Current levels of development at some sites in CRS are primarily business-driven tourism ventures that do not meet internationally recognized principles of ecotourism. Caution is suggested because business-driven approaches to ecotourism planning often alienate, rather than benefit, local communities. There is a need in CRS to balance the business model of tourism with a community-driven model of ecotourism which begins with the needs, values, and well being of host communities.

Ecotourism site planners in CRS need better guidelines. Developing comprehensive plans for ecotourism will allow managers to more completely identify and address the specific social and economic needs of forest communities and the ecological requirements of habitats. Future ecotourism planning in CRS could become substantially more efficient in the long-term if guided by government regulated impact assessments, policies, and laws that reflect international conventions but are flexible enough to incorporate the unique social, economic, and ecological needs of CRS and her people. Blanket policies for ecotourism solely designed to meet international conventions may fail in Nigeria.

Needs of the Cross River State Tourism Bureau

The CRSTB is a relatively new agency, established in 2003 by the CRS, with substantial organizational needs. Building institutional capacity, strengthening human resources, and streamlining management of the CRSTB are top priorities. It is

recommended that the CRSTB collaborate with outside and internal partners to conduct an assessment of its management structure and operating systems. Another short-term need is to improve the standards and quality of ecotourism sites, products, interpretive services, facilities, experiences, and community participation on a sustainable basis to meet current and future needs.

Key Findings and Recommendations for USFS Short-term Technical Assistance in Two Ecotourism Sites

Visitors and tourists are discovering the new canopy walkway and nearby Drill Ranch facilities at Afi Nature Reserve, but they are confused about how to use the area. An overall visitor experience package does not exist for the entirety of Afi Nature Reserve and the surrounding communities. Based on findings and recommendations, the USFS intends to provide short-term technical assistance to CRSTB and its partners on site planning, interpretive themes and training of tour-guides at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau. The objectives are (1) design simple primitive trails to integrate the tropical moist rainforest experience with visitor facilities, (2) link the trails and canopy walkway with the preliminary design for a visitor reception center and parking area, (3) develop interpretive themes and messages for visitor center displays, brochures, and other materials, and (4) hire and train people from neighboring communities as tour guides, rangers, and interpreters.

At Obudu Plateau, the new Cultural and Natural History Center is under construction without a site plan to integrate the Center with the Becheve Nature Reserve or aspects of the neighboring communities such as their roles in tourism or their cultural heritage and ancestral history in the Obudu Plateau area. Better access is needed to the nearby Okwangwo Division of CRNP to provide opportunities for visitors to experience local culture, art, and traditions in addition to the ecological assets of the place. It is recommended that the CRSTB and its partners work with the USFS/IP to complete a site plan for the new Cultural and Natural History Center at Obudu Plateau. The objectives are to (1) link opportunities to visit Becheve Nature Reserve and experience the culture of local communities with visitor center displays and interpretive materials and (2) in collaboration with the Nigerian Federal Government, plan to locate and construct a trail, or improve the existing trail, leading into CRNP Okwangwo Division.

Critical Needs for Cross River State Protected Areas

The boundaries of CRS Forest Reserves were mapped, marked, and legally described prior to independence but are now difficult to locate. The legal location of boundaries is confused for CRS protected areas, and the agencies and partners do not agree on the legal descriptions of boundaries shown on existing maps. In some cases, individuals, communities or businesses have taken advantage of the lack of enforceable boundaries to conduct illegal activities within protected areas.

Boundaries for the CRNP were created more recently using the original forest reserve descriptions. National Park boundaries were supposed to have been surveyed within two years of enacted legislation in the Federal National Park Service Act of 1999, but the boundaries have not been surveyed. Representatives from the NNPS that participated in

this assessment indicated that boundary location and enforcement present ongoing and long-term problems, but resources and full support from all CRNP partners are not yet available to start the long-term processes involved with legal demarcation.

The follow-up USFS/IP proposed missions in 2007 will not provide direct technical assistance, resources, or other support to address legal boundary demarcation for protected areas in CRS, but we consider determining and enforcing legal boundaries for CRS protected areas to be a critical need and priority that will require a longer-term, inclusive, and open collaborative process to resolve.

It is recommended that the CRSG continue to support the Afi Partnership in their ongoing efforts and newly funded project involving Flora and Fauna International (FFI) to set agreed upon goals and objectives for legal boundary demarcation and area management planning at Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary.

If funding and stakeholder agreement can be obtained, the NNPS and its partners such as WCS are strongly encouraged to continue their efforts to locate and delineate legal boundaries for both divisions of CRNP.

Although the NNPS Decree no. 46 of May, 1999 directs the formation of management committees (Section 21) and completion of management plans (Section 28), neither management committees or working management plans exist for CRNP. In addition, there are no protected area plans for wildlife sanctuaries. As a result, decisions about where to build facilities or where and how to alter habitat are made without clear goals and objectives.

The WCS, working with NNPS and other partners such as NCF, has obtained funds from US Fish and Wildlife Service to complete a management plan for CRNP. It is recommended that these ongoing efforts be fully supported by the CRSG.

It is recommended that the CRSG and its partners support and work to inform the efforts of FFI and NCF with the new project entitled “Community Management Planning for Sustainable Forest Livelihoods and Biodiversity Conservation at Afi Forest Complex, Cross River State, Nigeria.” Developing a management plan for the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary should be considered as an objective for this important project.

Critical Needs of the Cross River State Forestry Commission

Delineation and maintenance of forest reserve boundaries on the ground using the 1949 Reserve Settlement Orders remains of high priority for CRSFC. In view of current and past population and community expansion, some portions of forest reserve boundaries need to be readjusted to meet current realities.

Building the capacity of CRSFC staff to conduct inventory and stock surveys for selected forest reserves remains high priority.

There is a need to develop a comprehensive ecotourism plan for Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary on the part of CRSFC, CRSTB, NGOs, and leaders from local governments and neighboring communities. One of the key issues is how to address the numerous farms that now exist inside forest reserves while maintaining trust, community support, and cordial working relationships. It is critical that planning efforts seek to balance conservation objectives with the livelihood needs of the rural people because striking this balance remains the only means for sustaining community interest and collaboration.

Enhancing Capacity for Collaborative Approaches in Cross River State

Although long established partnerships such as the Afi Partnership do exist and have made remarkable progress in CRS, the degree of inclusive communication and consensus that is needed to collectively address social, economic, and ecological objectives for sustainable ecotourism development, protected area management, and natural resources conservation is substantially lacking among partners. The diverse stakeholder groups working in these areas face a number of highly complex problems, and the challenging question of how collaboration will best work to address these situations in CRS has not been adequately addressed. The government agencies, their partnering NGOs, and the other stakeholders such as forest community leaders need help in reaching consensus.

It is recommended that an inclusive group of stakeholders meet in CRS in order to (1) solidify a collaborative partnership by building new and rekindling old relationships based on trust and commitment for the long-term, (2) collectively produce a number of short-term and long-term goals and objectives on which the group can agree to implement, and (3) develop shared definitions and mutual understandings of concepts and words used to talk about ecotourism, conservation, and protected areas management, so everyone at the table understands the objectives that are emerging. This would allow the CRS partners to develop a common language to use throughout the collaborative process.

Conclusion

This assessment report is the result of international collaboration and provides insights for moving forward in CRS to develop ecotourism potentials that depend on forest communities and conservation of the State's remaining natural assets. General recommendations for addressing a number of complex challenges facing partners in CRS were identified. We outlined specific findings and short-term recommendations for implementing site planning and developing interpretive training programs at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau. Other findings from the assessment were described that represent longer-term issues at other protected areas in CRS. The CRS partners are encouraged to immediately consider how they can come together in a collaborative process to address these major challenges.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Brief History, Background, and Context

Nigeria has abundant natural resources, and the nation, working with its partners over the years, has made large strides toward conservation of this natural wealth, but the future of Nigeria's natural resources remains uncertain.

In 1962, George Petrides recommended a National Park system for Nigeria based on his extensive travels in country where he observed hunting of wildlife for local consumption and trade in bushmeat (Oates 1999). Several locations were recommended for park status, including the Oban Hills and Obudu Plateau of southeastern Nigeria in present day Cross River State (CRS). Implementing the vision to preserve the globally significant rainforests and endemic wildlife in CRS was stalled for decades because of civil war, political restructuring, and economic instability (Oates 1999).

Since Petrides, the ongoing conservation efforts of Nigerians and their outside partners have progressed. For example, Cross River National Park (CRNP) was established in 1991 by decree of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and is administered by the Nigerian National Park Service (NNPS) (Ite and Adams 2000). This federally managed National Park is located near the Cameroon border and comprises the core of a network of protected areas, including Forest Reserves, managed by the Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC), and communally owned forests and agricultural lands, partially controlled by communities. Many people live in this network of forests and protected areas surrounding CRNP. The northern division of CRNP, for example, is surrounded by more than 60 communities (Ite 1996) whose livelihoods largely depend on agriculture, and to a lesser extent, non-timber forest products, timber, and bushmeat (CRE 2006; Meludu 2004).

The Cross River State Government (CRSG), the NNPS/CRNP, and their partners from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue to face challenges. Throughout the 1990s and into this century, evidence has been documented of agricultural encroachment, illegal logging, and commercial hunting for bushmeat in protected areas, and government officials have few committed programs to adequately regulate or control exploitation (ARD BIOFOR Consortium 2004; Oates 1999). Indiscriminate logging practices have led to the suspension of the State's timber concessions (Chris Agbor, personal communication). Recently, there was an unconfirmed report that hunters had allegedly killed two Cross River gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) (Wildlife Conservation Society 2006). Cross River gorillas are a critically endangered subspecies (Oates and others 2003; Sarmiento and Oates 2000). These small fragmented gorilla populations hold tremendous scientific value in the form of endemic biodiversity and ecotourism potential.

Economic development and stability are priorities for the CRSG, and intensive tourism development is the current thrust. This is evident in the newly created CRS Tourism Bureau (CRSTB) and the ongoing construction of TINAPA, a large-scale, integrated business and leisure resort, situated next to the Free Trade Zone on the Calabar River (NigerianBusinessInfo 2005). The TINAPA resort is expected to bring domestic and

foreign visitors to CRS, some of whom are expected to travel to the interior to visit places such as Afi Nature Reserve, Obudu Plateau, and CRNP in search of smaller-scale cultural and ecotourism experiences (Tony Bassey and Stephen Haruna, personal communication). The CRSTB and its partners recognize a need to balance business-driven tourism projects like TINAPA with smaller, community-based ecotourism operations, which, if properly planned and operated, can help to achieve social, economic, and ecological objectives for CRS (Hochachka and Liu 2005).

Expectations for economic development are being raised on promises of tourism, but it is uncertain how increased tourism will affect long-term community development, protected area management, and biodiversity conservation. A successful ecotourism industry in CRS will depend on supportive and healthy host communities, protection of remaining natural assets, and preservation of rich cultural diversity (Wearing 2001). However, the integration of conservation and economic development through alternative livelihoods has failed to meet expectations of CRS communities in the past (Ite and Adams 2000; Oates 1999). Moreover, it has been documented that most protected areas in CRS lack clearly demarcated, legally enforceable boundaries and management plans.

The CRSG, NNPS, and partnering NGOs recognize a need to collaboratively formulate policies and plans to reduce threats to forest communities, protected areas and wildlife, and the broader landscape while beginning to realize ecotourism potentials. Recently, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has obtained funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to support the development of a comprehensive management plan for CRNP (Andrew Dunn, personal communication). The CRSG has also partnered with the United States Government (USG) to preliminarily plan and implement ecotourism operations that have linkages with the State's important protected areas and forest communities. This report details the results of the initial USG assessment mission sponsored CRSG.

B. Purpose, Objectives, and Activities of the Mission

In the role of international partner, the US Forest Service Department of Agriculture, International Programs Office (USFS/IP) was consulted by the CRSG to conduct an assessment of needs focused on collaborative ecotourism development in and near forest communities and protected areas in CRS. Providing assistance in this role is consistent with the vision of USFS/IP for its work with West African nations:

Facilitation of transparent and sustainable forest management to promote economic development and regional stability via empowered communities and strengthened institutions.

A technical assistance mission to CRS was organized (Appendices I and II). The USFS/IP team (We) consisted of three individuals with experience working in Africa and knowledge of and skills in protected area management, community development, collaboration, and principles of ecotourism. The overall purpose of this assessment was to develop specific, short-term work plans to address site planning, ecotourism, and collaboration with communities and partners at Afi Nature Reserve at Buanchor and the Obudu Plateau while giving secondary consideration to longer-term initiatives at other

CRS protected areas and forest reserves, including CRNP. The specific objectives were to (1) conduct a participatory rapid assessment of related needs for ecotourism developers, protected area managers, and their partners and (2) provide a written report of observations, findings, recommendations, and proposed plans for guiding implementation and moving forward.

Guided by principles of participatory action research (Stringer 1999), we used informal methods such as site visits, unstructured interviews, field observations, field notes, and review of available documents to gain a preliminary qualitative understanding of the situation in CRS (Beebe 1995). We asked questions; listened to presentations; and discussed past, present, and future issues. Available resources such as maps, aerial photographs, and satellite images were studied to learn local geography and to identify priority areas for ecotourism development in and around CRS protected areas. During mission activities, we primarily interacted with key individuals within CRSTB, CRSFC, and CRNP. Representatives from these Nigerian agencies accompanied our team during formal meetings and site visits and played a large role in steering the assessment and structuring the report.

We formally and informally met and spoke with other people and partners (Appendices III and VI). We were in Nigeria fifteen days, and adequate time was not allocated to thoroughly interact with all government agencies, local NGOs, and community leaders who have a stake in the complex problems surrounding ecotourism development and protected area management in CRS. We consider this to be an unfortunate limitation of this particular assessment, but key partners in CRS, both in and outside of government, have reviewed and commented on the report, and their input is reflected herein.

With our Nigerian counterparts, we made site visits to:

- Boki Birds Protection Foundation at Bashu, a community-based ecotourism initiative centered around conservation of the Grey Necked Picathartes;
- Drill Ranch primate rehabilitation center, operated by Pandrillus Foundation, at Afi Nature Reserve at Buanchor in Boki Local Government Area;
- the canopy walkway at Afi Nature Reserve, Buanchor;
- the Oban Hills Division of CRNP near the Kwa River;
- the community of Butatong and the Bemil River;
- Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and Swallow City at Ebakken near Boje;
- Becheve Nature Reserve and canopy walkway at Obudu Plateau;
- the resort, dairy, and cable cars at Obudu Plateau;
- the water park at Bottom Hill, Obudu Plateau;
- the future site of the Olongo Safari Hotel and Bebi Airstrip; and
- the TINAPA construction site, near Calabar.

With our Nigerian counterparts, we spoke with area and project managers, guides, rangers, and other agency representatives, NGO staff, and residents and leaders from communities at these sites. We observed, photographed, and discussed unique community, forestry, conservation, and ecotourism attributes, issues, and potentials and considered specific locations and facilities for ecotourism planning and development. As an international collaborator (Western 2003), the USFS/IP desires to build relationships that support existing partnerships in CRS and elsewhere. The intention of this report is to complement the work of others by documenting and reformulating many of their previous findings. The intention is to build on existing projects, programs, facilities, and policies already set in progress by the CRSTB, CRSFC, NNPS/CRNP, and a number of NGOs.

We also learned of three community-centered projects in CRS: (1) Centre for Education, Research and Conservation of Primates and Nature (CERCOPAN); (2) Ekuri Community Forest Management Initiative (Dunn and Otu 1996); and (3) Sustainable Practices in Agriculture for Critical Environments Project (SPACE). Although not formally responsible for ecotourism development or protected area management, these projects used methods of community involvement and engagement that can be used as models for the inclusive collaboration that will be needed to address the highly complex problems and critical needs identified in this report. Community successes and lessons learned from these collaborative initiatives should be considered when planning and operating ecotourism sites in CRS.

III. WHAT SHOULD GUIDE ECOTOURISM IN CROSS RIVER STATE?

A. Ecotourism for National and International Visitors

Ecotourism has become an important economic activity in and near protected areas around the world (Drumm and others 2004). A recent case study on ecotourism in CRS conducted by the Cross River Environmental Capacity Development Coalition (CRE) reported:

“Ecotourism holds immense potential for CRS as a viable economic alternative and a strategy to protect its globally significant rainforests ... a promising sustainable development initiative that would positively impact rural villages, the CRSG and the flora and fauna of CRS” (Hochachka and Liu 2005).

Finding 1

In the assessment, we observed potential for successful ecotourism development in CRS. It is important that we restate that ecotourism is not a panacea, however. Depending on the forces that drive ecotourism, it can have both positive and negative effects on society, economic stability, and ecology in Nigeria and elsewhere (Buckley 2001; Hochachka and Liu 2005; Lindberg and Hawkins 1993; Scheyvens 1999; Wearing 2001).

The concept of ecotourism in a Nigerian context may diverge, to some extent, from internationally recognized standards. We observed that current levels of development at the Obudu Plateau, for example, are primarily business-driven tourism ventures that do not meet internationally recognized principles of ecotourism. Similar observations have been reported by the CRE Project. Implementing the recommendations described below for site planning at the Obudu Plateau would add smaller-scale cultural and ecological components that are more characteristic of ecotourism.

The CRSG considers large-scale tourism developments to be legitimate avenues for economic development in CRS. The CRSTB has expressed a desire to offer tourists a diversity, or spectrum, of opportunities. We encourage providing a range of tourism experiences as a preferable development strategy in CRS. Projects such as TINAPA and Obudu Resort are best positioned at the large-scale, business end of this spectrum and require adequate planning, regulation, and evaluation that will differ in many respects from the planning required for smaller-scale ecotourism projects at the opposite end of the spectrum that are community-driven. The Boki Birds operation at Bashu, for example, provides a different experience from Obudu Resort, and, therefore, it requires different planning and monitoring strategies than Obudu Resort.

Nigerian culture, in general, is business oriented, so it is easy to see how business could become the main driving force behind ecotourism in CRS, but caution is suggested because business-driven approaches to ecotourism planning often alienate, rather than incorporate and benefit, local communities (Scheyvens 1999). There is a need within the CRSTB to balance the business model of tourism with a community-driven model of ecotourism which begins with the needs, values, and well being of host communities.

Internationally recognized principles of ecotourism can be used as guides for achieving balance in development, and, perhaps, for defining what ecotourism means for Nigerians in a Nigerian context. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has adopted the following definition to guide ecotourism planners and operators:

“Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas (and any accompanying cultural features) in order to enjoy and appreciate nature, that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples” (Ceballos-Lascurain 2006).

The CRE Project cited this definition as a guide for ecotourism development in CRS, recommending that, prior to developing sites for ecotourism, socio-economic and environmental impact assessments be completed with specific directions for how to reduce negative impacts. The Environmental Impact Assessment Decree (No. 86) was enacted in 1992 by the FGN, and ecotourism developers are required by law to complete these assessments (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication). The decree describes mandatory conditions for environmental impact assessments pertaining to resort and recreational development, including within National Parks, which most likely encompasses ecotourism development. Planners of ecotourism in CRS are strongly encouraged to develop a process for complying with this existing legislation.

The CRE Project also recommended that the CRSG, in collaboration with key partners, develop and implement a long-term ecotourism strategy modeled after internationally recognized ecotourism standards (Edom and others 2006). During the assessment, we confirmed that site planners do require better guidelines for ecotourism at places such as Afi Nature Reserve, Obudu Plateau, and Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. Developing comprehensive plans for ecotourism at these sites would allow managers to more completely identify and address the specific social and economic needs of neighboring communities and the ecological requirements of habitats. Future ecotourism planning in CRS could become substantially more efficient in the long-term if guided by government regulated impact assessments, policies, and laws that reflect international conventions but that are designed to meet specific situations in CRS.

Recommendation 1a

As a starting point, the CRSTB, CRSFC, and NNPS/CRNP are encouraged to revisit the general recommendations outlined on pages 18-20 of the CRE ecotourism case study (Hochachka and Liu 2005) to gain basic insights about international conventions for ecotourism. Where appropriate, some of these insights might be adapted to specific conditions at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau, for example, before and during business and site planning. Challenges can be expected at sites where visitor facilities and tourists already exist, but changes can, and should be made to current operations, existing plans, and future plans as conditions at these places change and new information is learned through an adaptive and collaborative decision-making process involving CRSTB and its partners such as CRE, CRSFC, Pandrillus Foundation, and USFS/IP.

Recommendation 1b

We encourage the federal and state government agencies in CRS to consider developing additional strategies, policies, and laws for ecotourism that are modeled after international standards where appropriate. Above all, ecotourism policies, plans, and laws must include flexibility to incorporate the unique social, economic, and ecological needs of CRS and her people (Western 2003). Flexible plans and policies better allow changes over time than do rigid planning strategies. Blanket policies for ecotourism designed to strictly meet international conventions may fail in a Nigerian context.

B. Prerequisite Needs of the Cross River State Tourism Bureau

Finding 2

The CRSTB is a relatively new agency, established in 2003 by the CRSG, with substantial organizational needs. At present, there is no ecotourism specialist employed, for example. Building institutional capacity, strengthening human resources, and streamlining management of the CRSTB are top priorities. Recognizing basic needs for organizational capacity, the CRSTB has formulated and shared with us two short-term objectives (Tony Bassey, personal communication).

- Organizational development of the CRSTB is a priority objective. It is critical that the CRSTB receives adequate technical assistance to carry out its role as the driver of tourism growth in CRS.

- A second objective is to re-engineer the organization to fulfill its mandate as a service provider and sector manager through targeted service, vocational training, and skills development in both the private sector and within CRSTB.

In addition, the CRSTB requested direct technical assistance and support from USFS/IP to address a number of related areas (Appendix I). However, more time, expertise, and research would be needed to fully address this entire suite of issues and priorities. We do consider documenting their needs to be an important first step for the CRSTB in achieving and sustaining ecotourism development. In this section, we attempt to reformulate and prioritize some of the short-term needs of the CRSTB.

Recommendation 2

We suggest that the first priority action for meeting these two objectives would be to conduct an assessment study of the management structure and operating systems of the CRSTB. Collaboration with outside partners to conduct this assessment will be required. Professionals from Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI), Citizens Development Corps (CDC)/JOBS NIGERIA, REFORM, and/or World Bank or others, with experience in developing organizational capacity for tourism agencies and business organizations in West Africa, should be consulted to help the CRSTB employees to:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses in how CRSTB currently operates;
- Identify other governmental agencies with which to partner;
- Identify private sector organizations and clients with which to partner;
- Reformulate specific needs for technical assistance, and then identify and contact potential sources to provide the technical assistance needed;
- Determine and better understand what policies and laws enable and empower CRSTB so that these can be applied to the design and improvement of budgets, operating directives, policies, etc. (If current legislation and policies are found to be inadequate, propose new policies and amendments to current laws.);
- Assess operational/business sectors within CRSTB for redundancy (For example, is it necessary to hire an ecotourism/conservation specialist, or can this position be staffed by a current employee who receives additional training?);
- Assess operational/business sectors for needs and inadequacies;
- Inventory skills and credentials of current staff and better match these skill sets to business sectors such as ecotourism, conservation, planning, marketing, budgeting, etc;
- Determine training needs for supervisors and staff, leading to a training curriculum and training sessions;
- Identify potential sources of internal funding or revenue (and outside donors) to support training, equipping, and furthering the education of staff;

- Identify and consult with outside partners who are capable of developing and conducting training sessions for CRSTB staff;
- Locate and target sources of skilled professionals in CRS and Nigeria such as universities and vocational schools for technical assistance and recruitment of staff as needed; and
- Reformulate and draft new vision and mission statements and priority objectives based on the results of these assessments, if determined necessary.

Finding 3

The CRSTB has another short-term objective, which is to improve the standards and quality of ecotourism sites, products, interpretive services, facilities, experiences, and community participation on a sustainable basis to meet current and future needs (Tony Bassey, personal communication).

Recommendation 3a

We suggest the following actions for moving forward:

- Work with partners such as CRSFC and Pandrillus Foundation to identify current needs by directly asking tourists at Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway and Drill Ranch, Obudu Plateau, and Bashu what they think should be added or removed so as to improve visitor experience and facilities. Short survey post cards can be developed and handed to tourists by the local guides and rangers to be collected on site and/or mailed back to CRSTB in Calabar (Knudson and others 2003);
- At these sites, advertise and make available a website address, an email address, and/or comment cards so that the CRSTB staff responsible for marketing research can receive feedback from visitors. Inform visitors that the agency is seeking their comments and suggestions about existing programs and facilities. Keep record of the responses and periodically tabulate results.
- Project future needs for visitor products, experiences, and facilities by comparing the current situation to estimated future tourism demand and the changing needs of visitors; additional long-term research, monitoring, and evaluation at tourism and ecotourism sites will be required;
- Determine who will support and conduct this evaluation research: CRSTB staff, local community staff, and/or outside consultants closely working with and training CRSTB local staff;
- Identify consulting partners who can support and conduct training of staff in determining schedules, guidelines, and timelines for needs assessments, marketing research, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of ecotourism operations;
- Follow similar assessment procedures to identify the current and future needs for communities that neighbor ecotourism developments; for example, conduct an

assessment of the needs, skills, and resources of key communities such as Buanchor and Bebi to determine how and to what extent community members can participate in tourism at Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway and the Bebi airstrip at Obudu Plateau, respectively. An opportunity may exist to work with the Afi Partnership and local cocoa farmers near Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary to develop opportunities for tourists to the Boje area to learn about cocoa bean production, farming traditions, and Nigerian culture in addition to the forests and wildlife of the area;

- Do the same to determine the needs and skills of local guides and rangers who are employed at ecotourism sites before designing new trainings (These employees may not require training in the interpretation of local culture or identification and usage of non-timber forest products if they are local people who have lived near the site for years, but they may need training in basic first aid and ecological interpretation to develop skills, for example.); and
- Conduct similar assessment procedures to determine site specific needs for conservation and visitor education materials such as posters, booklets, brochures, maps, trail signs and learning kiosks, displays, and education programs in visitor centers and cultural centers at existing sites. This information can be used by CRSTB planners and their partners for developing visitor interpretation at current and future tourism and ecotourism sites.

Recommendation 3b

We suggest that at least one employee of the CRSTB be rededicated to identifying and prioritizing specific ecotourism development initiatives and future sites within CRS. This employee would also be responsible for identifying and partnering with private sector businesses and development and conservation organizations such as JOBS NIGERIA and NCF to support the work with matching grants between CRSTB and outside partners.

IV. KEY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This section describes a proposal for two additional USFS/IP missions to CRS. The missions will be short-term and will provide technical assistance and training. Details for implementation are described. The intent is to start incrementally by working out a template for addressing the most critical and basic needs related to site planning and interpretation at two sites where underdeveloped ecotourism attractions and facilities currently exist but are in need of further planning. Once tested and refined at these specific places, the plans may be adapted and applied to other ecotourism developments linked to other protected areas managed by the CRSG and NNPS.

Findings and recommendations from the assessment activities are outlined and described in two sub sections, one for each proposed USFS/IP mission, including (1) short-term priority needs for ecotourism planning and site design at Afi Nature Reserve and

enhancement of existing tourism facilities at Obudu Plateau and (2) development of interpretive materials and training of local tour guides and rangers at these sites.

Recommendations for Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau are outlined together because these will be implemented simultaneously due to constraints of time, resources, and staff for CRSTB and the USFS/IP.

A. Ecotourism Development and Site Planning for Afi Nature Reserve and Tourism Enhancement at Obudu Plateau

Findings 4 and 5

4) Visitors and tourists are discovering the new canopy walkway and nearby Drill Ranch facilities at Afi Nature Reserve, but they are confused about how to use the area. An overall visitor experience package does not exist for the entirety of Afi Nature Reserve and surrounding communities. There is no visitor reception center, identification and roles of local guides and rangers are unclear, fees are not collected, existing trails do not have signs, and future opportunities for new trails in the area to view the river and access visitor facilities are under discussion but the planning process has not been initiated. The roles and participation of neighboring communities are not well understood or defined.

5) At Obudu Plateau, the new Cultural and Natural History Center is under construction without a site plan to integrate with the Becheve Nature Reserve or aspects of the neighboring communities such as their roles in tourism or their cultural heritage and ancestral history in the Obudu Plateau. In addition, better access is needed to the nearby Okwangwo Division of CRNP, which could offer additional opportunities for visitors to experience local culture, art, and traditions in addition to ecological assets.

Recommendations 4 and 5

4) Complete a site plan for Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway area. Design simple trails to integrate the tropical moist rainforest experience with visitor facilities. Link the trails and canopy walkway with the preliminary design for a visitor reception center and parking area near the road. Discuss planning for interpretive themes and messages for visitor center displays and for brochures and materials and hire and train locals as tour guides, rangers, and environmental/cultural interpreters (see Finding 6).

5) Complete a site plan for the new Cultural and Natural History Center at Obudu Plateau, linking opportunities to visit Becheve Nature Reserve and experience the culture of local communities with visitor center displays and interpretive materials. Preliminary planning should be completed to locate and construct a trail, or improve the existing trail, leading into CRNP Okwangwo Division. Since this action involves the CRNP, formal permission is required and must be obtained from the NNPS in Abuja prior to planning and implementation. Also, ecotourism developments that link Becheve Nature Reserve and CRNP should be completed within the context of the ongoing efforts of CRNP, WCS, and other partners to develop a management plan for CRNP Okwangwo Division.

Objective. Provide immediate design support to CRSTB and its associated partners for ecotourism development at Afi Nature Reserve and canopy walkway at Buanchor and tourism enhancement at the Obudu Plateau Cultural and Natural History Center.

Methods. A landscape architect with USFS/IP will provide the technical assistance and will work directly with key employees of the CRSTB and other stakeholders such as Pandrillus Foundation to inform appropriate design goals for the site plans. The landscape architect should bring a laptop computer (and extra battery components) with appropriate software for designing site plans. One possibility for base maps is digital orthophotos (scale 1:10,000) available from the Ministry of Lands, Surveys, and Housing in CRS (Department of Surveys), although no contours are available. Other base maps may be available from design work previously completed by Greenheart Conservation Company for the Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway, or contractors at Obudu Plateau for the Cultural and Natural History Center.

The USFS/IP West Africa Programs Manager, in collaboration with CRSTB and partners, will write a concise Scope of Work for the landscape architect and the CRSTB liaisons for this mission. The Scope of Work should closely follow the recommendations, objectives, and methods outlined in this report section to keep the mission on track. As a matter of protocol, the USFS/IP mission team will begin in Calabar by briefly meeting with the CRSTB director and other key partners, but it is essential that the bulk of the time be spent at the Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway and Obudu Plateau.

Participants. The USFS/IP will organize and cost-share with CRSTB a technical assistance mission to CRS in late February or early March 2007. A landscape architect will provide technical assistance with site planning. The CRSTB will provide liaisons to work with the landscape architect to coordinate key contacts with other stakeholders such as Pandrillus Foundation and traditional rulers from Buanchor community and local government authorities from the area.

The architect contractor, who developed the visitor center design plans for the Afi Nature Reserve will work with the landscape architect to integrate site planning with facility design.

Other stakeholders such as Pandrillus Foundation, NCF, and CRSFC should be strongly encouraged to appoint liaisons to consult with the landscape architect at Afi Nature Reserve.

CRSTB will appoint a second liaison to work with the landscape architect at the Obudu Plateau.

At both Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau, local communities must play key roles in planning, decision making, and, eventually, operation. Local tour guides and rangers are currently working at both sites, which will be continued. The CRSTB will contact traditional community leaders at both Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau and strongly encourage them to appoint community liaisons to work with the USFS/IP

landscape architect and the CRSTB liaisons in discussing the extent and methods of involving local communities at these sites early on in the site planning phase. Guides and rangers from the local area may best serve in the role of liaison.

Each site will also require a specific business plan that would ideally be developed before or during site planning by a partnering organization to be determined. The CRSTB should pursue the opportunity to work with a tourism planning specialist to complete the business plans. The extent and methods of community involvement should be explicitly written into these business plans to institutionalize local participation, income generation, alternative livelihoods, and other benefits and to facilitate a sense of local pride and self-sufficiency for neighboring communities rather than resentment toward the CRSG.

Timeline. This is a tentative schedule subject to changes.

February-March 2007

- Complete site planning for Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway area in approximately 7-10 days.
- Complete facility plan for the Cultural and Natural History Center at Obudu Plateau in approximately 5-7 days.

Constraints. Andersen (1993) recommended that developers of ecotourism facilities first assess the existing infrastructure, physical resources, and human capabilities of an area prior to constructing visitor facilities. Although facilities exist and some visitors have begun to arrive at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau, these sites are far from completion, and it remains necessary to identify and address constraints related to roads and transportation as well as constraints on water supply and sustainable power sources. For example, roads conditions between Calabar and these two sites need improvement. The Bebi airstrip, which services the Obudu Plateau, may need to be expanded, and the villagers near the Bebi airport have no current social or economic connection with the tourists who arrive to visit Obudu Plateau. The water supply at the Obudu site should be assessed to determine if it will meet projected growth in tourism.

The USFS/IP technical assistants and their CRS liaisons should recognize that the Afi Nature Reserve has been called Drill Ranch for over a decade, and Pandrillus Foundation originally negotiated with the community of Buanchor to lease this land from 1993-2005 (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication). The CRSG has now secured it for the purposes of Pandrillus Foundation and the operation of the canopy walkway facilities by the CRSTB. All Pandrillus project facilities are on this land, and Pandrillus has expressed plans for the area, such as rehabilitation and tree planting, now that community farms are abandoned and farmers have received compensation from the CRSG. The site was strategically selected for the Pandrillus project to preserve a habitat corridor from Afi Mountain down to the lowland forest reserve, extending east towards the Mbe Mountains where there is a sub-population of endangered gorillas (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication). For this reason, ecotourism developments on this land must be carefully planned to restore and preserve as much forest as possible to maintain this habitat corridor. There should be inclusive participation in planning for this small but strategic

area, especially with Pandrillus Foundation and Buanchor Community who have substantial stake and long-term investment there, but also with their Afi partners (CRSFC, FFI, NCF, and WCS), who are collectively concerned with the habitat corridor and have been working together as a focused group in the area for several years (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication).

The USFS/IP landscape architect may be distracted by, or unintentionally drawn into, larger issues at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau unless the landscape architect and the CRS liaisons closely follow a concise Scope of Work for the short period of time allotted to complete this mission. Both sites have noticeable needs for design beyond what will be contained in the USFS/IP Scope of Work for this proposed mission. There is a risk that the landscape architect involved with site planning will begin negotiations with community members that spiral into many issues that he or she does not have proper time or expertise to address.

Support for software needs does not exist in CRS outside Calabar.

Office space at Afi Nature Reserve is minimal and may be unavailable. The Drill Ranch primate rehabilitation and ecotourism facility operated by Pandrillus Foundation may be the best partner to provide office support to the USFS/IP team members, but discussions and coordination with the management staff at Pandrillus will be necessary to find out if appropriate facilities are available at Drill Ranch for the work of this mission.

Each of these constraints and others that are not yet identified will need to be carefully considered and addressed before and during site planning at Afi Nature Reserve, Obudu Plateau, and similar sites designated for future ecotourism development in CRS.

B. Development of Interpretation and Training of Tour Guides

Finding 6

Closely related to business and site planning is planning for interpretation. The overall goal of an interpretive plan is to convey to visitors the primary story of an ecotourism site, the value of the site, and what it means for the visitor and the neighboring communities (Knudson and others 2003). A short-term need exists to plan for and develop interpretive themes, concepts, and visitor materials for Afi Nature Reserve and the Cultural and Natural History Center/Becheve Nature Reserve at Obudu Plateau.

In addition, there is an immediate need to develop curriculum, programs, and training workshops for local tour guides and interpretive rangers at both sites. The CRSTB has the ability to train tour guides and rangers about work ethics such as showing up on time, remaining at post, wearing a crisp uniform, smiling, being courteous, answering inquiries politely, and other "good host" training. The CRSTB most likely requires some short-term assistance in training tour guides and rangers about creating interpretive themes and messages from those themes, methods of delivering effective interpretive messages, and work duties to fill the time between interpretive programs or walks when visitors are not present at their duty sites.

Recommendation 6

Develop visitor education materials such as posters, booklets, brochures, maps, trail signs and learning kiosks, displays, and education programs in visitor centers and cultural centers at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau. The materials should focus on the ecological and cultural attributes of each site and how preservation of these areas is intertwined with the livelihoods and well-being of surrounding communities and populations of endemic plants and wildlife.

Develop, organize, and conduct trainings for the tour guides and interpretive rangers working at each location.

Objectives. Provide short-term design, development, and training support to CRSTB and its associated partners for ecological and cultural interpretation and visitor education at Afi Nature Reserve canopy walkway at Buanchor and the Obudu Plateau Cultural and Natural History Center/Becheve Nature Reserve.

Methods. The USFS/IP team will provide technical assistance and will work directly with key employees of the CRSTB and other partners such as CRSFC, Pandrillus Foundation, and those at Obudu Plateau. The interpretive specialist and trainer should bring a laptop computer (with extra battery components) and appropriate computer software for conducting training presentations and simulations and designing educational materials.

The USFS/IP West Africa Programs Manager, in collaboration with CRSTB and partners, will write a concise Scope of Work for the interpretive and training specialists and the CRSTB liaisons, which should closely follow the recommendations, objectives, and methods outlined in this report to keep the mission on track. The USFS/IP mission team will begin in Calabar by briefly meeting with the CRSTB director and other key partners as needed, but it is essential that the bulk of the time be spent with local tour guides and rangers at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau and at a central meeting place to conduct the training workshop.

The primary themes for the content of the training course curriculum should generally include, but not be limited to (see Drumm and others 2004):

- Natural history of the sites and surrounding areas including the major species of plants and animals (i.e., communities and ecosystems), how these ecological components interact, and the conservation status of each;
- Cultural attractions including history, archaeology, and traditional activities and foods, and the relationships between culture and ecology at the sites;
- The conservation priorities and activities of those who manage the sites;
- Guides and interpretive rangers need to be aware of the rules and regulations governing visitor use of the sites and facilities, including how ecotourism is defined and how it is applied at the sites;

- Guides and interpretive rangers need to learn how to best manage groups of visitors that have disparate attention spans, knowledge levels, expectations, and reasons for visiting the sites; and
- Basic interpretive and communication techniques and strategies.

We recommend using, and bringing to CRS, two comprehensive manuals designed for training tour guides and interpretive rangers.

- RARE Center for Tropical Conservation. 2001. *Interpreting for conservation: A manual for training local nature guides*. Arlington, Virginia: RARE Center for Tropical Conservation.
- Ham, S. 1992. *Environmental interpretation: A practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets*. Golden, Colorado: North American Press.

Participants. A second USFS/IP mission to CRS will be organized to implement these recommendations and will be funded by a cost share agreement between CRSTB and USFS/IP. The USFS/IP team will consist of an ecological and cultural interpretive planner/specialist and a tour-guide/interpretive trainer both with experience working in rural Africa.

At Afi Nature Reserve, the USFS/IP team should work closely with liaisons from CRSTB, Buanchor Community and Pandrillus Foundation. Representatives from CRSFC can be consulted as technical specialists in flora and fauna identification and natural history. Members of the neighboring forest communities can be consulted as technical specialists in identification and use of non-timber forest products and to explain key cultural aspects of their people.

At Obudu Plateau, the USFS/IP team should work closely with liaisons from CRSTB, Becheve Nature Reserve, and NNPS/CRNP Okwangwo Division.

Timeline. This is a temporary schedule subject to changes.

March - April 2007

- Conduct an assessment of training needs to determine the skill base of current tour guides and interpretive rangers in approximately 5-7 days.
- Consult with partners at CRSTB, Pandrillus Foundation, Obudu Plateau, and community leaders about which interpretive themes and messages are most appropriate for each site in approximately 5-7 days.
- Conduct a workshop to teach interpretive planning and skills that are most lacking and the themes for interpretation that are most appropriate in approximately 5-7 days.

Constraints. It is critical that a substantial number of the tour guides and interpretive rangers to be hired and trained come from neighboring communities. When tour guides and interpreters are from local communities, they can serve an important role in improving communication between the administrators of the site and the neighboring communities, especially when misunderstandings between the two occur (Drumm and others 2004). If the CRSTB primarily hires guides that originate in Calabar or regions of Nigeria far from Afi and Obudu, business relations with local communities cannot be expected to prosper.

USFS/IP technical assistants should recognize that there is a relatively long and varied history of relations between Pandrillus Foundation and the community of Buanchor and an inclusive approach to interpretive planning will be necessary. Both groups have valid needs and desires that should be taken into account during the decision-making process.

Training of tour guides and interpretive rangers should not be a one-time event (Drumm and others 2004). Courses and curriculum will need to be continually developed and updated, and employees at each site will need to receive additional trainings as conditions and visitors change over time.

It is recommended that the CRSTB and other site administrators make an effort to hire some female guides and interpreters from the local communities as well as hiring and training young men, which are currently the majority at these sites. Many of the visitors to these sites will be females who will appreciate learning from and meeting female residents of CRS. Older, well-respected community members should also be hired and trained to work at the sites (Drumm and others 2004).

V. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We present additional findings and recommendations based on our assessment activities. The USFS/IP will not be directly involved in implementing these general recommendations in the foreseeable future, but these are worth noting in the report because these issues could substantially impact current and future activities in CRS protected areas and the success of ecotourism. The USFS/IP considers documenting these observations to be an important prerequisite for achieving and sustaining successful ecotourism, conservation, community development, and protected area management.

A. Critical Needs for Cross River State Protected Areas

Finding 7

The boundaries of CRS Forest Reserves were mapped, marked, and legally described prior to independence but are now difficult to discern. Survey pillars were installed at various locations in 1949, but most are now missing, difficult to locate, or clearly see. The legal location of boundaries is confused for CRNP and other protected areas (ARD BIOFOR Consortium 2004), and the agencies and partners working in CRS do not agree on the legal descriptions of boundaries shown on existing maps. In some cases, individuals, communities or businesses have taken advantage of the confusion and lack of

enforcement to conduct illegal activities within protected areas such as agricultural plantations, construction for community expansion, poaching, and commercial tree plantations.

Boundaries for the CRNP were created more recently using the original forest reserve descriptions. National Park boundaries were supposed to have been surveyed within two years of enacted legislation in the Federal National Park Service Act of 1999 (National Park Service 1999), but the boundaries have not been surveyed. Representatives from the NNPS/CRNP that participated in this assessment indicated that boundary location and enforcement present ongoing and long-term problems, but resources and full support from all CRNP partners are not yet available to resolve the complex issues surrounding legal demarcation and community negotiations.

Recommendation 7

Locate and delineate the legal boundaries of high priority CRS protected areas. It has been suggested that the 1949 Reserve Settlement Orders can serve as an official guide. Boundaries indicated by green line on the 1994 vegetation map (1:250,000 scale) appear to be the most accurate indication of legal boundaries, however, agreement on which maps actually reflect the law and the situation on the ground is lacking among key stakeholders.

The follow-up USFS/IP proposed missions in 2007 will not provide direct technical assistance, resources, or other support to address legal boundary demarcation for Afi Nature Reserve or Obudu Plateau or any other protected areas in CRS. The USFS/IP considers determining and enforcing legal boundaries for CRS protected areas to be a critical need and priority that will require a longer-term, inclusive, and open collaborative process to resolve. The USFS/IP will not have adequate time and funds to directly address boundary demarcation in the immediate future.

The Afi Partnership and other stakeholders should continue to be supported by the CRSG in their ongoing efforts and new project involving Flora and Fauna International (FFI) to set agreed upon goals and objectives for legal boundary demarcation and area management planning at Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary.

If funding and stakeholder agreement can be obtained, the NNPS and its partners such as WCS are encouraged to continue their efforts to locate and delineate legal boundaries for both divisions of CRNP.

Since there is at present no formal plan or funded project to demarcate CRS protected areas (with the possible exception of Afi Forest Complex), we provide further planning details to inform future efforts.

Objectives. Map, locate, and mark clear boundary lines that allow enforcement of regulations in CRS. Strive to allow communities to fulfill their needs and maintain well-being while protecting the long-term interests of the protected areas. This will require three general steps:

1. Temporarily mark the original, legal boundaries of the National Park and forest reserves with teams of trained employees from CRNP and CRSFC such as guards and rangers, especially those who reside in or come from local communities.
2. Negotiate with communities and other stakeholders the locations of boundaries that no longer make sense. The aim should be to balance fulfilling the purposes of the National Park and forest reserves in the long-term with stakeholder trust building and compromise in decision making that meets community livelihoods and protected area objectives.
3. Mark and describe the new boundaries permanently.

Methods. Legal descriptions of the 1949 Reserve Settlement Orders and maps of these descriptions should be digitized to create electronic files. The electronic data should be loaded into field GPS receivers for teams of rangers to accurately locate boundaries. Reserve Settlement Orders should also be followed, where appropriate, by field teams for meets-and-bounds type legal descriptions.

As boundaries are located in the field, these should be clearly marked with temporary flagging, survey stakes, or similar devices.

Community and stakeholder negotiations should follow in areas where controversy exists or where legal boundaries have been encroached upon by settlements, plantations, or other means. Tradeoffs that meet social, economic, and ecological objectives should be agreed upon in a collaborative approach that includes discussions among all stakeholders.

Participants. The lead agency for demarcating forest reserves should be the CRSFC and NNPS for demarcating CRNP. Guards and rangers from local communities should be hired and trained to implement the field work for boundary surveys and their supervisors should be involved with negotiating boundary locations with traditional community rulers and local government authorities. The Ministry of Lands, Surveys, and Housing in CRS (Department of Surveys) could serve as the supporting agency to help digitize maps, train staff in GPS methods, and support Arc-GIS processing. Department of Surveys could also serve as the lead agency for conducting surveys at Obudu Plateau.

Technical assistance should be provided by a GIS specialist working in CRS. Project personnel should have skills in use of GIS hardware and software, and field experience in use of portable GPS surveys, and, experience working in CRS.

Constraints. It is critical that government agencies and their partners working in CRS protected areas determine, and agree to, what maps and other legal documents to use in official boundary demarcation.

Some CRS communities feel that their problematic relationships with CRNP are related to poorly demarcated boundaries, and these communities are in favor of renegotiating boundaries and laws to redefine community rights and access, clarify community roles in park management and enforcement, and implement alternative livelihood programs (CRE 2006).

Before formal activities begin to implement demarcation of boundaries for CRNP, the NNPS personnel and their partners, who propose boundary demarcation, will be required to obtain permission from the NNPS headquarters in Abuja. Local government authorities and community chiefs in CRS should also be informed prior to the start of any formal procedures on the ground that concern communities neighboring protected areas.

Digitizing maps may have to be done by private contractor if the Department of Surveys cannot complete the work. Area Maps Inc., in Calabar, may be used as a contractor to digitize and run the required Arc-GIS computer software.

Skills in downloading digitized map information to GPS receivers may not be available unless Department of Surveys is available, or a private contractor is used.

Department of Surveys largely works with urban and suburban projects in Calabar. Knowledge of Arc-GIS software may be limited to the Department of Surveys, but these civil servants do not normally survey remote protected areas, so lack of experience in rural CRS, low priority, and time constraints may exist.

Field work must be conducted during the dry season of January to April, while negotiations with communities and office work can be conducted at any time. However, meeting with communities during the rainy season may be constrained by wet and muddy road conditions and peak agricultural activities.

Desktop or laptop computer(s) are not available to run Arc-GIS software, except at the Department of Surveys, which is normally busy with other work.

Some GPS receivers are available, but the number is undetermined.

Final boundary marking requires completion of long-term negotiations with an inclusive group of community leaders, representatives, and other stakeholders. This could result in substantial lack of permanent boundary markers in areas where these are most needed, especially in CRNP.

Community and stakeholder negotiations will take considerable time for controversial and contested areas or places where significant changes in boundary location are anticipated. Substantial time and discussion will be required to establish trust and develop shared goals for boundary demarcation and enforcement. This is especially the case where expectations of communities were raised, but remain unfulfilled, due to undelivered promises that they believe were made to them when CRNP was originally established (CRE 2006; Ite and Adams 2000; Oates 1999).

Government agencies, communities, and other partners must make honest and open assessments of what communities can expect to gain from enforcement of protected area boundaries given the constraints faced by the CRSG and NNPS. Community expectations should not be raised to unrealistic levels regarding land tenure or alternative livelihoods. The CRSG and NNPS must find ways to fairly share power in decision making with

neighboring community leaders and local government authorities if they wish to minimize conflicts and meet objectives for both conservation and economic development (Adams and Hulme 2001).

Other Sites. After refining procedures and training staff at the CRSFC, the NNPS, and local community members and leaders, boundary demarcation and community negotiation should be planned, applied, and enforced at other CRS forest reserves and protected areas including, but not limited to, Cross River North Forest Reserve, Cross River South Forest Reserve, Agoi Forest Reserve, and Ukpon Forest Reserve.

Finding 8

Although the NNPS Decree no. 46 of May, 1999 directs the formation of management committees (Section 21) and completion of management plans (Section 28), neither management committees or working management plans exist for CRNP. In addition, there are no protected area plans for wildlife sanctuaries such as Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result, decisions about where to build facilities or where and how to alter habitat are made without clear goals and objectives.

It is important to note that development plans were published by WWF (referred to as “project plans”) for both divisions of the CRNP in 1990. Some implementing partners (i.e., Pandrillus Foundation) do not necessarily support all the activities in the ambitious plans developed by WWF (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication). The WWF plans should be reviewed as a starting point for ongoing and future efforts.

In addition, the WCS, working with NNPS and other partners such as NCF, has obtained funds from US Fish and Wildlife Service to complete a management plan for CRNP.

Recommendation 8

Support the ongoing efforts of WCS and NNPS to complete a management plan for CRNP. One strategy would be to form a NNPS collaborative management committee as outlined in the May 26, 1999 decree Section 21 and prepare the plan in accordance with Section 28 of the decree to oversee park planning (National Park Service 1999). Establishing collaborative management committees should be given careful consideration so that committees can focus on actual park management issues rather than political agendas (Pandrillus Foundation, personal communication).

Support the efforts of FFI and NCF with the new project entitled “Community Management Planning for Sustainable Forest Livelihoods and Biodiversity Conservation at Afi Forest Complex, Cross River State, Nigeria.” Developing a management plan for the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary should be considered as an objective of this recently funded and important project.

B. Critical Needs of the Cross River State Forestry Commission

Finding 9

Delineation and maintenance of the forest reserve boundaries on the ground using the 1949 Reserve Settlement Orders is a critical priority for the CRSFC (Chris Agbor, personal communication). In view of current and past population and community expansion, some portions of forest reserve boundaries need to be readjusted to meet current realities for neighboring forest communities.

Building the capacity of CRSFC staff to conduct inventory and timber surveys for selected forest reserves remains a priority. These surveys would be guided by previously developed forest management plans.

There is a need to develop a comprehensive ecotourism plan for Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. This planning process should involve CRSFC, CRSTB, NGO partners, and leaders from neighboring communities. The planning process should clearly define community roles in and benefits from ecotourism.

One of the key issues that is likely to attract much attention and require substantial time in protected area management will be addressing the numerous farms that now exist inside forest reserves while maintaining trust, community support, and cordial working relationships. It is critical that future planning efforts seek to balance conservation objectives with the livelihood needs of the rural people because striking this balance remains the only means for sustaining community interest and participation.

VI. ENHANCING CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN CROSS RIVER STATE

During the assessment, review of documents, and report writing, we observed a broad overarching challenge faced by the agencies and partners working in CRS. There is a need to build the capacity of stakeholders to engage in productive collaboration.

The USFS/IP cannot provide short-term assistance in addressing the overarching need for better collaboration among partners in CRS. But, we do consider documenting and addressing these observations to be an important prerequisite for achieving and sustaining successful ecotourism development, biodiversity conservation, community development, and protected area management in CRS. We elaborate on the need for better collaboration and provide details to be considered by the Nigerian agencies and other stakeholders during their ongoing efforts.

A. Characteristics of Successful Collaboration

Research on stakeholder processes has identified several key factors necessary for successful, balanced, and integrated collaboration. These include sound development and planning of collaborative initiatives early in the process; open, interactive, and free

exchange and sharing of information; solid organizational support to keep the process on track; effective communication that encourages listening, understanding, discussing, and decision-making; building relationships and partnerships based on trust, honesty, and respect; and prioritizing accomplishments and outcomes such as report writing, follow-up action on key issues, evaluation, and monitoring of the process (Schuett and other 2001).

Power sharing, on the part of government agencies, is critical for successful collaboration directed toward meeting social, economic, and ecological objectives (Adams and Hulme 2001). In most cases, the CRSG and the NNPS are ultimately and legally responsible for ecotourism and protected areas management, and therefore have tremendous power in decision-making. Relinquishing formal decision-making authority is not required for government agencies to participate in long-term collaborative efforts; what is important is sharing the decision-making space with stakeholders so that collaborative efforts have a real impact on plans and decisions (Keough and Blahna 2006). Stakeholders in CRS, including the agencies, must be made to feel that they have been heard and that they play a meaningful role in the collaborative process regardless of whether their agendas are fully met—they need to know that their voices count.

Several questions then arise: do the partners working in CRS support this type of collaborative process to drive decision-making; is it a priority? Which, if any, of these factors of success are relevant in a Nigerian context? Which of these can be achieved? What level of capacity exists in CRS for successful collaboration? Who will take the lead in initiating collaboration with these goals in mind? What groups will be invited to participate? Based on what we have learned from the assessment activities, we hope to provide some insights and suggestions for addressing these questions and strengthening capacity to collaborate in CRS.

Finding 10

Although long established partnerships (e.g., the Afi Partnership with CRSFC, FFI, Pandrillus Foundation, NCF, and WCS or the partnering between CRNP and several NGOs) do exist and have made remarkable progress in CRS, the degree of inclusive communication and consensus that is needed to collectively address social, economic, and ecological objectives for sustainable ecotourism development, protected area management, and natural resources conservation is substantially lacking among partners. The diverse stakeholder groups working in these areas face a number of highly complex problems, and the challenging question of how collaboration will best work to address these situations in CRS has not been adequately addressed. The government agencies, their partnering NGOs, and the other stakeholders such as forest community leaders need help in reaching consensus.

Recommendation 10

Set a priority to create a new reality, a new way of doing business in CRS, by genuinely talking and listening to one another, setting past agendas and differences aside, and building new collective goals and relationships for the future. This coming together can facilitate collective action whereby stakeholders make decisions and implement plans as

a whole. Acting collectively is necessary to resolve tough problems related to ecotourism, protected areas management, and natural resources conservation.

Brainstorm to identify representatives from as many stakeholder interest groups as possible in CRS and Nigeria, including, but not limited to, the CRSTB, CRSFC, NNPS/CRNP, the NGOs, local government authorities, and forest community leaders. Inviting representatives from all possible groups to the decision-making table would be ideal, but this may not be realistically feasible. At a minimum, we suggest that it is necessary to identify and invite a partial list of key stakeholders in order to achieve integrated collaborative decisions and planning (Keough and Blahna 2006). A transparent and accurate assessment of the social, ecological, and economic impacts and conflicts for each ecotourism site and protected area is needed to understand which key stakeholders to include and for which areas (Endter-Wada and others 1998.) Such assessments can be used to carefully identify and invite the key stakeholders into the process for each specific area and situation.

Employing an outside neutral facilitator may be required to help stakeholders in CRS learn how to create mutual resolutions for the tough problems that they face (Generon Counselling 2001; Kahane 2004). Ideally, the group and the facilitator would meet for multiple days at a neutral quiet place with few distractions. With the assistance of the facilitator, the participants would talk and listen to each other about their concerns and roles in collaboration. Participants would make an effort to talk about past, present, and future issues in order to become reacquainted and discover common ground, shared values, mutual desires and needs, and their roles regarding ecotourism development, protected areas management, and natural resources conservation.

Initial Outcomes. We suggest the following goals for these meetings.

- Solidify a collaborative partnership by building new and rekindling old relationships based on trust and commitment for the long-term.
- Collectively produce a number of short-term and long-term goals and objectives on which the group can agree to implement.
- Develop shared definitions and mutual understandings of concepts and words used to talk about ecotourism, conservation, and protected areas management, so everyone at the table understands the objectives that are emerging. This allows the group to develop a common language for the partnership to use throughout the collaborative process.

Caveat. We describe a model for understanding collaboration and achieving collective action in order to provide more detailed information and citations to support this recommendation (see Appendix IV). We admit that we lack a complete understanding of the situation in CRS, and sources of support and funding have not been identified, but moving forward by building new relationships should be considered by the partners in CRS. We have observed that something to this effect is needed to achieve integrated and effective collaboration.

VII. CONCLUSION

The CRSTB, CRSFC, NNPS, the NGOs working in CRS, and leaders from forest communities each have their own needs, directives, and missions, but these partners share common ground with regard to the well-being, economic stability, and capacity of the people living in CRS; the unique and highly important natural resources of the State; biodiversity conservation; and sustainable ecotourism development. This common ground must be recognized as the foundation for improved understanding, cooperation, and communication in planning, management, and development of sustainable ecotourism linked to CRS protected areas and neighboring communities.

A common vision for CRS seems to be re-emerging that is focused on balancing economic development and livelihoods with sustainable ecotourism development, protected area management, and conservation, but a comprehensive plan, or road map, is lacking for achieving the vision. Nigeria and CRS must continue to work with existing partners and identify new partners, both within and outside its borders, to form a network of stakeholders. Such a partnership will be based on long-term relationships, trust, and a common vision for achieving social, economic, and ecological goals in CRS. This newly integrated CRS partnership can achieve success if it works incrementally and prioritizes inclusive and fair stakeholder participation in a Nigerian context.

This assessment report is the result of international collaboration and provides insights for moving forward in CRS to develop ecotourism potentials that depend on forest communities and conservation of the State's remaining natural assets. General recommendations for addressing a number of complex challenges facing partners in CRS were identified. We outlined specific findings and short-term recommendations for implementing site planning and developing interpretive training programs at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau. Other findings from the assessment that represent longer-term issues at other protected areas in CRS were briefly described. The CRS partners are encouraged to immediately consider how they can come together in a collaborative process to address these long-term challenges.

Balancing economically viable tourism and small-scale sustainable ecotourism with community needs, conservation objectives, and protected area management presents a long-term challenge for CRS and Nigeria as a whole. The USFS/IP team recognizes and respects the complex challenges faced by our Nigerian counterparts and their partners, and we hope that this report provides insights and recommendations that can be adapted and used to meet some of their critical short-term needs and longer-term priorities. Ultimately, Nigeria and her people living in CRS hold the final decision for making changes that best fit her diverse needs and challenges, which, unfortunately, are not easily or quickly understood by outside partners.

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APPENDIX I – Initial Scope of Work and Team Credentials

Title: US Forest Service International Programs/Department of Agriculture Technical Mission to Cross River State, Nigeria: Assessments and Recommendations Exercise for Planning and Management of Cross River State Protected Areas and Forest Reserves and Development of Sustainable Ecotourism

Introduction

On Tuesday, April 25, 2006, the US Forest Service met with the Governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke, and Mr. Gabe Onah, Managing Director of Cross River State Tourism Bureau. Prior to the meeting, Governor Duke met with the US Department of State Regional Environmental Officer for West and Central Africa, Matthew Cassetta, to discuss the possibility of receiving technical assistance from the United States for proposed ecotourism activities and improve protected area management. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau seeks to develop a circuit of tourist attractions. Ecotourism sites of priority include the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, the Mbe Mountains, and the Cross River National Park (Oban and Okwangwo Divisions).

Mission Objective

The objective of this technical assistance mission is to assess the current situation and management structure of a sample of Cross River State protected areas and make recommendations to improve protected area management, conservation, sustainable local resource management, and the well being and economic stability of communities living in and around the protected areas. The team will propose methodologies for the development of sustainable ecotourism.

Background

Loss of forest habitat and biodiversity. Threats to wildlife resulting from the bushmeat and pet trades are apparent in Cross River State protected areas. Recent reports included the alleged killing of two Cross River gorillas. In addition, indiscriminate logging practices (legal and illegal) have led to the suspension of the State's only active logging operation. Consequently, the deforestation is causing sedimentation of streams and rivers. Calabar River, where both TINAPA and the Calabar Free Trade Zone are situated, is undergoing damage to aquatic life and reduced navigability. In an effort to reduce these threats to broader landscape and biodiversity, the Cross River State Government requests assistance to resurvey and demarcate protected area boundaries and possibly prepare area management plans to begin to address conservation needs.

Participatory forest management. The livelihoods of communities in and around the Cross River State protected areas depend on agricultural production. How local communities see linkages between protection of forest resources and agricultural production is not clearly understood and little community participation exists in the overall management of the protected areas. The Cross River State Government is in need of assistance in developing and implementing sustainable agriculture and alternative livelihood options for communities that neighbor protected areas.

Sustainable tourism. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau has taken extensive measures to expand its tourism industry, as shown by the construction of a canopy walkway at Buanchor and Obudu Plateau. The historically popular resort, Obudu Cattle Ranch, has seen an increase in both domestic and international visitors. It is estimated that the annual number of tourist visits to Cross River State is 100,000. Cross River State is ready to enhance its tourism industry, expressing an urgent need for assistance in several areas related to ecotourism development at protected areas.

Other Considerations

Additional support was requested by the Cross River State Tourism Bureau in several key areas. Addressing this list in total requires more time than the two-weeks allocated for this specific mission and the realistic capabilities and expertise of the USFS/IP team. Of the two-weeks, only five days were spent in the field visiting actual tourism sites in the State, and we had one meeting where we indirectly discussed the operation and management of the Tourism Bureau and its staff.

1. Improving the standard and quality of ecotourism products and services on a sustainable basis to meet current and future needs.

- Assist with conducting training workshop on tour guiding skills and basic first aid techniques for maintenance staff and tour guides at Buanchor and Obudu Plateau.
- Support training of tour guides on identification techniques for key taxa at Buanchor and Obudu Plateau, tree phenology, nature walk interpretive techniques, basic ethno-botany, non-timber forest product identification and usage
- Contribute to the production of quality conservation and visitor experience material (posters, booklets, worksheets, brochures, maps, signage, etc) for Visitors Reception Centre at the Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau ecological areas

2. Develop capacity for improved monitoring and evaluation

- Support in the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan at Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau facilities
- Assist to carry out studies to identify weaknesses in service delivery and product quality at ecotourism facilities
- Contribute to the development of a training curriculum based on results of needs assessment
- Support the conducting of training based on results of needs assessment
- Support the training and equipping of Tourism Bureau tour guides and facility maintenance staff at the canopy walkway sites
- Support the review of checklists currently used for monitoring and inspections of ecotourism operations

- Support the review of guidelines and schedules currently used to regulate ecotourism sector operators

3. Assessment of management structure and systems of the Cross River State Tourism Bureau.

Activities

The technical assistant team will meet and dialogue with key partners in the management of Cross River State protected areas. These partners may include, but are not limited to, Cross River Tourism Bureau, Cross River Forestry Commission, Nigeria National Park Service, the director of CRNP, USAID/Nigeria, US Embassy/Abuja, USDA/FAS, ARD, and WCS. The team will visit the Afi Nature Reserve, the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Obudu Plateau, and Cross River National Park. In collaboration with the Cross River State Forestry Commission, Cross River State Tourism Bureau, and NNPS the mission team will conduct an assessment of the Cross River State protected areas using rapid participatory methods. In addition, available resources such as aerial photos and satellite images will be used for the identification of critical areas and perhaps facilitate the analyses for viable visitor centers within these selected protected areas. The team will build on available information from the USAID-funded Sustainable Practices in Agriculture for Critical Environment (SPACE) Program. The team will also visit other specific sites to determine their suitability for proposed ecotourism projects.

Description of Team Members' Roles and Credentials

- **Mr. John Neary, B.Sc.:** Protected area management and planning specialist; US Forest Service, Alaska; Parks and Wildlife Volunteer, US Peace Corps Rwanda; advisor to Wilderness Advisory Group, South Africa; US Peace Corps training advisor, Uganda
- **Jeffrey J. Brooks, Ph.D.:** Community collaboration, outdoor recreation/tourism and social science research specialist; US Peace Corps Benin (1990-1992), rural health education and extension
- **Ms. Blessing E. Asuquo, B.Sc.:** Mission Team Leader, US Forest Service International Programs Office, West Africa Program Manager; US Peace Corps Guinea (2001-2003), agro-forestry; mission logistics coordinator

Deliverables

The mission team will produce a report of observations and findings from the assessment mission, including short-term recommendations to improve and enhance the development of sustainable ecotourism at selected sites in Cross River State administered by the Tourism Bureau. The report will include a short-term action plan for Afi Nature Reserve and Obudu Plateau with a description of partners and stakeholders, which is intended to lead to formal area, site, and business planning facilitated by future USFS/IP assistance missions in collaboration with both governmental and NGO partners in Cross River State.

Secondarily, the report should also include, to a lesser extent, some discussion of the longer-term needs for work plans and management plans at protected areas administered

by the Cross River State Forestry Commission and the Nigerian National Park Service, specifically, CRNP, including their partners such as NCF and WCS.

Timing

Mission dates: October 20 – November 5, 2006

The first draft report is to be submitted to the Nigerian counterparts and their partners in November 2006 with a revised final report based on their comments to follow in January 2007.

Funding

All costs incurred (international and domestic travel, domestic transportation, and lodging) during this detail will be covered by the Cross River State Tourism Bureau except the daily per diem rate and a two-week salary for each of the three members of the mission team which will be covered by US Forest Service.

Logistics

All logistics will be coordinated by the USFS/IP West Africa Program Manager and the Cross River Tourism Bureau team.

APPENDIX II – Mission Itinerary

October 20, 2006, Friday

- Depart United States

October 21-22, 2006, Saturday and Sunday

- Arrive in Lagos, Nigeria
- Contact Mr. Sunday, Cross River State Liaisons Office, arrive at Hotel

October 23, 2006, Monday

- Travel to Calabar, Cross River State
- Visit Cross River State Tourism Bureau
- Site visit to TINAPA with Tony Bassey and Lisa Badru

October 24, 2006, Tuesday

- Meetings, introductions, and presentations with officials from Cross River State Tourism Bureau, Cross River State Forestry Commission, and Cross River National Park
- Meetings and presentations with field implementing partners: Pandrillus Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society, Nigeria Conservation Foundation, Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, CERCOPAN, and SPACE
- Visit Calabar Botanic Gardens
- Dinner at Aqua Vista Farms with traditional music and dancing

October 25, 2006, Wednesday

- Depart to Erokut to hike into the Oban Division of CRNP to view site on the Kwa River
- Travel to Ikom

October 26, 2006, Thursday

- Travel to Bashu to see small-scale ecotourism lodges and snail raising project and the Boki Birds Protection Foundation project
- Travel to Butatong Ranger Station in CRNP

October 27, 2006, Friday

- Hiked to Bembi River
- Site visit to canopy walkway at Afi Mountain Reserve and Drill Ranch
- Depart to Ikom

October 28, 2006, Saturday

- Depart to Boje to visit Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and Swallow Roost Accompanied by Chris Agbor, Sam Ubi, and several NCF-sponsored rangers/guides
- Depart to Obudu Plateau for the night with dinner, bon fire, Nigerian music, and dancing

October 29, 2006, Sunday

- Tour of Obudu Cattle Ranch facilities, Becheve Nature Reserve and canopy walkway, and ride cable cars to Bottom Hill; tour the water park with Mr. Hans Bucher
- Depart to Bebi Airstrip
- Arrive in Calabar

October 30, 2006, Monday

- Tourism Bureau in Calabar; review site visits and information from the field with counterparts from CRSTB and CRSFC to decide on priority areas/sites and critical needs; outline plan for reporting of recommendations
- Prepare power point presentation to outline key recommendations
- Deliver the presentation to Governor Donald Duke

October 31, 2006, Tuesday

- Report writing at Tourism Bureau in Calabar
- Visit to Cross River State Ministry of Lands, Surveys, and Housing

November 1, 2006, Wednesday

- Tourism Bureau in Calabar for presentation by Joel Frank, OICI Tourism Development Specialist
- Present recommendations to Gabe Onah, Director of CRSTB, and Sean Mann, World Bank Tourism Development Specialist
- Meeting with CRSTB, OICI, and World Bank representatives to finalize report content and outline

November 2, 2006, Thursday

- Tours of Cultural Center and Old Calabar
- Depart for Abuja accompanied by Lisa Badru
- Report writing

November 3, 2006, Friday

- Visit headquarters of Nigerian National Park Service in Abuja as courtesy call and brief the Conservator General on the assessment results
- Meet US Embassy officials and USAID/Nigeria representative to debrief
- Depart for Lagos

November 4, 2006, Saturday

- Report writing
- Tours of Lagos
- Depart Lagos for London

November 5, 2006, Sunday

- Arrive in United States

APPENDIX III – List of Contacts and Partners

During the mission dates, the USFS/IP team attended formal meetings with representatives from USAID/Nigeria in Abuja, the US Embassy in Abuja, the NNPS in Abuja, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Calabar, Sustainable Practices in Agriculture for Critical Environment Project (SPACE) in Calabar, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) in Calabar, Centre for Education, Research and Conservation of Primates and Nature (CERCOPAN) in Calabar, Pandrillus Foundation in Calabar and at Afi Mountain Reserve, Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI) and The World Bank in Calabar, the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary near Boje, Development in Nigeria (DIN) at Obudu Cattle Ranch, and the Department of Surveys in Calabar. Nigerian agency counterparts from CRSTB, CRSFC, and CRNP participated in many of the meetings in Calabar and a representative from the CRSTB participated in the meetings with NNPS and the US Embassy in Abuja.

While in Calabar, the USFS/IP team met informally with representatives from CRNP, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Ekuri Community Initiative, Cross River Environmental Capacity Development Project (CRE), Development in Nigeria (DIN), and World Bank.

A list of names with contact information is provided for the people and organizations associated with this mission:

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Mr. Abong E. Abong, Marketing, Cross River National Park

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APPENDIX IV – Model of Collaboration and Collective Action in Addressing Complex Problems

The opposite of *collective action* for addressing problems is stalemate and paralyzing conflict (Innes and Booher 2003). Highly complex tough problems tend to get stuck or solved by force, which is a closed approach, leading to further problems (Kahane 2004). This appendix describes three broad, interrelated, long-term social processes that are important for avoiding stalemate and collectively improving problem situations in ecotourism and protected area management (Figure 1):

- Building relationships and the capacity of partnerships to develop a shared vision
- Problem definition—Developing shared definitions and understandings of concepts and words used to talk about ecotourism, conservation, and protected areas management. This allows partnerships to develop a common language for communicating during the collaborative process.
- Mutual trust—positive public relations; respect; and inclusive, interactive communication

Community capacity has been defined as the interaction of human capital, social capital, and the physical resources existing within a given community that can be leveraged to collectively solve problems and improve or maintain community well-being (Chaskin 2001; Kaplan 2000). From an organizational perspective, collaborative capacity means having a clear vision and strategy to enable relationship building, collective thinking, adaptive planning, and implementation beyond the tangible elements of money, skilled personnel, and equipment—although these too are important for successful collaboration (Kaplan 2000). A collaborative entity, or *partnership*, with a common vision, self-organization, an attitude of confidence, and a coherent frame of reference may have *the capacity to collectively act* in ways that improve problem situations related to ecotourism development and protected area management.

Problem definition involves the different ways that stakeholders frame, or view, the problem and the terminology and concepts related to it, such as community involvement and sustainability. Problem definition accounts for stakeholders' multiple understandings of a complex situation—their various frames of reference. Different frames of reference allow stakeholders to see what they want to see, or what they are guided to see, but stakeholders tend to have trouble seeing the same problem situation, or reality, from another group's frame of reference (Spicer 1997). The existence of many different frames of reference for the same problem highlights a need to develop *common goals* and a *common language*.

Long-term committed partnerships that communicate using a common language tend to have mutual trust between members and outside stakeholders. Mutual trust leads to positive public relations and respect and tolerance for different frames of reference. Mutual trust is developed over time through fair, inclusive, interactive communication

and co-learning processes, rather than one-way persuasion strategies (Schusler and others 2003; Toman and others 2006).

When and where these processes are integrated, *collective action* may be achieved through long-term partnerships that have common goals and use a common language (Figure 1). The integration of capacity to collaborate and mutual trust can allow for partnerships that are characterized by long-term relationships. Partnerships with capacity are sustained by a guiding vision, strong leadership, and a sense of collective identity (Moore and Lee 1999). The integration of collaborative capacity and problem framing can allow for common goals, including *shared* understandings of future desired conditions, acceptable development and management practices, and successful outcomes sustained over time. The integration of mutual trust and problem definition can allow for a common language, including *shared* definitions of ecotourism, protected area management, conservation, ecological conditions, social conditions, economic conditions, and successful outcomes of collaboration.

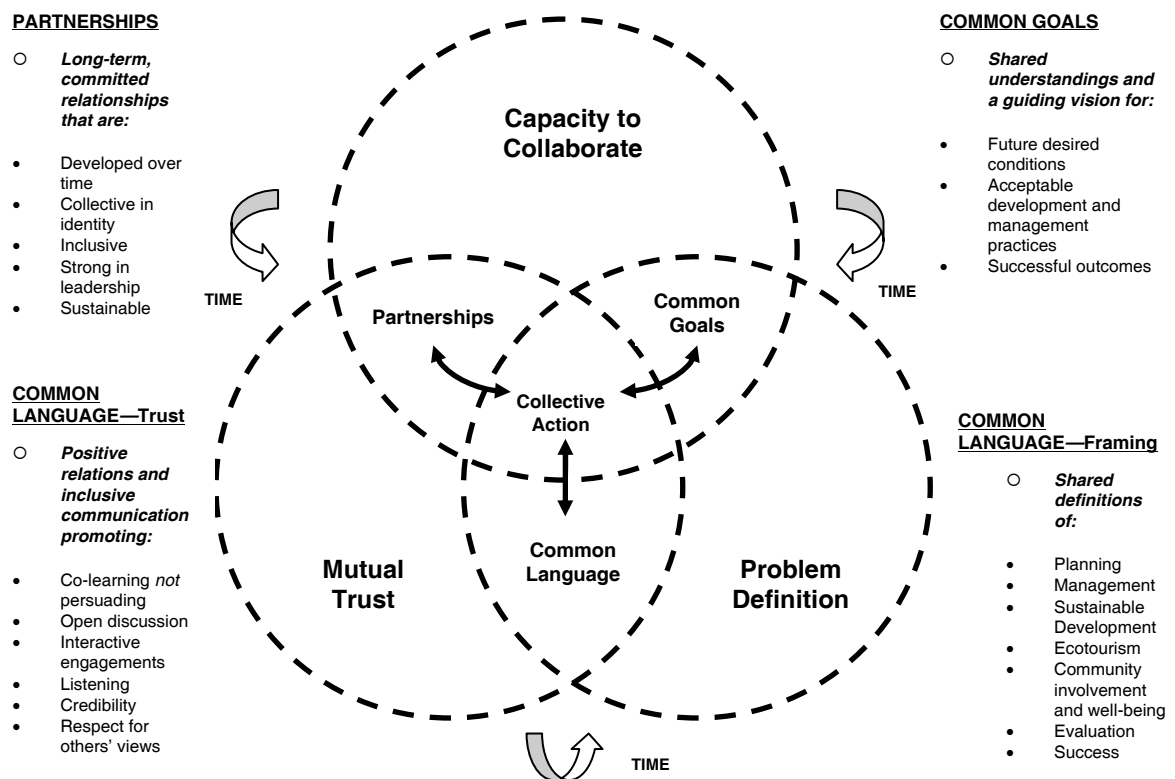


Figure 1. An open framework for collective action and collaboration in addressing complex problem situations (Brooks and others 2006).

APPENDIX V – List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARD – Associates for Rural Development

CERCOPAN – Centre for Education, Research and Conservation of Primates and Nature

CRE – Cross River Environmental Capacity Development Coalition

CRNP – Cross River National Park

CRS – Cross River State, Nigeria

CRSFC – Cross River State Forestry Commission

CRSG – Cross River State Government

CRSTB – Cross River State Tourism Bureau

Department of Surveys – Ministry of Lands, Surveys, and Housing in Calabar

DIN – Development in Nigeria

FFI – Flora and Fauna International

FGN – Federal Government of Nigeria

IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature

CDC JOBS NIGERIA – Citizens Development Corps Jobs Nigeria

NCF – Nigerian Conservation Foundation

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

NNPS – Nigerian National Park Service

OICI – Opportunities Industrialization Centers International

REFORM – Nigeria Restructured Economic Framework for Openness, Reform and
Macroeconomic Stability Project

SPACE – Sustainable Practices in Agriculture for Critical Environments Project

USFS/IP – United States Forest Service Department of Agriculture, International
Programs Office

USG – United States Government

WCS – Wildlife Conservation Society

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature

APPENDIX VI – Acknowledgements

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