

Comments by the IUCN SSC ARRC Task Force on the Scope of Work for Survey of Chimpanzee Communities along the Masindi-Biiso (R2) and Masindi-Paraa (R3) roads within the Budongo Central Forest Reserve

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General comments

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to provide feedback on the scope of work for chimpanzee surveys to be conducted along Masindi-Biiso and Masindi-Paraa roads, and on the subsequent technical proposal received by the Project to undertake this work.

The Project should aim to answer these questions with these surveys in order to inform mitigation:

1. Where do chimpanzee potentially range in relation to the Project's roads?
2. Where are chimpanzee communities and their territories located in relation to the Project's roads?
3. Are there specific areas used by chimpanzees to cross the roads?
4. How are chimpanzees perceived by the local communities? Are there human-chimp conflicts?
5. What is the habitat condition within the chimpanzee's territories and which botanical species are used for nesting and feeding?
6. How to best rehabilitate chimpanzee habitat? Which areas can be targeted for rehabilitation effort?
7. Which mitigation measures can be proposed to minimize impacts of the road upgrades on chimps?

However, the current proposal received lacks details to assess with confidence if the data collected will provide answers to these questions. For example, it is indicated that the consultant will identify the different chimpanzee communities, however this would require identification of individuals on camera-trap videos or conducting a non-invasive genetic survey, which are not mentioned in the proposal. Furthermore, regarding rehabilitation or restoration effort, this takes time, trial and error, and the proposal lacks information to assess what exactly will be done in practical terms and how, by whom, and how success will be monitored. We have provided more specific feedback below. It would be helpful to see the 'Reconnaissance and data gap analysis report' before the fieldwork is undertaken to review the more detailed survey plan and the area to cover.

Another concern is that if some of the road construction has already started, the chimpanzees may already be avoiding the roads and it will not be possible to identify road-crossing areas that were used by chimpanzees pre-construction.

There is a mix of baseline data collection and long-term monitoring in this proposal, and it would be preferable to separate both, and focus first on the baseline data collection. Once more baseline information has been gathered, it is easier to develop a more focussed long-term monitoring plan.

Specific comments

Overall the surveys proposed by the consultant will help to provide more insight into the chimpanzee population using the Project's area, however several questions may remain unanswered. The consultant proposed to use these three methods: 1) Review of available literature; 2) Household surveys; 3) Field visits (including recces and camera-trapping). However, the survey plan remains unclear to the reader (e.g. where will camera-traps be placed? will they cover different seasons or be placed once-off on specific part of the roads?), although it is acknowledged that the consultant will use the first month to refine the survey plan. Furthermore, it is unclear if the consultant has factored in the time needed to collect and process the data needed for such a study. For example, if camera-traps are placed along roads, there will be many footages of vehicles and pedestrians crossing to go through. It can also take more than one year of intense survey to establish chimpanzee community's territories.

We have included in the table below a summary of what is planned to be conducted and what else should be done to answer Project's questions:

Question	Methods proposed	Advice
STEP 1: Desktop review		
1. Where do chimpanzee potentially range in relation to the Project's roads?	Literature and data review; remote sensing.	Based on previous surveys conducted in the region and on identification of suitable forest cover, survey areas can be better delimited, as well as villages that should be targeted for interviews. We would like to know which villages will be targeted for interviews, and which areas will be targeted for field surveys. In the 'Reconnaissance and data gap analysis report' we would expect to see all chimpanzee communities that have already been identified in the Project area based on previous research (e.g. chimpanzee community in Busingiro on the Masindi road).
STEP 2: Field surveys		
2. Where are chimpanzee communities and their territories located in relation to the Project's roads?	Household survey; recces; camera-trapping.	To identify chimpanzee communities, one need to identify individual chimpanzee on camera-trap pictures/videos, or to collect feces samples to conduct genetic analyses. If chimpanzees are to be identified on camera-trap pictures/videos, camera-traps will need to be placed within their territories, not just along roads.
3. Are there specific areas used by chimpanzees to cross the roads?	Household survey; recces; camera-trapping.	Chimpanzees may not cross the road everyday, it can be affected by season as well as human activity. Thus placing

		camera-traps along one part of the road for 20 days may miss them crossing the road.
4. How are chimpanzees perceived by the local communities? Are there human-chimp conflicts?	Household survey.	We would advise to also add a literature review of existing studies. Human-chimpanzee conflicts, local attitudes and threats to chimpanzees have been documented for the region, especially between Budongo FR and Bugoma FR. It is already known that chimpanzee-human conflicts are high in this area. These interviews should not only serve to establish if there are human-chimpanzee conflicts (as we know there are), but should also serve to find some possible solutions, how local communities would propose to address these conflicts (e.g. would they be open to use different deterrents for avoiding crop raiding then setting snares). If possible, we would like to see the interview questionnaire before undertaking field surveys.
5. What is the habitat condition within the chimp’s territory and which botanical species are used for nesting and feeding?	Household survey; recces; remote sensing.	As proposed by the consultant, a desktop review using remote sensing can be combined by ground-truthing during field surveys. Further information can also be gained from other reforestation initiatives ongoing in the region.
6. Which areas can be targeted for rehabilitation effort?	Household survey; recces; remote sensing.	This is not really clear in the proposal. Will areas suitable for rehabilitation be identified within each chimpanzee’s community territory? How will success be measured and monitored? What will the rehabilitation entail, or is it more habitat enrichment? This will need further discussion and buy-in from landowners.
STEP 3: Reporting		
7. Which mitigation measures can be proposed to minimize impacts of the road upgrades on chimps?	Literature review and expert knowledge.	Measures to be proposed in the report.

Survey methods

- Household surveys: It would be useful to review the household survey questionnaire once it has been drafted.
- Camera-trapping: 30 camera-traps will be used, 15 on each road. Will these be rotated along the road? Given the length of the roads and the fact that chimpanzees do not always cross at the exact same spot, more thought needs to be put into this and more camera-traps may be needed. Furthermore, the consultant should also not underestimate the time it takes to process pictures/videos collected with camera-traps, especially if individuals need to be identified, and because there may be a lot of videos of vehicles/people. For identifying individual chimpanzees, it is preferable to use the 'video' mode on camera-traps, however these should be placed on chimpanzee trails to allow for better identification. It is however not clear how camera-traps placed along the road will enable identification of individuals.
- Recces: conducting recces along roads will not provide sufficient information to understand where chimpanzee core areas are located in relation to the roads and to determine territory boundaries, as chimpanzees tend to nest away from the road.

Timeline

- The proposal mention surveys will occur every month, but it is unclear what will be done every month (e.g. how many km of recces on average?) and which areas will be covered (18 field assistants= 6 teams of 3 people, or could be 3 teams of 6 people?). When are we expected to know where chimpanzee cross the roads and how many chimpanzee communities are in the Project's area? When is the consultant going to propose mitigation measures?