Comments on Supplementary ESIA Specialist Studies: Chimpanzee Survey Scope – Biodiversity, November 2020

Comments from the ARRC panel task force, November 11th 2020

General comments

The task force was pleased to see that additional chimpanzee surveys are being planned before construction for the Bon Ami Project in Guinea. However, we would like to propose a slightly different approach in order to obtain first additional information regarding the potential distribution of chimpanzees in this area to optimise the survey design for estimating abundance and other demographic parameters.

As noted, undertaking a line transect survey and placing camera-traps requires significant field effort and we therefore want to ensure that these surveys will yield enough information to answer the important questions: 1) How many chimpanzees use the area? 2) How many chimpanzee communities overlap with project infrastructures? 3) What is the size of these communities? 4) Where are their territory boundaries? 5) Where to focus mitigation? and 6) How many chimpanzees will be impacted by the Project?

Chimpanzees living in a heterogenous environment such as the one present in the Bon Ami Project area, will use their surroundings in a non-random way., If placed in a systematic way, transects and camera-traps could miss areas important to chimpanzees. It would therefore be more useful to first increase our understanding of chimpanzee distribution and existing threats in this area, and only to conduct an abundance survey in a second step. We therefore propose a phased approach in the following section, with all surveys completed before the start of construction.

We note that you added the Endangered King Colobus (*Colobus polykomos*) as a primate species of conservation concern. The Endangered Temminck's Red Colobus (*Piliocolobus temminckii*) was also initially included. It would therefore be important for both of these species to be included in further surveys. These species do not often come close to the ground so they would probably be missed with camera trapping. Furthermore, because they occur at low densities in this area, they will most likely be missed on line transects as well, especially because they would move away with the noise from cutting a transects. To confirm their presence, we suggest first including these species in the interviews to better understand where they may occur in the project area (see below). Once it is clearer where they may be ranging, you would need targeted recces (reconnaissance walks) in these areas (see below).,

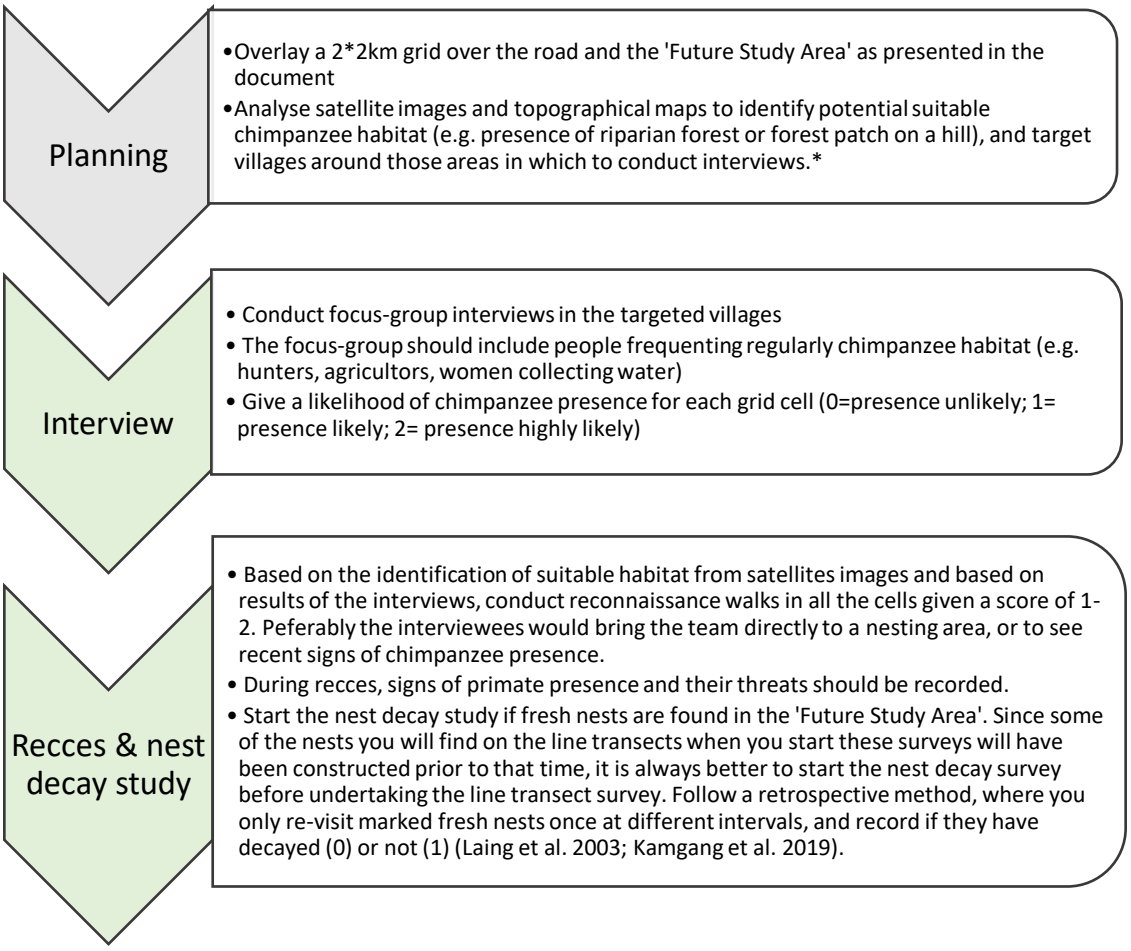
Finally, as an additional measure during the pandemic, we advise that people working in chimpanzee habitat should also provide proof that they have tested negative for Covid-19.

Survey approach

As mentioned, in order to optimise the survey design for conducting further surveys, it would be preferable to use a phased approach as there are still gaps in our knowledge regarding the distribution of chimpanzees in the Project area. This would also leave a bit more time to review results of the first

round of camera trapping (assuming the camera traps will be collected). See below our suggestion for planning and undertaking further surveys:

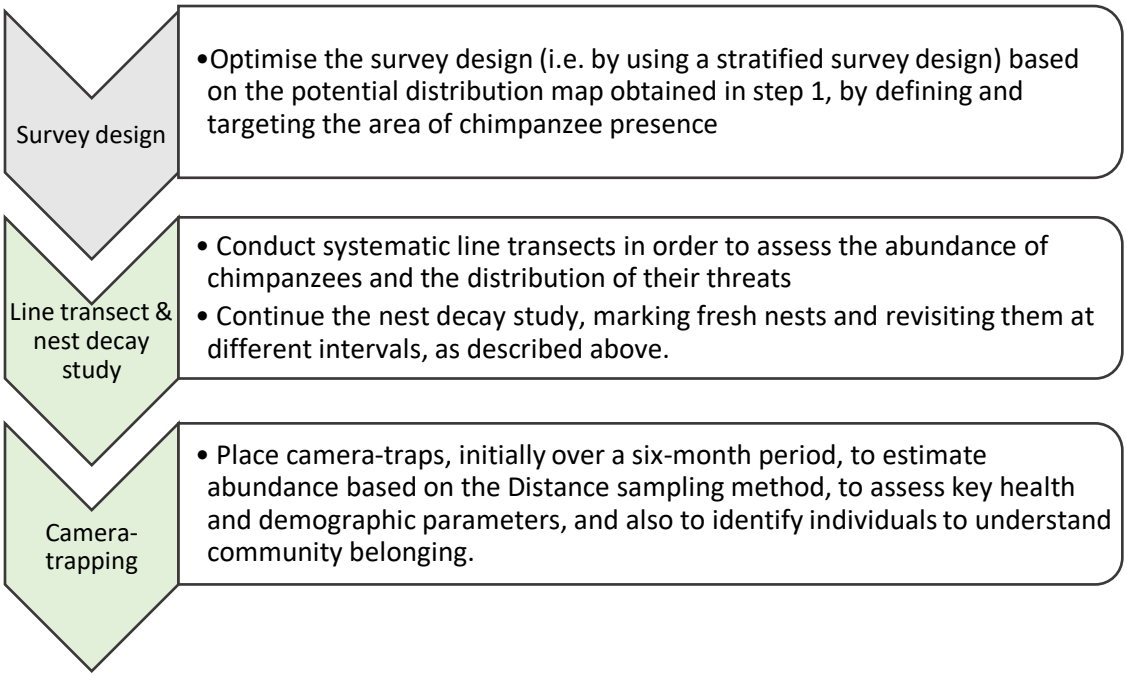
Step 1: Understanding chimpanzee distribution within the Project area (November-December 2020)



Output: Map of potential distribution of chimpanzees and other primate of conservation concern in the Project area

*If you share the results of the satellite imagery interpretation, the villages targeted for interviews and the interview questions, then the ARRC task force will be happy to provide feedback on this before the survey work begins.

Step 2: Undertake further surveys to estimate chimpanzee abundance and the number of communities present (Start at the end of December 2020-early January 2021, the transects finalized by the end of January and with the camera-trap conducted for a six-month trialling period initially)



*The task force can help guide the survey design once results from step 1 will be presented.