IUCN SSC PSG SGA/SSA[1] ARRC Task Force

ARRC Task Force's comments on the chimpanzee surveys conducted as part of the Kong solar project in Côte d'Ivoire

April 30th, 2026

The ARRC Task Force is thankful to the project for revising their chimpanzee survey report and including more details on the survey rationale and survey effort, and sharing the revised report 'Rapport de l'étude de référence sur le chimpanzé d'Afrique de l'ouest (*Pan troglodytes verus*) et son habitat pour le projet de centrale solaire à Kong, nord Côte d'Ivoire' dated October 27th 2025. The project also shared its 'Plan de Gestion de la Biodiversité' (PGB). The ARRC Task Force panel for this project has reviewed these documents and emitted the comments below.

General comments

- The panel agrees that the surveyed area in the project's area of influence (AoI) is highly degraded and that the chance of chimpanzees being present in this area is low. However, chimpanzees are present in the neighboring Comoé National Park, and therefore the project should remain aware of potential chimpanzee's encounters that could happen in the future, for example, if a female is searching to emigrate at puberty and travels through the project's AoI to find a new community to join. To that effect we proposed some additional preventive mitigation measures that can be included in the project's 'PGB', which also includes the Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (BMEP) (see below).
- We agree that this project will not entail significant impacts, but we find the current AoI defined at 1km in the PGB to be too small to include the extent of indirect impacts. For example, given the high number of workers to be hired during the construction phase, this could create new restaurants in Kong with further demand for bushmeat. Even though the Comoé National Park is c.20km away, this is the closest area with abundant wildlife that is probably providing bushmeat to local restaurants. The project should monitor its impacts within an appropriate area to ensure its mitigation approach if effective.

[1] International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Primate Specialist Group (PSG) Section on Great Apes (SGA) and Section on Small Apes (SSA)

Specific comments

- Regarding the updated chimpanzee survey report, it would have been useful to see where recces were conducted on a map.
- We acknowledge the mention of preventive measures in the PGB; however, there is no detail provided to assess if these will actually be implemented. For example, it is mentioned '*Réaliser des activités de communication et de sensibilisation des employés et des communautés environnantes sur la protection des chimpanzés*', who is responsible for this? In which villages will these take place? With whom will the content of these sensitization be developed?. We would also propose including these further mitigation measures in the PGB:
    - Include information on biodiversity sensitivities in the employee induction, as well as mention the vicinity to Comoé National Park, World Heritage Site;
    - Provide food and latrine for workers;
    - Forbid and impose sanctions to workers if they buy bushmeat, and/or of buying wild animals as pets.
    - Inform workers of how to act when seeing a chimpanzee; and who to report to in such cases, see example here.
- Some measures mentioned in the PGB are relevant to the BMEP, such as '*Continuer les inventaires des chimpanzés dans la zone d'influence et les zones aux alentours du parc*'. How frequently will this be done? Is the area of influence the initial 10km which was used for surveys or the new 1km mentioned in the PGB? Further monitoring surveys should include:
    - Camera trapping and recces focussed on gallery forests that communicate with the Comoé National Park.
    - Identifying informants in several villages that can inform the project if they see chimpanzees or signs of their presence.

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Best regards,

The ARRC Task Force panel for this project