Writing a field report
Types of Report

Type & form of report depends on circumstances: eg

- Pre-planned investigation vs happening across illegality
- Access to computers
- EPA / FDA / IFM / NGO author
- Target audience

**BUT** - basic principles of good reporting remain the same
General Considerations

• **Comprehensible**
  - Needs to be understood by a range of potential audiences - including staff of other agencies not expert in the subject, and local communities
  - Use simple, clear language - avoid highly technical terms & flowery description

• **Comprehensive**
  - Must include all the facts and information of any relevance
  - Include notes on checks made which did not uncover irregularities

• **Concise**
  - While being comprehensive, still try to be concise - aids clarity
  - Helps to keep key facts or conclusions in main body, but calculations/analysis / lists in annexes
General Considerations

• **Objective**
  - Important for use in legal proceedings
  - Stick to the facts, and only extend your conclusions to what the evidence shows - no supposition / speculation
  - Some allowance where recommendations for further checks is concerned

• **Consistent format**
  - Assists readers
Items to Include

Exact list will depend on type of report, but certainly:

- Background / Context
- Observations / Evidence
- Conclusions / Recommendations
Format

For longer mission reports:

• Cover page

• Contents List

• Executive summary
Main format

• Context of the mission - Why did we go?
• Objectives of the mission - What were our aims?
• Calendar of the mission - When did we do?
• Itinerary followed - Where did we go?
• Activities done - What did we do?
• People encountered - Who did we meet?
• Difficulties encountered - Problems?
• Mission findings - What did we find?
• Infractions observed - What illegalities?
**Cover page**

*Your address: eg EPA/FDA*

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**Title of document eg Report by FDA/EPA**

**Number of the report**

**Type of mission**

**Concessions/places investigated**

**Locations of the mission**

**Dates of the mission**

**People who went on the mission**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Dates of the mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forests Communautaires</td>
<td>Province du Centre et Sud-Ouest</td>
<td>16 mai au 02 juin 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Equipe Observateur Indépendant**
- M. Guy-Rans: Rapporteur - Fonction : Fonctionnaire
- M. Serge C. Mifomou, Directeur Éco de Forêt (DÉ)

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**Equipe MINFOR**
- M. KDG: Rapporteur - Fonction : Fonctionnaire
- M. YMG: Rapporteur - Fonctionnaire
- M. SIVA: Rapporteur - Fonctionnaire
- M. DOUNGEO: Rapporteur - Fonctionnaire
- M. SSG: Rapporteur - Fonctionnaire
- M. NGOM: Rapporteur - Fonctionnaire
Executive summary

Give a *Summary of Findings*; copy the *Conclusions* and *Recommendations* you make (at the end of the main text body) – that should not exceed 1 page
Background of the mission

- Background to the mission
  - type of mission (eg. standard monitoring / specific lead-based; focused on one type of illegality; focused on specific license holder / form of license)
  - (if relevant): reason for mission (eg tip-off, follow on from previous leads/recommendations)
Context of the mission

• Composition of the investigation party:
  - List the **members of the party** and any other official participant – including his/her organisation, institution, company and his/her position

• Equipment / resources used
  - Vehicle, fuel, GPS, camera, measuring devices etc
Objectives

- What were the specific goals of this mission?
- What exactly did you plan to do in this mission?

For example:

- Control the timber yards of companies x, z and y
- Check inputs-permits-outputs etc of sawmill Z
- Check activities at various checkpoints
Calendar and itinerary

• Dates of the mission dates that were spent in each point along the mission

• Map illustrating itinerary
Calendar & Itinerary

• Which geographical locations/provinces the mission covered and for what reason

• What specific actions were done, eg on 5 september on the itinerary Monrovia – Tubmanburg the mission did a check on a truck transporting logs of x species in a zone located approx. 10km from the village of y
People encountered

- A full list of all the people that the mission met
Difficulties encountered

• Mention in short all the obstacles, interferences, problems and technical or logistical difficulties the investigation (team) met or was confronted with
• How they were resolved
Mission findings

• Describe briefly the
  – background of the permit, how was it granted / allocated (e.g. irregularities in the allocation process)?; have there been any past involvement in illegalities, by the same company / person, etc.?
  – how you conducted your investigation: talks held, interviews conducted, what /which kind of routes taken in the field, what elements have you investigated (sites, log ponds, operations, boundaries, etc.)
  – facts found: if possible insert photos of evidence and a map of the visited area / concession (with GPS tracks and waypoints taken)
  – analysis of your observation and the facts found (eg. including checks made against maps / permits on return from field)
Infractions detected

• legal discussion of illegal facts discovered – reference to the relevant laws and regulations
• List of infractions that the mission findings reveal
Conclusions and recommendations

- Draw CAREFUL conclusions based on your observations and evidence; formulate recommendations to relevant authorities for follow up on illegalities / irregularities
- Avoid any conclusions which are not soundly based on your observations
Annexes

• Contain any document or background information which you have referred to in your report, and any document which is significant to the case: permits, quotas, denunciation letter, contracts, etc.

- Log of photographic evidence collected
- Copies of permits obtained / documents collected
- Log of GPS readings / items seen
- Detailed inventory data & analysis on timber seen/seized