

PRESS KIT



**The United States Government:
An enduring commitment to the Congo Basin**





For Immediate Release

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO RENEW ITS ENDURING COMMITMENT TO THE CONGO BASIN

LIBREVILLE, GABON — The United States Government is renewing its longstanding commitment to the protection, conservation, and sustainable management of the Congo Basin, the world's second largest tropical rainforest with the launch of the fourth phase of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment, also known as CARPE. The U.S. Embassy in Libreville detailed the U.S. government's renewed commitment to the Congo Basin at the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Meeting of Parties held July 5-8, 2022, in Libreville, Gabon.

Launched by former United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the Central African Heads of State at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the CBFP is a multi-stakeholder partnership to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems, combat climate change, and reduce poverty in Central African countries.

To date, USAID/CARPE in partnership with, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Forest Service, has invested over \$600 million in biodiversity research, mapping and conservation, livelihoods enhancement, economic development, and climate change mitigation since 1995 through the first three phases of CARPE.

The U.S. delegation was led by Dr. Diana Putman, the Acting Assistant Administrator of USAID's Bureau for Africa. A career Senior Foreign Service Officer and second-generation development specialist, Dr. Putman has spent most of her life overseas and has worked for USAID for 39 years, including five years as Mission Director in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where she oversaw CARPE.

Some of the major achievements of CARPE in the region include:

- Raising awareness of the Congo Basin Forest as a globally important ecosystem for biodiversity and climate change mitigation to the entire world.
- CARPE has supported some of the world's leading remote sensing work that has led to near real time forest monitoring capacity.

- The development of four landscape planning guides for forest management that are now adopted by all CBFP country members through the Central African Forest Commission.
- The development of the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool known as SMART in protected areas throughout the region to ensure park management decisions are based on the best information possible.
- The strengthening of wildlife law enforcement across many of the major protected areas in Central Africa, which is showing significant impact in terms of reduced poaching

CARPE IV will build on earlier successes and lessons learned and support the vision of a Congo Basin with healthy ecosystems and dynamic local leadership that supports stability and prosperity in communities.

**CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES WATSON REMARKS
OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE FOURTH PHASE OF
THE USAID/CARPE PROGRAM
LIBREVILLE (Radisson Hotel) - JULY 5 – (17-19h)**

[Salutations]

Hello, my name is Samuel Watson and I am the Chargé d’Affaires *ad interim* at the United States Embassy in Libreville.

On behalf of the American people, I wish to thank you for joining us today to celebrate the official relaunch of the United States Agency for International Development’s Central African Regional Program for the Environment. We call this program CARPE. It aims to address the environmental issues of conservation of biological diversity and global climate change in the tropical lowland forests of the Congo Basin.

We all know the critical importance of the Congo Basin’s forests.

It is a global reservoir of carbon which, if destroyed, will release billions of tons of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, contributing dramatically to climate change. However, while the forest remains healthy, it absorbs carbon dioxide, helping to mitigate climate change.

The Congo Basin is also crucial in terms of biodiversity conservation. It supports an enormous diversity of plants and animals and is home to species seen nowhere else, like bonobos and okapis.

I would like to share with you a bit of the CARPE history.

My government first authorized CARPE in nineteen ninety-five as a long-term regional initiative divided into strategic phases.

Since the inception of CARPE, Gabon has been and continues to be a leading partner in its implementation. In fact, the first CARPE Regional Office was established here in Libreville in nineteen ninety-five. I am so proud and delighted to see we are celebrating this relaunch event here in Libreville after more than twenty-five years of operations.

Let me review the various CARPE phases.

Phase one of CARPE, from nineteen ninety-five to two thousand two, centered on gathering information on the Central African forest ecosystem. It simultaneously built regional human resources and institutional capacity.

Phase two, from two thousand three to two thousand twelve, provided substantial U.S. Government resources to support the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, or CBFP.

Just to recall, the CBFP was launched at the two thousand two World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. At the summit, the U.S. Government committed fifty-three million dollars – more than thirty-three billion francs CFA - to finance the CBFP's efforts to support sustainable forestry, biodiversity conservation, and poverty alleviation.

My government identified USAID/CARPE as the principal mechanism through which these funds would be dispersed.

Consequently, CARPE scaled-up its operation in Congo Basin countries to include twelve Congo Basin Forest Partnership landscapes. Five are in Gabon or transboundary with Gabon: Mont Cristal-Mont Alen, Gamba-Conkouati, Lopé-Chaillu-Louesse, Dja-Minkebe-Odzala, and Léconi-Batéké-Léfini.

In twenty ten, CARPE evolved from the initial focus on forest and biodiversity conservation to include the U.S. Government's main program in Central Africa for climate change mitigation.

CARPE began its third phase in twenty twelve with the aim to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of the Congo Basin. This phase contributed to accelerating Central Africa's transition to climate-resilient, low-emissions development.

The Government of Gabon made impressive commitments to sustainable forest management and the creation of a network of thirteen parks in two thousand two covering three million hectares, ten percent of the country's surface area. It created the National Agency for National Parks, or ANPN. In response, the U.S. Government channeled most of its CARPE funds in Gabon through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support sustainable natural resource management in the field, improving environmental governance, and strengthening natural resource monitoring capacity.

Since the inception of CARPE to date, my government has invested around six hundred million dollars – almost three hundred eighty billion francs CFA - to support the sustainable management of the Congo Basin Forests.

This relaunch event marks CARPE's fourth phase at the same time that we celebrate the CBF's twentieth anniversary. Phase four signals the U.S. Government's continued commitment to biodiversity conservation and climate change response in the Congo Basin.

CARPE's fourth phase will use a people-centered approach to biodiversity and habitat protection. It will use protected areas as anchors for sustainable development, encourage fostering public private partnerships for protected area management and sustainable financing options, and leverage natural capital to promote green economies.

I am especially proud of our strong relationship with the government of Gabon and the progress we have accomplished together.

I would also like to recognize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Forest Service agencies which are key partners in CARPE's implementation. They continue to support the Gabonese government to combat wildlife trafficking and protect forests and biodiversity.

Last year, President Biden invited President Ali Bongo to attend the Africa Leaders' Summit on Climate. President Bongo explained how Gabon's forests absorb four times more carbon than the country emits. He outlined to the world Gabon's strategy to ensure its forests are managed sustainably.

Ladies and gentlemen, the high-level U.S. Government engagement with the Congo Basin government members and our partners' attendance at this event demonstrate our joint commitment to protecting the Congo Basin. It also responds to shared goals to curb climate change from the United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as C o P twenty-six.

Together we stand strong looking at the future of CARPE, and of the forests of the Congo Basin.

A-AA Diana Putman's Speech for the Launch of Phase IV of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment

Libreville – Radisson Hotel – July 05, 2022

Honorable Ministers representing the governments of the Congo Basin countries,

Dr. Ruck, Congo Basin Forest Facilitator,

Excellencies, Ambassadors,

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

I would like to start by offering a sincere thanks to the Government of Gabon for hosting the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) 19th Meeting of the Parties, which also happens to mark the 20th anniversary of this important partnership. Having attended the CBFP meetings in Brazzaville in October 2014, I am especially happy to be here today

My sincerest gratitude goes to Germany for its outstanding performance facilitating the CBFP over the last two and a half years, and for facilitating this year's General Assembly meeting here in Libreville, Gabon. Since the birth of the CBFP in 2002, Germany has taken on this critical role two times– the first time was from 2008 to 2010 – so, special congratulations and thanks are in order.

I would also like to recognize all the CBFP members. Membership has grown from around 40 countries and institutions in 2002 to nearly 120 today. This growing partnership demonstrates our joint commitment to work together towards sustaining the forests of the Congo Basin.

It is wonderful to see so many Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment partners in the room. You have contributed so much to the program's success over the past decades. First, I'd like to recognize the representatives from the governments of the countries of Central Africa. I'm also happy to welcome our implementing partners including Wildlife Conservation Society, Africa Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, University of Maryland, World Resources Institute, Tetra Tech, and World Wildlife Fund; our regional partners, including the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Forest Commission, and the Network of Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions in Central Africa, and our colleagues from other donor countries.

As some of you may know, I spent five years as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and also covered the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic and have a deep respect and affinity for this region.

During my five years in the DRC, I led the launch of the third phase of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment, which we fondly call CARPE. CARPE is the U.S. government's oldest and largest environmental program in Africa, and we have invested approximately \$600 million through CARPE to date. I am delighted to be back and part of kicking off yet another phase of CARPE.

It is truly a special honor for us to officially launch the fourth phase of CARPE on the margins of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the CBFP. The U.S. government was one of the founding members of the CBFP, which was launched by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Almost a year since his passing, his legacy lives on and the United States remains a strong supporter of CBFP.

CARPE was originally launched in 1995, and has gone through three distinct phases, as his excellency U.S. Embassy CDA Samuel Watson just described.

CARPE, which USAID co-implements with our U.S. government partners the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of State, is a proven program for strengthening sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation across six Central African countries that share the Congo Basin ecosystem -.

Some of CARPE's major achievements in the region include:

- Raising awareness of the Congo Basin Forest as a globally important ecosystem for biodiversity and climate change mitigation.
- CARPE has funded some of the world's leading remote sensing work, which has led to near real time forest monitoring capacity. This includes the Global Land Analysis and Discovery tool and the Global Forest Watch. CARPE has also built online forest atlases for Congo Basin countries, and systems that allow people in governments and civil society to receive alerts within days when a disturbance occurs in a particular area they are interested in, even if it is in the middle of the forest, thousands of kilometers away.
- On the forest management front, CARPE has developed four landscape planning guides that are now adopted by all CBFP country members through the Central African Forest Commission or COMIFAC.
- CARPE has rolled out the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, known as SMART, in protected areas throughout the region. Initially developed as a means to harness ranger-collected data on threats and performance, SMART now integrates data from a variety of sources, ranging from electronic sensors to intelligence data and information collected by communities. This technology has revolutionized Central African efforts to ensure park management decisions are based on the best information possible.

- CARPE has helped to strengthen wildlife law enforcement across many of the major protected areas in Central Africa, which is helping significantly reduce poaching. For example, in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, elephants used to be poached at a rate of 100 or more a year. Since 2017, there has been zero poaching in the park.

But that's CARPE's history, let's talk about CARPE's future.

- CARPE Phase IV builds on CARPE's earlier successes and lessons learned and supports the vision of a **Congo Basin with healthy ecosystems and dynamic local leadership that supports stability and prosperity in communities.**
- CARPE IV aims to achieve this vision by building inclusive markets, improving law enforcement, supporting civil society's role in environmental monitoring and advocacy, and strengthening land use management.
- During this phase, CARPE will place a greater focus on civil society, encouraging more citizen participation and ownership across households, communities, and protected areas, and ensuring that marginalized populations - including women and Indigenous Peoples - are engaged in effective and equitable ways.
- CARPE IV will prioritize private sector engagement, such as establishing partnerships for effective park management and catalyzing green economic growth which can benefit communities while helping to maintain biodiversity and forests.
- CARPE IV will also strengthen locally led development such as supporting local communities to secure land and forest rights and enabling them to sustainably manage their own forest resources.

The longevity of CARPE demonstrates the U.S. government's firm commitment to promoting sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation in the Congo Basin.

Looking beyond CARPE, the U.S. government has expanded commitments on the environment. For example, at the recent UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow, we launched the U.S. Plan to Conserve Global Forests: Critical Carbon Sinks, which is a \$9 billion whole-of-government effort to conserve forests and other terrestrial and coastal ecosystems that serve as critical carbon sinks.

In addition, we signed the Global Forest Finance Pledge, which commits countries to take action to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, and the Congo Basin Joint Donor Statement, which provided an initial collective pledge of at least \$1.5 billion of financing between 2021-2025 to protect and maintain the Congo Basin.

Moreover, in April 2022, USAID released its new Climate Strategy, which will guide USAID's work globally to address the climate crisis through 2030.

This new Climate Strategy sets six ambitious high-level targets, including activities that reduce, avoid, or sequester six billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, and promote the conservation, restoration, and/or management of 100 million hectares of forest.

The U.S. Government recognizes the importance of the Congo Basin for climate and biodiversity purposes. Continued investments in the Congo Basin are crucial if we are to achieve emissions reduction targets, advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis, and conserve biodiversity.

In closing, I wish to recognize the US Embassy in Gabon and all of the U.S. Embassies in the Central Africa region whose support contributes so much to the overall success of CARPE and all our USAID investments in the region.

And finally, I wish to recognize Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba and his late father President Omar Bongo Ondimba for the role they have played over the years in emphasizing the importance of protecting the environment. And we are delighted to be here with Gabon's Minister of Water, Forest, the Sea and Environment, Professor Lee White, who is well known and regarded for his leadership on sustainable forestry and forest management.

I also would like to highlight Minister Lee White and the Government of Gabon's more recent efforts to focus on transitioning away from fossil fuels and towards job growth in the green economy - which are crucial to chart a path towards truly sustainable development. This includes the Government of Gabon's commitments to achieve conservation of 30 percent of its lands and 30 percent of its waters by the year 2030 to protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change impacts. We commend Gabon's target of ensuring that all logging concessions are Forest Stewardship Council certified by 2025, and bringing timber processing industries to Gabon, to add value in-country, creating more jobs and economic impact from less trees cut.

I would now like to invite Minister Lee White to the podium and look forward to his remarks.

Long live our cooperation and long live the Congo Basin Forest. Thank you.



CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

USAID’s Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) works to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of the Congo Basin. It strengthens forest management in priority carbon-rich, biologically sensitive, and diverse landscapes across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo (ROC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). It also works to reform environmental policy and monitor ecosystems in six Central African countries (DRC, ROC, CAR, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Cameroon). Current USAID activities, which are implemented by non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, and U.S. Government agencies, focus on managing protected areas, empowering communities, engaging the private sector, strengthening policy, and building capacity.

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT: GARAMBA CHINKO PROTECTED AREAS ACTIVITY

African Parks Network

Oct 1, 2016 - Sept 30, 2024; \$16,998,650

Garamba National Park in northeastern DRC and the Chinko Reserve in southeastern CAR represent a unique ecosystem on the northern edge of the Congo Basin Forest. These protected areas support rich biodiversity across a gradation of habitats, from forest to savanna, but both have suffered greatly from insecurity over the last 15 years. This project strengthens wildlife law enforcement in these protected areas. This, in turn, improves security for local people. In addition, this activity builds the capacity to manage protected areas and develops local and regional constituencies in support of conservation.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITY BASED COUNTER WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

African Parks Network

June 18, 2018 - June 29, 2023; \$9,998,480

This activity focuses on conflict-vulnerable communities in northeastern DRC and southeastern CAR, where unsustainable livelihoods threaten biodiversity. The activity targets artisanal miners, pastoralists, agricultural communities, and those engaged in illegal fishing within protected areas. It aims to reduce conflicts and develop sustainable livelihoods that support conservation and provide local communities with incentives to conserve biodiversity.

GESI NI NISHATI KWA KILA MTU (GAS IS AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CHARCOAL) ACTIVITY

BBOX Capital DRC

September 30, 2020 - September 30, 2023; \$2,999,630

This activity promotes private sector-led solutions that decrease deforestation caused by charcoal production and greenhouse gas emissions by replacing charcoal with Liquefied Petroleum Gas. This improves the health of thousands of people—primarily women—by reducing their inhalation of dangerous fumes caused by cooking with charcoal. In the south sector of Virunga National Park in eastern DRC, where charcoal production is responsible for 91 percent of deforestation, the project will provide 15,000 households and small businesses with clean and affordable cooking alternatives to avert the equivalent of 40,000 mt of carbon dioxide emissions.

ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: TOURISM EXPANSION IN THE NOUABALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK

Wildlife Conservation Society

April 9, 2020 - April 8, 2024; \$5,500,000

This activity strengthens the management of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and develops community constituencies to support biodiversity and forest conservation by leveraging private sector resources to promote green economic development. It will set the Park on a path to sustainability while enhancing local communities' socio-economic incentives by promoting nature-based tourism, creating jobs, and diversifying livelihoods to conserve biodiversity and reduce deforestation.

TULINDE MAZINGIRA YA OKAPI, KWA MAENDELEO YETU (PROTECT THE OKAPI HABITAT) ACTIVITY

Wildlife Conservation Society

September 30, 2020 – September 29, 2024; \$7,000,000

This activity strengthens security in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, builds effective management of the reserve, strengthens the capacity of law enforcement, and establishes a secure enabling environment to protect its unique biodiversity, especially the world's remaining wild population of Okapi, a species found only in the DRC. This activity takes a human-centered approach that empowers local communities by diversifying income sources, creating jobs, improving access to education and health services, and attracting private sector investment to sustainably manage the reserve and wider landscape. The activity has a particular focus on gender and inclusion issues, ensuring that women and the 7,500 indigenous Efe and Mbuti people, for whom the Okapi Wildlife Reserve is their ancestral home, are included in conservation efforts.

POLICY AND CAPACITY BUILDING: FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

U.S. Forest Service

June 15, 2015 - May 31, 2025; \$32,155,541

This activity improves sustainable forest management throughout Central Africa by supporting training, technical assistance, and policy reform, and developing and rolling out tools and best practices for effective policy-level decision-making.

VIRUNGA DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITY

Virunga Foundation

July 2019 - January 2027; \$16,580,894.00

This activity strengthens the core functions of Africa's oldest national park, expands on ongoing development projects outside the park, and contributes to peace building efforts in the region. This partnership with the Virunga Foundation aims to retain ecosystem diversity and conserve critically endangered species such as the mountain gorilla by protecting habitat and developing tailored threat-reduction strategies. A community-based approach is at the center of Virunga interventions engaging with, and providing benefits for, local communities. Virunga plays a central role in the post-conflict economic reconstruction of eastern Congo, improving livelihoods in neighboring communities through support that helps small and medium enterprises access specialized training, credit, and affordable clean energy (including at a new industrial zone).

SOSO PONA MOTO NYONSO (CHICKEN FOR EVERYONE) ACTIVITY

Wildlife Conservation Society

September 30, 2020 – September 29, 2024; \$3,000,000

This activity develops local constituencies to protect wildlife in northern ROC by providing a sustainable alternative source of animal protein, creating jobs, increasing household revenues, and enhancing social and economic wellbeing. The activity leverages private sector resources to address the unsustainable harvesting of bushmeat—one of the major threats to biodiversity in the area. It advances the country's economic development and improves the enabling environment by increasing access to finance and markets to allow rural communities to engage in sustainable livelihoods.

USAID'S FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Tetra Tech, Inc.

August 11, 2020 - August 10, 2025; \$24,900,000

This activity helps environmental actors in the Congo Basin implement strategies and actions that address large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management. The activity pursues policy reforms and strengthens institutions related to conservation and forest management, while training government agencies and local organizations and providing them with tools to shape national and regional issues in Central Africa. The activity also increases private sector engagement to develop green enterprises, such as ecotourism businesses, which support biodiversity and conserve forests.

ZAMBA PONA LOBI / MSITU JUU YA KESHO (FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE) ACTIVITY

Rainforest Foundation UK

September 30, 2020 - September 29, 2025; \$4,000,000

The activity works with over 20 communities in Equateur, Maniema, and North Kivu provinces in the DRC to minimize deforestation, protect biodiversity, and provide local communities with improved benefits through Community Forest Concessions. It helps communities develop concession management plans with agreed limits to logging, sets up forest-friendly cultivation methods, such as agroforestry, and supports community monitoring of key flora and fauna. The activity will consolidate and scale up progress to strengthen the enabling institutional and policy environment, while building the capacity of stakeholders to support the Community Forest Concessions process.

USAID'S CONSERVATION TROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Tetra Tech, Inc.

July 2021 - June 2026; \$15,000,000

This activity stimulates private investment in environmentally sustainable growth, spurring the establishment of local enterprises. It ensures that local communities benefit from forest and biodiversity resources while

reducing threats to biodiversity, carbon-rich forests, and peatlands in ROC. The activity also seeks to mitigate threats to biodiversity by supporting growth in conservation-friendly industries.

KAKAO ENDELUVU INALINDA OKAPI (POSITIONING SHADE-GROWN COCOA TO IMPROVE CONSERVATION AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS)

University of California, Los Angeles.

September 2021 - August 2022; \$359,404 (For phase one)

This activity seeks to conserve the biodiversity of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in Ituri, in the north-east of the DRC by (a) limiting deforestation around the Reserve while (b) promoting a sustainable shade-grown cocoa approach to that is more supportive of biodiversity than other anthropogenic land uses such as annual or perennial monoculture or livestock rearing. This activity is set up so that an initial year of research, consultation and business modeling will yield opportunities for deeper engagement with the private sector and other relevant actors in the cocoa sector in this region.

UMOJA WA NGILIA NA KAHAWA (USAID'S GORILLA COFFEE ALLIANCE ACTIVITY)

TechnoServe, Inc.

August 2021 - August 2026; \$7,000,000

The Gorilla Coffee Alliance Activity is a Global Development Alliance partnership under the USAID's Health, Ecosystems, and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies ([HEARTH](#)) family of public-private partnerships that leverage cross-sectoral efforts for the well-being of people and the planet. This activity seeks to catalyze a robust organic coffee sector in South Kivu to create a virtuous cycle of conservation and community prosperity. It integrates programming for the sustainable development of coffee value chains, conservation around Kahuzi Biega National Park and improved livelihoods through increased household income and improved health outcomes. It will partner with 8,500 farming households to improve their coffee production and sales and reduce poaching and deforestation around the Park.

GARAMBA ALLIANCE ACTIVITY

Adam Smith International Ltd. (ASI)

January 2022 - November 2027; \$7,702,376

The Garamba Alliance Activity is a Global Development Alliance partnership under the USAID's Health, Ecosystems, and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies (HEARTH) family. This activity will bring together both private and public sector organizations to forge a common vision and work together to ensure sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the region. The Garamba Alliance Activity will a) increase access to economic opportunities, b) promote sustainable agriculture and livestock-based enterprises, c) strengthen the capacity and expand market opportunities and d) strengthen the effectiveness of protected area management.

STRENGTHENING CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL AFRICA

US Fish and Wildlife Service

May 2021–May 2027; \$88,958,946

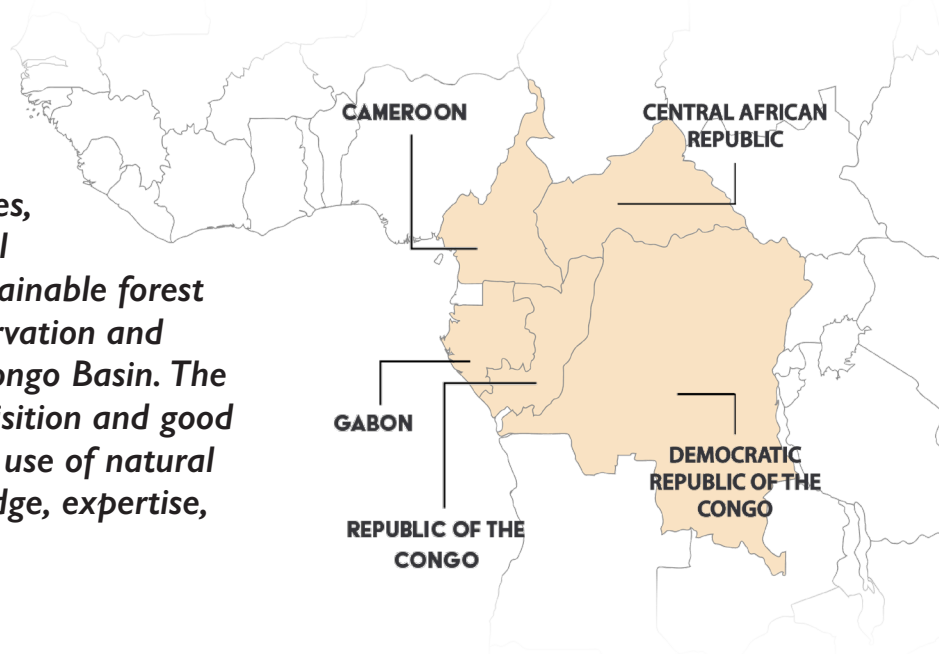
USFWS, through its Division of International Conservation, provides targeted technical and financial assistance aimed at developing capacity for improved conservation management and the protection of key wildlife populations and their habitats throughout the Congo Basin. USFWS supports programs that improve site-based wildlife conservation in priority population strongholds in Central Africa; increase individual and institutional capacity for more effective wildlife protection at the local, national and regional level including the professionalization of protected area staff; and directly address regional and emerging pressures on wildlife including the unsustainable bushmeat trade, disease and transhumance. USFWS works in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Gabonese Republic, and Republic of the Congo. Regional programming may further target the additional members of the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC) (Burundi, Chad, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Principe).



On the river in Gabon. Photo by Olivia Freeman.

CENTRAL AFRICA PROGRAM

The USDA Forest Service International Programs has worked in Central Africa for over 20 years, collaborating with governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, and local communities to address and promote sustainable forest and land management, biodiversity conservation and responses to climate change across the Congo Basin. The Forest Service (USFS) supports skills acquisition and good practices in sustainable management and use of natural resources through the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and experience.



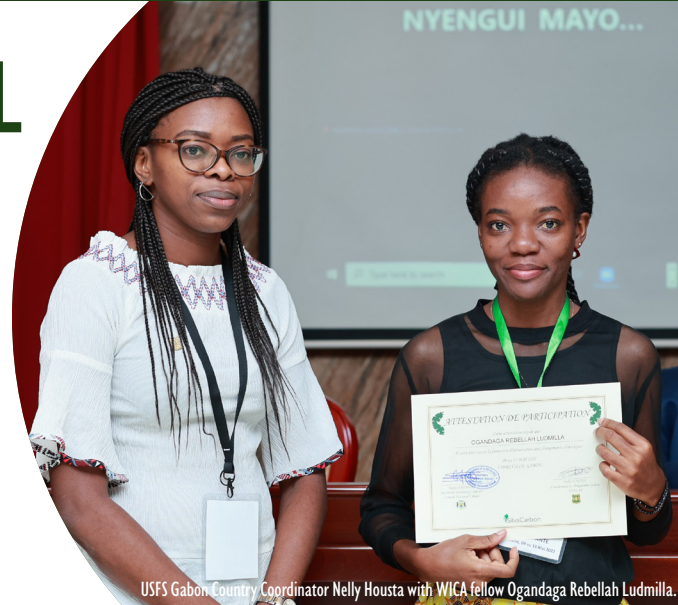
WHY CENTRAL AFRICA?

Stretching across nine countries in Central Africa, the Congo Basin forest is estimated to represent ten years of global CO₂ emissions. The preservation of this forest is paramount to the health and well-being of the people of Central Africa and the world. As Congo Basin countries focus on their most pressing developmental and environmental needs, they are acquiring invaluable knowledge about some of the least studied forests on Earth. USFS works to coordinate and harmonize natural resource management approaches, providing technical information, expertise, training, and support to regional and national planning and governance bodies.

In Central Africa, USFS works primarily in seven key areas. Program priorities are based on partner country needs, Forest Service expertise, and the potential for positive impact.

TRAINING & INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

USFS annually sponsors partners to attend international seminars held in the United States and offers scholarships to promising master's candidates to study natural resource management and climate change. USFS is also working with government agencies and NGOs in DRC and ROC to help them carry out institutional capacity assessments and implement subsequent support plans.



OVER 200 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, AND TECHNICAL PARTNERS TRAINED IN TERRESTRIAL CARBON ACCOUNTING, FOREST INVENTORY METHODOLOGIES, AND FOREST MONITORING

FOREST INVENTORY & MONITORING

Understanding existing forest resources, including changes in forest and land cover, is an essential step in making informed land use planning decisions. USFS is supporting Central African countries to better measure these important resources for decision making and international reporting processes. Since 2014, USFS has provided targeted technical assistance to governments in Cameroon, DRC, and ROC to help them measure, monitor, and manage forests.

SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM

Central Africa is one of the last places on Earth where one can see great apes such as gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos, giant creatures like hippopotamuses and elephants, and rare mammals like okapis and pangolins in the wild. Sustainable ecotourism presents a huge opportunity in the region to give protected areas and animals intrinsic economic value. USFS is working with various partners in DRC, ROC, and Gabon to improve ecotourism infrastructure, resources, and capacity with the aim to increase ecotourism opportunities and income while reinforcing biodiversity conservation efforts.





Sosthène Ndong Obiang, a senior ecoguard with Gabon's National Protected Area Agency, speaks about the identification of forest products during a workshop.

COMBATting ILLEGAL LOGGING

USFS is working with government partners to strengthen forest governance and improve countries' capacity to investigate and prosecute illegal natural resource cases in the region. Forestry agents, customs officials, and law enforcement personnel have been trained in on-site investigation techniques, while prosecutors and judges have been trained on investigating, developing, and prosecuting illegal logging cases. USFS is also working in ROC to support the development of an inter-ministerial Forestry Law Enforcement Task Force.

LAND USE PLANNING

Land use planning and zoning processes are critical for ensuring strategic land and resource management. USFS is promoting sustainable resource management, biodiversity conservation, and economic development by working with governments and local communities to create land use and protected area plans that address livelihood needs as well as protect and preserve natural resources.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In the fight against climate change, tropical forests are our first line of defense, as they absorb and stock huge amounts of carbon. For more than a decade, USFS has worked with governments to develop and improve national forest monitoring systems. USFS also works directly with technicians, professors, students, and government officials to offer specialized trainings, facilitate regional networking, and connect them with mentors and colleagues working on climate issues around the globe.

OVER 100 WOMEN INTRODUCED TO CLIMATE SCIENCE THROUGH NATIONAL WORKSHOPS, WITH 19 WOMEN SUCCESSFULLY EARNING DIPLOMAS IN GREENHOUSE GAS MANAGEMENT



Fire management training outside of Mushie, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo by Olivia Freeman.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

USFS is working in DRC and ROC with local communities to improve fire management. This includes developing land use and fire management plans, establishing village fire brigades, and developing training materials to scale up fire management. In ROC, USFS is also working with the government to facilitate adoption of national fire management strategies based on successful work in select communities.

PROGRAMS

CARPE

The Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is a long-term initiative to promote sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation in the Congo Basin through increased local, national, and regional natural resource management capacity. USFS has been an implementing partner of CARPE since 1997.

SilvaCarbon

SilvaCarbon is an interagency technical cooperation program of the U.S. Government to enhance the capacity of selected tropical countries to measure, monitor, and report carbon in their forests and other lands. USFS currently implements SilvaCarbon activities in DRC, ROC, and Cameroon.

Illegal Logging

USFS is working with national partners and the U.S. Department of Justice to increase the capacity of government ministries, law enforcement, and forestry officials to combat illegal logging. These programs are supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), USAID, and the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).



Technicians from the Directorate of Forest Inventory and Management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during a workshop focused on mapping burned areas and estimating greenhouse gas emissions from biomass burning. Photo by Lisa Loukounyi.

CONTACT

Kathleen Sheridan

Assistant Director for Africa and the Middle East
kathleen.sheridan@usda.gov

Richard Paton

Central Africa Regional Program Coordinator
richard.a.paton@usda.gov

For more information please visit:

www.usfscentrafrica.org



Securing Wildlife and Landscapes in Central Africa: *The USFWS Role in CARPE*



A herd of forest elephants at Dzanga Bai, Central African Republic. Credit: Dirck Byler/USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) works in Central Africa to conserve some of the world's most iconic species, including forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, and marine turtles. Together with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), USFWS supports a range of partners in the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) to secure wildlife, protect vital landscapes, and strengthen capacity for wildlife management.

USFWS provides financial and technical assistance to meet the complex and demanding tasks required to conserve Central Africa's wildlife and habitats. Some of our major CARPE initiatives are located in:

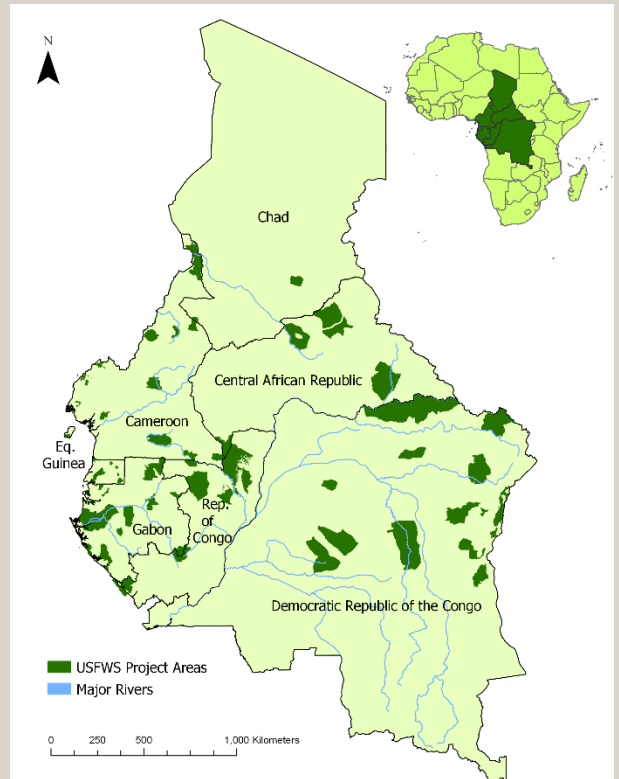
- Gabon's network of 13 national parks, home to more than 50 percent of Africa's remaining population of forest elephants, and a network of 10 marine protected areas covering 23 percent of the country's territorial waters.
- The Sangha Trinational and Northern Congo landscape, a vast tropical forest and stronghold for elephants and great apes. It includes national parks in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo.

USFWS leverages its expertise in wildlife management and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to strengthen the capacity of government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to fight wildlife trafficking and protect threatened species in Central Africa.

Demand for bushmeat, poaching for ivory, and international wildlife trafficking are devastating forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, pangolins, and other iconic species across Central Africa.

Program Highlights

- USFWS supports a network of key projects and trusted partners based on wildlife priorities for the region, and provides critical monitoring and evaluation as well as expert technical support.
- USFWS-CARPE investments build on more than 30 years of USFWS work in Central Africa to conserve African elephants, great apes, and marine turtles, as mandated through Acts of Congress.



Project areas in Central Africa supported by USFWS since 2010. Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS



Central chimpanzee.

Credit: Ian Nichols/National Geographic

Threats to Central African Wildlife

Commercial bushmeat trade

Commercial demand for bushmeat poses a critical threat to the majority of forest animals in Central Africa. The illegal luxury bushmeat trade empties the forests of their wildlife and threatens the security of rural people.

Transnational illegal livestock grazing

Seasonal movement of cattle by pastoralists across borders (i.e., transhumance) occurs within a landscape of escalating violent conflict and threatens both wildlife and people.

Elephant poaching

The illegal ivory trade poses the single biggest threat to the survival of the African elephant. The number of forest elephants in Central Africa fell 62 percent between 2002 and 2011.

Extractive industries

Logging, mining, and oil exploration that is unregulated and unmanaged threatens wildlife by destroying and degrading habitats. These industries also create roads that attract poachers and new human settlements.

Marine turtle mortality

Commercial and artisanal fishing operations threaten marine turtles through direct and incidental capture. During nesting season, poachers also capture females and raid nests for eggs.

Disease

Ebola and other infectious diseases are a major cause of decline in Africa's great ape populations. Ebola's mortality rate is higher for chimpanzees and gorillas (up to 95 percent) than for humans.

Strategic Objectives

CARPE's primary objective is to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss and forest degradation in the Congo Basin by increasing capacity for natural resource management at local, national, and regional levels. USFWS has been a major CARPE partner since 2006, and works closely with national governments, other U.S. agencies, international donors, and a range of other partners to ensure a results-based approach to wildlife stewardship in Central Africa.

Major Program Goals

- Improve governance, security and stability of wildlife strongholds in Central Africa
- Increase individual and institutional capacity for more effective wildlife protection at the local, national, and regional level, including the professionalization of protected area staff
- Reduce pressure on wildlife strongholds through directly addressing regional and emerging threats, including zoonotic disease and the unsustainable commercial bushmeat trade

USFWS employs a full cycle, strategic approach to developing capacity that is anchored by our support to protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. This includes a focus on developing capacity at all levels, from individual to institutional, to ensure protected areas are managed and championed beyond their boundaries. Through the USFWS MENTOR Model, we provide further leadership and innovative, interdisciplinary management training. USFWS' integrated capacity development opportunities build upon each other to address performance gaps and strengthen good governance

Achievements

- Significant reduction in illegal commercial and artisanal fishing in Gabon's coastal waters and lagoons (in partnership with ANPN).
- Formation of a new regional network of partners working to prevent illegally harvested species from entering the commercial bushmeat trade (in partnership with the Central Africa Bushmeat Action Group).
- Creation of the Democratic Republic of Congo's first community co-managed protected area, the Kabobo Natural Reserve (in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society)
- Transboundary collaboration in the Garamba-Chinko landscape in the DRC and Central African Republic to restore and conserve key wildlife species, while also establishing a foothold for governance, security, and stability throughout the region (in partnership with the African Parks).
- Seven USFWS MENTOR Model programs including 61 Fellows from 11 African countries

For more details on the USFWS results-based vision for conservation in Central Africa and guidance to enhance project effectiveness, please see the USFWS website to download [A Results-Based Vision for Conservation in Central Africa](#) and [Standard Measures of Effectiveness and Threats for Wildlife Conservation in Central Africa](#).



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service International
Affairs <http://www.fws.gov/international>

 @USFWSIntl USFWS_International

 Affairs

June 2022



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID'S FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT ACTIVITY

For the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Congo Basin

The forests of the Congo Basin cover an area of more than 3.6 million square kilometers (larger than the State of Alaska) spanning Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. They are home to over 80 million people as well as 1,000 bird species, 400 mammals, 700 fish, and 10,000 plants, 30% of which are endemic to the region. Housing the second largest contiguous forest in the world, Central Africa's rainforests are a vital source of food and income for forest peoples; a supplier of fuelwood, timber, and water regulation for downstream cities; and a storehouse of carbon and biodiversity for the planet. However, degradation of these forests is accelerating as agriculture and settlements expand and more timber and fuel wood is extracted; increasingly its rich biodiversity is also threatened due to habitat degradation, poaching, overfishing, and illicit trade in wildlife products.

OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

The goal of USAID's Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity is to assist CARPE and other environmental stakeholders in the Congo Basin to implement strategies and actions that address the large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management. To achieve this, the activity engages closely with a broad network of institutions including civil society, private sector, government, and other conservation and development practitioners across the Congo Basin to build sustainable local institutions with the capacity to generate new analysis and evidence to support policy reforms and implement innovative conservation approaches. Underpinning these objectives is the activity's collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach that improves knowledge-sharing, communications, and learning across conservation networks in the Congo Basin.

The Activity focuses its capacity-building, policy, and CLA efforts on improving forest, biodiversity, and land management; strengthening law enforcement efforts to reduce forest and wildlife crime; and promoting more inclusive markets and sustainable financing for forest conservation and management.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Tetra Tech

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

USAID's Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity implements strategies and actions that address the large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management by focusing on three interconnected intermediate results (IRs):

IR 1: Leadership and Stakeholder Participation Strengthened:

Working closely with civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, and policy makers, the activity strengthens the technical and institutional capacities of stakeholders in Central Africa, including the private sector, to implement evidence-based analysis and strategies, policy advocacy, and improved communications to address key threats to forests and biodiversity.

IR 2: Policy, Regulatory and Enabling Environment Improved:

In order to enrich and inform provincial, national and regional policy discussions, the activity identifies and addresses priority constraints in the policy and regulatory framework by providing analysis and policy options to government, strengthening policy/regulatory advocacy and promoting the participation of the private sector as well as women and other marginalized groups in policy reforms and their implementation.

IR 3: Innovative and Evidence-based Approaches Adopted and Institutionalized:

To improve regional understanding of effective and evidence-based strategies to improve forest management and reduce threats to biodiversity, the activity produces, disseminates and institutionalizes evidence-based analysis in support of biodiversity conservation and forest management policy that is informed by best practices and learning. Through support to grants and partnerships, as well as collaboration across the CARPE portfolio, the Activity introduces innovative approaches, promotes financial sustainability for long-term conservation, and strengthens communication on the impact of CARPE investments.

Activity Expected Results

IR1

- Strengthened organizational capacity of at least 20 local organizations over the life of the Activity,
- Mobilization of at least 50 new partners
- New partnerships and networks with private sector convened to support green economy and inclusive market systems approaches for conservation.

IR2

- Generation of data-driven advocacy and knowledge products to improve decision-making
- Strengthened participation and voice of vulnerable groups in policy dialogue and decision-making,
- Improved design and implementation of at least 25 laws, policies, regulations, or standards addressing biodiversity conservation of sustainable landscapes

IR3

- Increased visibility and uptake of CARPE-supported strategies to address threats to forests and biodiversity.
- At least three new sustainable financing strategies identified and piloted
- CARPE CLA agenda facilitated and CARPE results shared widely through newsletters and organization of partner meetings

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The five-year, Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and began in August 2020. Implementation is led by Tetra Tech ARD with support from the World Resources Institute and Resonance.

CONTACTS

Melody McNeil, Director, CARPE, mmcneil@usaid.gov

Nathan Hulley, Private Sector Advisor, CARPE, nhulley@usaid.gov

Christian Kalinde, Program Management Specialist (Climate Change), CARPE, ckalinde@usaid.gov

Kevin Doyle, Chief of Party, FABS, kevin.doyle@fabs-activity.org



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID'S CONSERVATION THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO ACTIVITY

Promoting green enterprises and conservation-friendly development to reduce threats to biodiversity, carbon-rich forests, and peatlands.

The Republic of Congo is home to one of the richest and most biologically important forest ecosystems on the planet. Approximately 66% of the country's land area is covered by lowland tropical forests, much of which is made up of large tracts of undisturbed virgin wilderness. The Public Forest Estate is comprised of 18.4 million hectares of production forest, 2.86 million hectares of protection forest and 72,000 hectares of industrial eucalyptus, pine and limba tree plantations. Congo is home to nearly 400 mammal species, 1,000 bird species, and approximately 10,000 plant species, of which 3,000 are endemic to the country. Efforts to conservation have struggled to achieve impacts at a sufficiently large scale to outpace threats to ecosystems and biodiversity due to small-scale forest clearing for agriculture, even though the yields are well below potential and forest clearing for commercial logging and extractive industries. In spite of this, interventions to improve livelihoods that support conservation and reduce deforestation have been small-scale thus far. There is a need to promote wider scale economic benefits, diversify livelihoods, foster greater private sector engagement in conservation, and improve the enabling environment for industries or markets for sustainability.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Tetra Tech

OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

The goal of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Conservation through Economic Empowerment in the Republic of Congo (CEERC) Activity is to assist the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and other stakeholders in the Republic of Congo in strengthening green market systems and enterprises that achieve sustainable economic benefits to local communities and economic stakeholders to reduce threats to biodiversity, carbon-rich forests and peatlands. CEERC works closely with a broader range of stakeholders including government, private sector, civil society and other conservation and development

practitioners to analyze and select green economy value chains and sectors, strengthen the enabling environment for conservation friendly enterprises and support target communities to develop and sustain conservation-friendly enterprises. The Activity works with established local partners, using grants to promote promising, innovative, strategic solutions, incentivize investment and scale up proven approaches. Underpinning these objectives is the activity's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting approach that improves knowledge-sharing, communications, and learning across conservation and economic growth networks in the Republic of Congo and beyond.

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

The USAID CEERC Activity implements a green market system approach to foster private investment to strengthen value chains and associated services that contribute to reduce threats to biodiversity conservation and forest. The approach is focused on three interconnected intermediate results (IRs):

IR 1: Sustainable and Scalable Enterprises / Industries Supporting Conservation and Reducing Deforestation Established:

Building partnerships and alliances between stakeholders, the activity identifies and strengthens market systems and associated green business models, develops value chains addressing environmental threats and strengthens conservation enterprise incubator and business support services.

IR 2: Enabling Environment for Conservation-Friendly Enterprises Improved:

The activity identifies and addresses gaps in the policy and regulatory framework for target green market system and value chains by providing analysis and policy options to government, strengthening advocacy, and promoting dialogue with participation of the private sector and marginalized groups.

IR 3: Communities Establish and Benefit from Conservation-Friendly Enterprises and Industries:

The activity supports community-level green economy enterprises to become viable and build alliances and partnerships among all the value chain actors to have more sustainable and scalable impacts on broader communities. Through grants, coaching, and leveraging value chain-based alliances, community-level enterprises are to become strong members of market systems. The activity produces, disseminates and institutionalizes best practices and learning.

Activity Expected Results

Intermediate Result 1

- Develop and implement market system investment plans for 3 to 5 high potential green industries /value chains
- Establish at least 3 innovative green enterprise models
- Create incubator supporting around 20 medium and small enterprises
- Facilitate at least 8 partnerships to support conservation

Intermediate Result 2

- Develop and implement market system enabling environment improvement plans
- Establish and strengthen at least 2 community environmental conservation funds
- Improve private sector and community engagement in advocacy for sector-driven policy and regulatory strategies
- Strengthen capacities of at least 14 institutions to sustain reform

Intermediate Result 3

- Train/educate around 8000 people to support conservation activities
- Establish and support conservation enterprises in target areas and sectors
- Establish alliances and business partnerships in target areas and sectors

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The five-year, CEERC Activity is funded by USAID and began in July 2021. Implementation is led by Tetra Tech ARD with support from partners Resonance and Solimar.

CONTACTS

Sabine Jiekak, Chief of Party, CEERC, Sabine.Jiekak@tetratech.com

Nicodeme Tchamou, CARPE USAID, ntchamou@usaid.gov



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



GESI NI NISHATI KWA KILA MTU (USAID-FUNDED GAS IS AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVES TO CHARCOAL ACTIVITY)

USAID is supporting the innovative, technology-led initiative to reduce charcoal-related deforestation around Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in partnership with BBOXX Ltd. In the DRC, energy demand drives 94 percent of wood harvesting. Consumption of charcoal increased in cities because of population growth, lack of livelihood alternatives, high unemployment rates, and low enforcement of forest management legislation. Virunga National Park, in eastern DRC, lost 37,400 hectares (ha) of forest (around 4 percent of the park) during the last 18 years, with deforestation concentrated close to the major urban centers of Beni, Butembo, and Goma. Adjacent to Goma, the south sector of the park has lost 13,000 ha of forest, about 11 percent of total surface area. The south sector of the Virunga registered a loss of 3,550 ha in 2018 alone, about 3 percent of surface area. In 2019, BBOXX analysis on charcoal consumption in and around Goma concluded that 91 percent of deforestation in the southern sector is due to charcoal production.

Alternatives available and currently used around Goma, such as improved cookstoves, failed to demonstrate a clear impact on reducing deforestation in the park. In the specific case of using Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), barriers to adoption in the East of DRC are significant and include i) the upfront investment required in cookers and canisters, ii) a mismatch between purchase patterns and income patterns, iii) concerns over the safety of the fuel, iv) inconvenience due to heavy canisters, and v) a lack of availability and awareness. The objective of this project is to promote LPG within the East of DRC, especially Goma and Bukavu by tackling these barriers.

USAID'S SUPPORT

At the center of this activity is the “customer management software with Tag & Trace cylinders” which ensures the highest level of safety by recording home installation for customer education, managing home delivery, and cylinder quality check at every refill.



The customer management software with Tag & Trace cylinders offers customer asset financing which removes the biggest obstacle to adoption of LPG by households at scale: affordability of the equipment.

Through customer management with Tag & Trace and offering asset financing, the activity will overcome existing barriers to the adoption of LPG, thus making it an accessible and affordable alternative to charcoal. In particular:

- **Affordability:** Consumers benefit from the usual gas prices, with the costs of the cooker, canister, and delivery service included in the purchase price, and even have the option of paying on an installment loan model
- **Safety:** LPG canisters, cookers, and peripherals are regularly maintained, serviced, and replaced by BBOXX to assure customers of safety
- **Availability:** Potential gas consumers are coached on how to cook with gas and transition from charcoal by a dedicated all-women gas cooking team
- **Awareness:** Potential gas consumers are made aware of services by an extensive distribution network.

BENEFICIARIES

- This project will directly benefit the southern sector of Virunga National Park, where charcoal production is responsible for 91 percent of deforestation.
- Over the 3-year duration of the project, BBOXX aims to reach 30,000 households in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo with LPG, averting Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions totaling 40 tons CO₂ equivalent.
- The LPG activity expects to improve security in the Kivu region by weakening the damaging and corrupt charcoal value chain.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A total of 8,065 customers have added LPG as an alternative for cooking, including 4,186 active customers (with a consumption of more than 3 kg of gas per month) in the city of Goma by the end of April 2022
- Reduction of charcoal use by 34% in households that have adopted gas as an alternative
- Appropriate authorizations obtained by Bboxx to become gas distributor in DRC
- Baseline studies conducted: household charcoal consumption and charcoal supply chain
- Other relevant studies finalized: Political economy analysis (PEA) of the charcoal sector and Charcoal monitoring market status in the Goma city

For more information:

<https://www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional> and <https://danube.umd.edu/content/home>.

Please contact:

CARPE Office: kinshasacarpe@usaid.gov

Louis de Muylder: l.demuylder@bboxx.co.uk

Xavier Carbonel: x.carbonel@bboxx.co.uk



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



CENTRAL AFRICA FOREST ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVATION GARAMBA CHINKO PROTECTED AREAS ACTIVITY

OVERVIEW

USAID strengthens the conservation of Garamba National Park (GNP) in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Chinko Nature Reserve in eastern Central African Republic (CAR), in partnership with African Parks and the governments of the two countries.

BACKGROUND

Garamba National Park is one of the oldest national parks in Africa. It covers an area of 4,900 square kilometers, with a buffer of hunting zones to the east, south and west. South Sudan's Lantoto National Park lies to the north. The Park and the three hunting zones comprise the 14,760 square kilometer Garamba Complex. The Chinko Nature Reserve in eastern CAR covers an area of 19,846 square kilometers.

Both Garamba and Chinko lie on the transition zone between two major habitat zones: Guinea-Congolian tropical forest and Guinean-Sudanese savannah, which holds very high biodiversity. Garamba hosts 165 species of mammals, 363 species of birds, 82 species of reptiles, and 42 species of amphibians, while Chinko is an important ornithological site with more than 400 bird species recorded as well as 10 species of primates, 23 antelopes, and 21 carnivores including African wild dogs and lions. Garamba supports approximately 1,300 elephants and the last population of Kordofan giraffes in DRC, while Chinko has around 1,000 chimpanzees.

Over the past few decades, Garamba and Chinko have been challenged with massive increases in poaching pressure on elephants and other species. Armed poachers and rebel groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army, take advantage of the instability generated by conflict and the lack of strong government presence in the area. The same armed groups that are attracted to the area to poach elephants for ivory also attack villages, so that the security of both wildlife and people are closely related.

Garamba sits on the border with South Sudan and is particularly vulnerable to incursions from over the border of armed poachers and militia coming from Sudan and Chad, as well as South Sudan itself. In Chinko, armed groups engaged in the internal conflicts of CAR pose a threat to wildlife by facilitating or directly engaging in poaching. In



Confiscated Ivory being destroyed



Group of newly trained park rangers/ecoguards

In addition to the threat caused by professional poaching, wildlife has decreased due to bushmeat hunting by local populations and nomadic pastoralists' cattle migrations through conservation areas.

African Parks holds management agreements for both Garamba and Chinko. It will manage Garamba for the next 10 years in partnership with DRC's wildlife and protected areas authority; *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*. Since 2014, African Parks has managed Chinko in partnership with the Central African Republic Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting & Fishing and has a 50-year agreement. The overall goal is to achieve sustainable long-term conservation management through a public-private relationship with the local governments.

PROGRAM

The Garamba-Chinko Protected Areas activity strengthens biodiversity conservation planning and implementation. By 2021, the activity expects a higher standard of park management and reduction of threats to wildlife in Garamba National Park. In the Chinko project areas, successful restoration and conservation of key wildlife species is a major objective. The activity will also endeavor to establish a foothold for governance, security, and stability for surrounding communities as well as the wider DRC-CAR-South Sudan trans-boundary landscape. This will be achieved by, improving security of the protected areas, strengthening management capacity for the protected areas, and developing partnerships and a constituency for conservation.

JOINT FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN AND WILDLIFE SECURITY

A new activity, initiated in FY 2018 focuses on Community Based Combating Wildlife Trafficking in this same area. This activity will help vulnerable community members (notably farmers, pastoralists, and artisanal miners) to reduce conflicts and develop livelihoods that provide incentives to support conservation. Together with USAID's activity focusing on community resilience, these three activities implement USAID's joint framework for human and wildlife security in this region.

2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the Chinko Nature Reserve, an area of more than 22,000 km² during the 2020-2021 dry season was kept free of livestock, nomadic pastoralists camps, and major poaching, also, the entire core zone of 5,000 km² kept free from illegal human activities and had regular Law Enforcement activity through ground patrols and aerial surveillance.

In Garamba National Park, the critically endangered Kordofan giraffe population has been found to have increased from 40 in 2020 to 65 individuals following the 2021 Giraffe Population Assessment. The giraffe population has already surpassed GNP's goal of reaching 60 individuals by 2022.



FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE

For sustainable and scalable Community Forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Entrusting the management of tropical forests to the people who live in and depend on them is the fairest and most effective means of protecting them. However, until recently, communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had no possibility of securing legal rights to their rainforest home. Building on the passage of landmark community forest legislation, this project aims to lay the foundations for community-based forest management in DRC, by empowering local and indigenous communities to secure their rights and thrive through sustainable livelihoods. We will do this by piloting innovative livelihoods, supporting traditional and inclusive governance of forests, and strengthening the institutions, policies, and know-how necessary to mainstream this approach.

OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

Our vision for this project is for: *“Community forests to drive improved livelihoods and wellbeing in forest communities, as well as biodiversity protection and reduced deforestation in target areas in DRC, providing a scalable model by 2025 for nationwide implementation.”*

We aim to achieve this goal by:

- **Improving communities’ livelihoods** – Piloting sustainable and equitable livelihoods including for women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups.
- **Developing a self-reliant economy** – Enlisting support from the private sector to develop sustainable and scalable economic opportunities, which secure fair commercial partnerships and responsible long-term investments, and ensure the viability of community enterprises.
- **Improving governance and forest management** – Embedding these income-generating activities in accountable and inclusive community governance and land use plans to ensure environmental sustainability and equal distribution of benefits.

- **Securing customary rights** – Supporting more communities to obtain and manage community forests.
- **Preventing deforestation and preserving biodiversity** – Combating illegal logging and poaching through community-led forest monitoring, embedding forest protection in land use plans, and promoting scalable agroforestry techniques.
- **Enhancing the policy and legal framework** - Promoting lesson learning and consensus building around a rights-based, participatory, and cross-sectoral vision of community forests through a national roundtable process.
- **Enabling a supportive institutional environment** – Building civil society and forest administration’s capacity to oversee and support the allocation and management of community forests.

KEY EXPECTED RESULTS (R)

- R1.** Community forests prove to be a scalable model to improve local communities’ wellbeing in DRC
- R2.** Community forests contribute to reduce deforestation and protect biodiversity
- R3.** The national legal and policy framework supports community forests according to the central principles of the National Strategy (community rights, inclusion, customary governance, decentralization, and capacity building)
- R4.** An enabling institutional environment sustained in adequate capacity is in place to effectively implement this model of community forests

TARGET BENEFICIARIES

Upwards of 100,000 direct beneficiaries in 20 communities in:

- Lukolela and Ingende territories, Equateur province,
- Lubero territory, North Kivu province,
- Kailo territory, Maniema province.
- Beneficiaries include Indigenous Peoples, notably the Batwa in Equateur and the Wambutu in Nord Kivu.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Three communities have acquired titles for their forest concessions (Bofekalasumba and Inganda in the Equateur province and Bamasobha in North Kivu), securing 31,450 hectares for 7,500 people in 13 villages; bringing the total to 9 communities supported who have their titles,
- Three new applications of community forest concessions (CFC) submitted by the supported communities to the local authorities in the Maniema province,
- Finalization of socio-economic and biodiversity data collection, in Equateur to establish the baseline on community livelihoods and biodiversity,
- Producing the deforestation baseline for current CFC and control sites,
- Holding the 2021 Multi-Stakeholder RoundTable on Community Forestry, a consensus was achieved on the strategic direction of the process and the immediate priorities actions, and
- Continued support to the improvements of the Community Forest database.

PROJECT DETAILS

Period: September 30, 2020 - September 29, 2025

Prime Partner: Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK)

Implementing partners:

GASHE: Action Group to Save Man and his Environment (Equateur)

RCREF: Network for the conservation and rehabilitation of forest ecosystems (North-Kivu)

PREPPYG: Peasant association for the rehabilitation and protection of pygmies (North-Kivu)

GeoFirst: GeoFirst Development (Maniema and Kinshasa)

CAGDFT: Support Center for the Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests (Kinshasa)

APEM: Action for the promotion and protection of threatened peoples and species (Kinshasa)

ASSECCAF: Association of cocoa and coffee exporters from the DRC (Equateur and Kinshasa)

CONTACTS

Christian Kalinde, Program Management Specialist (Climate Change), CARPE, ckalinde@usaid.gov

Melody McNeil, Director, CARPE, mmcneil@usaid.gov

Georges-Thierry Handja, Chief of Party, RFUK, GeorgesThierry@rainforestuk.org



USAID-funded Positioning Shade- Grown Cocoa activity to Improve Conservation and Rural Livelihoods

The activity will protect the forests and biodiversity of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by offering economic opportunities that provide sufficient income for farmers without the loss of primary forests.

THE FORESTS OF EASTERN DRC ARE ICONIC—AND UNDER THREAT

The Okapi Wildlife Reserve, a World Heritage Site in the Ituri Forest in the north-east of the DRC, harbors spectacular biodiversity, including the iconic Okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*). Parts of the surrounding Ituri province act as a buffer zone for the Reserve. Ituri is also home to a growing human population, in part due to significant in-migration from neighboring provinces in search of land, which threatens the Reserve and its biodiversity. Clearing for agricultural production is a major cause of deforestation in the region, and deforestation for cocoa farming is common. The deforestation rate in Ituri does not yet equal that of West Africa, where 2.3 million hectares of forest were lost to cocoa production between 1988-2007. However, as demand grows, and climate change renders West Africa less suitable for cocoa and Central Africa more suitable, the pressure on the forest around Okapi Wildlife Reserve is predicted to increase.

The rampant deforestation now found in West Africa is one version of the future for Ituri. This activity will bend the curve towards a different future—one where private sector investment, improvements in cocoa production, and a sustainable land-use planning and forest governance approach combine to limit, deforestation while providing meaningful local economic development.

BENDING THE CURVE TOWARDS CONSERVATION

This activity will conserve the biodiversity of Okapi Wildlife Reserve by (a) limiting deforestation around the Reserve while (b) promoting a sustainable shade-grown cocoa approach that is more supportive of biodiversity than other anthropogenic land uses. It will do this in three ways.

1. DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE AND ENGAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN AN EFFORT TO HALT DEFORESTATION FROM COCOA GROWTH IN ITURI

The project will make the case to cocoa buyers that DRC offers an opportunity to meet growing global demand and supplement waning supplies from climate change-impacted West Africa. Globally, 62% of cocoa is purchased by companies with sustainable sourcing commitments and increasing scrutiny of deforestation driven by cocoa production in West Africa is leading companies to make active investments in sustainable value chains. In October 2020, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which represent 60% of global cocoa production, began charging a \$400/MT premium. Responses from major corporations to this development were supportive, demonstrating an increased willingness on the part of major buyers to pay for sustainable sourcing. This project will directly engage the private sector to co-design a business case that addresses private sector needs and concerns.

2. DEPLOY THE BEST QUALITY SCIENCE TO ADDRESS PRODUCTION, BIODIVERSITY, AND LAND USE TRACKING

Using evidence-based best practices, the project will use management and intensification techniques to address private sector existing agricultural lands while minimizing collateral impacts on biodiversity and essential ecosystem services. There is space for significant improvements in the quality and quantity of cocoa from Eastern DRC through well-tested approaches like varietal sorting and low-cost improvements to post-harvest processing, which can be supplemented by cutting edge regional research led by IITA to sustainably intensify cocoa production. The project will also leverage team expertise at the intersection of biodiversity and agroforestry to promote shade-grown approaches that maintain yield, allow farmers to diversify crops, and promote ecosystem services and biodiversity. It will assess impacts on primary forest and monitor changes in biodiversity pattern and process. In this way, the project will promote a shade-grown approach that maximizes the conservation of biodiversity and protects yield and quality.

3. COORDINATING WITH OTHER PROJECTS ADDRESSING CONNECTED ISSUES

There are numerous other projects in the region that seek to address issues that impact a sustainable cocoa value chain in Ituri, including projects focused on conflict resolution, governance, economic development, and access to finance. The Congo Basin Institute (CBI) team will coordinate with these projects while filling two key gaps in existing programs: 1) developing a clear business case for

sustainable deforestation-free cocoa in Ituri, and 2) bringing an integrated conservation and agronomics technical approach.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Phase I one-year (2021-2022) Positioning Shade-Grown Cocoa to improve conservation and rural livelihoods Activity is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and began in September 2021. Implementation is led by a team of experienced research and nonprofit organizations including University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) under the umbrella of the CBI, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and Rikolto, a nonprofit that enables and supports smallholder farmers to take up their role in rural poverty alleviation.

For more information:

<https://www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional> and
<https://danube.umd.edu/content/home>.

CONTACTS

CARPE Office: kinshasacarpe@usaid.gov
Virginia Zaunbrecher, Project Manager, UCLA/CBI,

Wildlife Conservation Capacity Development in Central Africa



A ranger on patrol in Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Credit: Virunga National Park

Capacity development is the ability of individuals, teams, organizations, and constituencies to develop and enhance their systems, resources, and knowledge, all reflected in their capability to perform functions, solve problems, and achieve objectives.

— Adapted from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Development of conservation capacity is critical to ensuring individuals and organizations are able to adapt to growing threats impacting wildlife and their habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) employs a strategic threats-based approach to conserve species and habitats in Central Africa. As part of this approach, USFWS works with partners to identify the key competencies necessary to ensure individuals and organizations are achieving at the highest level.

By providing its expertise in the development of wildlife training programs and workforce planning, USFWS supports capacity development at all levels, including individuals, organizations, and legal frameworks.

Equally important to ensuring long-term support of capacity development is the ability to remain nimble and responsive to ensure training programs include the most up-to-date knowledge, the most current methods, and the latest technologies.

USFWS supports long-term mentoring and professional development for emerging conservation champions in Central Africa in order to respond to critical threats to the region's wildlife.

Desired Results for Conservation Capacity in Central Africa

- Identification of training, competencies, and new techniques needed to address threats to wildlife.
- Strengthened workforce capacity for wildlife and protected area management.
- Implementation of training plans for protected area staff to improve performance based on systematic assessments of training needs.
- Development of conservation champions in Africa.
- Transdisciplinary teams of emerging African conservationists to problem-solve key threats to wildlife and habitats.
- Improved institutional and faculty performance at regional wildlife colleges.
- Improved collaboration through networks of institutions.



MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins) Fellows at the 17th Conference of Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Credit: MENTOR-POP

The Five Levels of Capacity Development

1. The Individual Level

Affecting behaviors, knowledge, and skill sets all contribute to capacity development at the individual level. The training process is a critical component, and provides a framework for changes in attitudes, values, and participation.

Scholarships at Garoua Wildlife College:

USFWS supports **individual** capacity development for protected area staff through its collaboration with Garoua Wildlife College in Cameroon, and the development of training programs to increase capacity for wildlife and protected area management among faculty and students. USFWS support has provided 26 scholarships for individuals from three countries in the region.

2. The Team Level

At the team level, capacity development influences relationships between individuals, improves communication within and outside of groups of professionals, and increases access to mentoring and networking capabilities.

MENTOR Programs:

At the **team** level, the USFWS MENTOR Programs develop transdisciplinary teams of conservation practitioners to address complex threats. Through academic and field-based training and experiential learning, these programs have developed leaders in pangolin, manatee, great ape, and forest protection, as well as a team of professionals to respond to the threat of the commercial bushmeat trade to protected species.

3. The Organizational Level

Capacity development at the organizational level functions systematically to improve performance and adaptability, including on issues such as strategy, access to information, and overall resources.

The Government of Gabon:

USFWS works at the **organizational** level directly with the government of Gabon to develop the capacity of the country's national parks agency, *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux* (ANPN). Gabon contains approximately half of Africa's remaining forest elephants, important populations of gorillas and chimpanzees, and one of the world's most productive marine ecosystems.

4. The Constituency Level

At the constituency level, capacity development moves beyond the individual and focuses on influencing community and societal change. Information sharing, education, the media, and awareness campaigns are important facets of these actions.

Local Communities:

Engagement with local communities is an important aspect of capacity development at the **constituency** level. Examples include the ongoing support of conservation efforts through community-based ecotourism and education in the Lake Region of Gabon.

5. The Systemic Level

Systemic capacity development affects the frameworks in which these previous levels operate, including policy, laws and regulations, and relationships, allowing for increased capability to respond and adapt to large-scale challenges.

Protected Area Management:

USFWS promotes **systemic** level capacity through its support of protected areas that are essential to the survival of wildlife in Central Africa. Through development of competence-based training needs assessments, implementation of training plans, review of organizational structure, identification of emerging leaders, and thorough evaluation methods, USFWS supports regional partners in establishing and effectively managing these critical protected areas.

USFWS supports improved workforce capacity in protected areas through systematic assessment of training needs and implementation of training plans.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs**
<http://www.fws.gov/international>



Military officer in Minkebe National Park, Gabon. Credit: William Kanapaux/USFWS



Local leaders meeting in Cameroon.
Credit: Direk Byler/USFWS



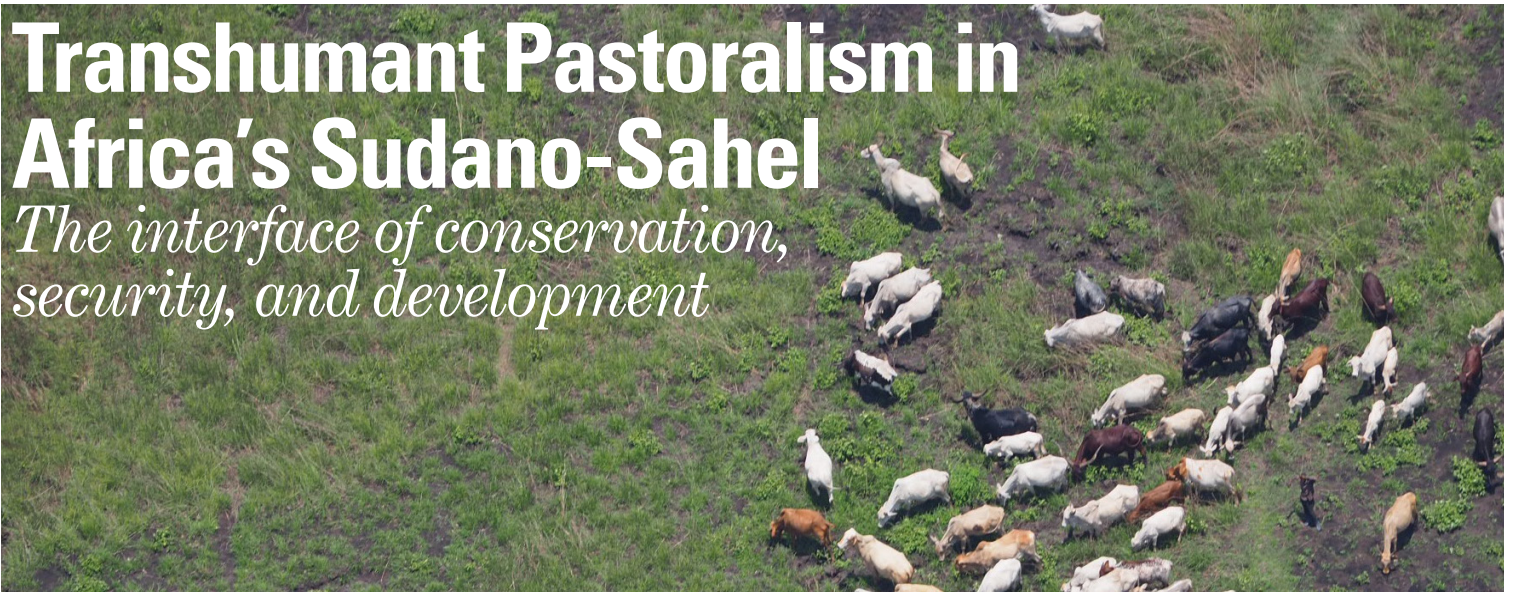
MENTOR-FOREST Fellows conducting fieldwork. Credit: Lauriane Besse Strait/USFWS

 @USFWSIntl

 USFWS International Affairs
November 2018

Transhumant Pastoralism in Africa's Sudano-Sahel

The interface of conservation, security, and development



Mbororo pastoralists illegally grazing cattle in Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Credit: Naftali Honig/African Parks

Africa's Sudano-Sahel is a distinct bioclimatic and ecological zone made up of savanna and savanna-forest transition habitat that covers approximately 7.7 million square kilometers of the continent. Rich in species diversity, the Sudano-Sahel region represents one of the last remaining intact wilderness areas in the world, and is a high priority for wildlife conservation. It is home to an array of antelope species such as giant eland and greater kudu, in addition to African wild dog, Kordofan giraffe, African elephant, African lion, leopard, and giant pangolin.

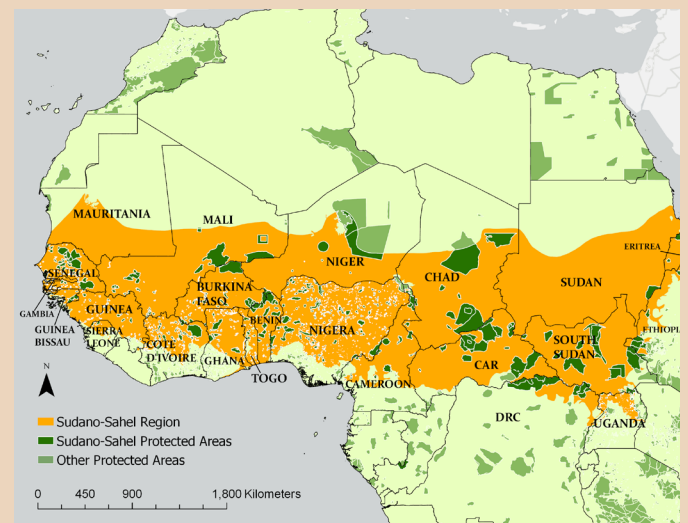
This region is also home to many rural communities who rely on the landscape's natural resources, including pastoralists, whose livelihoods and cultural identity are centered around strategic mobility to access seasonally available grazing resources and water. Instability, climate change, and increasing pressures from unsustainable land use activities pose growing threats to the resilience of the Sudano-Sahel's iconic wildlife and rural people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has supported projects in the Sudano-Sahel region since 1990. In recent years, the long-distance seasonal movement of livestock, also known as transhumance, has posed a growing challenge to protected area management, with a rising number of pastoralists and their herds illegally entering protected areas in search of resources and/or refuge from armed conflict. Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC) and Chinko Protected Area (Central African Republic, or CAR) are two examples of protected areas where iconic wildlife populations have been decimated by insecurity and poaching and now face increasing threats from transhumance.

Transhumant pastoralism across national borders occurs within a landscape of escalating violent conflict, and has local and global implications for both human and environmental security.

Program Priorities

- Increased data gathering and assessment of core natural resource assets across the Sudano-Sahel region.
- Efficient data-sharing, analysis, and dissemination between relevant stakeholders spanning conservation, security, and development sectors, and in collaboration with rural agriculturalists and pastoralists.
- Enhancement and promotion of multi-level governance approaches to resolve conflict and stabilize transhumance corridors.
- Continuation and expansion of strategic investments in the network of priority protected areas and their buffer zones across the Sudano-Sahel, in order to improve security for both wildlife and surrounding communities.



Africa's Sudano-Sahel region.
Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS



Mbororo pastoralist, DRC.
Credit: Naftali Honig/African Parks



Mbororo pastoralists sharing lunch, CAR.
Credit: Kasper Agger/Creative Commons



Elephants in Pendjari National Park, Benin.
Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS

Strategic Objectives

The USFWS supports initiatives that address emerging regional conservation challenges associated with transboundary cattle movements in Africa's Sudano-Sahel (i.e., transnational transhumance), leading to the following desired results:

- Improved understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of transhumant pastoralism on wildlife and people in and around high-value conservation areas.
- Improved understanding of transhumant pastoralist seasonal movements, demographics, drivers, and economics.
- Promotion of effective and sustainable governance strategies that improve security for humans and wildlife and the compatibility between transhumant herding, livelihood practices of other local communities, and protected areas.

On-the-Ground Investments

- In partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USFWS supports efforts to understand the threats posed by transhumance to wildlife populations in priority landscapes in Chad's Zakouma National Park and CAR's Manovo-Gounda-St. Floris National Park and Chinko Protected Area. Goals of the project include analysis of transhumance governance structures in southern Chad and CAR in relation to those in West Africa, a Chadian transhumant pastoralism mobility analysis, and geospatial analysis of pastoral resources in both countries.
- In partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society, USFWS supports efforts to improve conservation management and security for people, livestock, and wildlife through engagement on transhumance in four transboundary areas in the Sudano-Sahel, spanning Yankari Game Reserve (Nigeria), Bouba-N'djida and Sena Oura National Parks (Cameroon and Chad), Bamingui-Bangoran and Manovo-Gounda-St. Floris National Parks (CAR), and Southern National Park (South Sudan).
- In partnership with Jerry Kirensky Mbi, USFWS supports efforts to reduce the threats posed by transhumance to wildlife in Kimbi Fungom National Park (Cameroon), by strengthening capacity within the park and through outreach and engagement with pastoralists.
- In partnership with African Parks, USFWS supports the development of a transhumance strategy for protected area management in the Chinko Protected Area (CAR), including recruiting, training, and equipping herder sensitization teams to engage incoming cattle herds identified through aerial surveillance and fire monitoring, and lead them along designated transhumance corridors outside of the core conservation zone.

Key Definitions

Transhumant pastoralism is the regular movement of pastoralists and their livestock between fixed points in order to exploit seasonally available grazing resources.

Transnational transhumance is the same migration process, but across national boundaries and primarily involving cattle, which require greater quality and quantity of forage than other livestock species.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs
<http://www.fws.gov/international>

 @USFWSIntl

 USFWS_International Affairs

November 2018

Combating the Commercial Bushmeat Trade in Central Africa



Bushmeat seizure in Ivindo National Park, Gabon. Credit: Richard Ruggiero/USFWS

Unsustainable hunting for wild-sourced meat, commonly referred to as bushmeat, has been identified as one of the greatest threats to Central Africa's wildlife. Fueled by demand in the region's expanding urban centers, the commercial bushmeat impacts fragile populations and ecosystems by emptying forests and other habitats of their wildlife. Nearly all species are affected, ranging from iconic large mammals such as forest elephants, gorillas, and chimpanzees, to smaller animals such as porcupines, pangolins, bats, turtles, and birds.

Urban demand for bushmeat trade is driven by luxury consumers. The urban consumption of bushmeat not only impacts wildlife; it also has a direct negative effect on the food security and livelihoods of local and indigenous people by depleting game populations and destabilizing communities that depend on wildlife for subsistence.

Sustainability of the bushmeat trade is not currently possible for many reasons, including:

- Gaps in enforcement capacity
- Weak adherence to laws
- Lack of protein and economic alternatives
- Corruption across all levels of governance
- Lack of scientific information to determine offtake levels

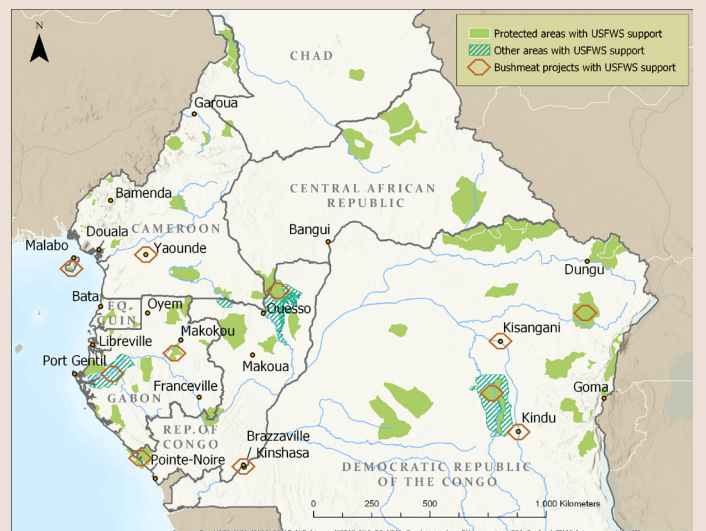
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) supports a range of efforts to reduce demand for commercial bushmeat, including strengthening wildlife and protected area management, promoting alternative livelihoods, and conducting behavior change campaigns. All efforts aim to reduce protected species in illegal trade, and ensure greater economic and food security for local people.

Bushmeat markets in Central Africa include many protected species such as elephants, gorillas, and chimpanzees, which are supplied by illegal traffickers for urban luxury consumption.



Live crocodile in an urban bushmeat market.

Credit: Nancy Gelman/USFWS



Bushmeat projects with USFWS support in Central Africa.

Credit: Matthew Luizza/USFWS



Pangolin in a bushmeat market.

Credit: Nancy Gelman/USFWS

Threats Posed by the Bushmeat Trade

Local Extinction

Every year, approximately five million tons of wild animals, including numerous protected species, are extracted from the Congo Basin's forests to satisfy the demands of growing urban markets. Unsustainable commercial trade in bushmeat is causing local extinctions and irreparable damage to wildlife populations in the region.

The Future of the Forest

The bushmeat trade poses a critical threat to ecosystems in Central Africa and across the continent. Unsustainable hunting creates an "empty forest syndrome," leading to weakened ecosystem functionality and less resilience to environmental change and disease. Wildlife targeted in the commercial bushmeat trade play a key role in seed dispersal and in maintaining the forest environment and composition.

Security of Local People

The illegal commercial trade in bushmeat supplies an urban market in which wild-sourced meat is often viewed as a luxury item. This unsustainable urban trade threatens local people who are dependent on wildlife for economic and food security.

Public Health

Handling and eating wildlife poses concerns for human health, as many diseases of animals are transmissible to people. Disease outbreaks in Central and West Africa have been linked with human contact with wildlife species that are hunted for bushmeat.

Strategic Objectives

USFWS has a long history of working with partners to address the illegal commercial bushmeat trade, both through its Multinational Species Conservation Funds and with funding from the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). Over the past two decades, USFWS has supported 80 partners in 28 countries to implement priority strategies to combat the unsustainable bushmeat trade, including:

- Training and capacity development
- Alliance and partnership building
- Basic research and status monitoring
- Outreach and communications
- Behavior change campaigns
- Alternative livelihoods

Combating the commercial bushmeat trade is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach tailored to local circumstances. In cities, bushmeat often remains the preferred choice even where alternative sources of protein are available.

On-the-Ground Investments and Achievements

- In the capital cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the neighboring Republic of the Congo, the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)** is working to conserve protected species by developing a replicable model to reduce luxury bushmeat consumption in big cities across Central Africa. The project will develop and implement a campaign and coalition to change consumer behavior, strengthen capacity, and reduce availability of protected species in markets.
- The **Central Africa Bushmeat Action Group (CABAG)**, a network of projects addressing the bushmeat issue, is committed to raising regional and international awareness about the impact of the commercial bushmeat trade on people and wildlife, with the goal of preventing protected species from entering the commercial bushmeat trade.
- **CABAG**, in partnership with the **University of Stirling**, **The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)**, and other partners, is working to provide conservation and development stakeholders in Central Africa with the tools they need to develop and test bushmeat management interventions using an evidence-based approach, with the goal of developing an openly accessible database on bushmeat hunting in Central Africa.
- In the Lomami Basin of the DRC, the **TL2 Project** is working to address the threat of commercial bushmeat hunting to endemic species by instituting a hunting season to help communities secure wildlife populations. This project also supports efforts to curb criminal activity in and around the park, strengthening capacity for park management, and establishing the country's first new protected area in more than 40 years.
- The **Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP)**, a partnership between Drexel University in the United States and the National University of Equatorial Guinea, focuses on combating the illegal bushmeat trade on Equatorial Guinea's Bioko Island, which is home to seven species of monkeys and one of the world's largest nesting populations of leatherback turtles. BBPP works with government and other stakeholders on park management and impact assessments, conducts research, raises awareness, and works to reduce demand for bushmeat.
- In Gabon's lake region, the **Organisation Ecotouristique du Lac Oguemoué (OELO)** is conserving wildlife by working to lower consumer preference for bushmeat and reduce illegal sales of protected species such as the slender-snouted crocodile, African manatee, forest buffalo, and giant pangolin. This project monitors success through bushmeat surveys, raises awareness, and increases sustainable revenue sources through ecotourism development.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs
<http://www.fws.gov/international>

 @USFWSIntl

 USFWS_International Affairs

November 2018

POULTRY INDUSTRY AND INCOME DIVERSIFICATION IN THE NORTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In northern Congo, bushmeat is an integral part of the way of life, contributing to the food security and income of rural populations. However, unsustainable levels of hunting in the region threaten its long-term availability and biodiversity. In the Ouesso region, on the edge of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, we are helping to improve access to household protein through the development and strengthening of more sustainable micro-enterprises.

Each year, the neighboring populations of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park consume:



WCS works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Forest Economy and the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In addition, the project has technical support from the World Poultry Foundation and Village Enterprise.

The World Poultry Foundation promotes the development of a poultry industry that meets the needs of emerging markets.

Village Enterprise is a pioneer in improving the well-being of rural populations in Africa with a participatory micro-enterprise development program.

Our common goal is to support income diversification and help ensure food security for rural populations in Northern Congo.

OUR INTERVENTION LANDSCAPE IN NORTHERN CONGO

- 01** Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park
- 02** Peripheral areas
- 01** Lac Télé Community Reserve



Current obstacles to a poultry industry in the region:

Lack of access to veterinary services



1,7kg of feed per month for a commercial hen in the first months

70 eggs produced per year by a local breed

70% of the cost of raising chicken is due to the cost of feed

Program objectives and solutions:

More robust, the «dual purpose» breed does not require any vaccine after the sale

1kg of food per month for the new breed in the first months

Up to 230 eggs produced per year by the improved breed

At least 33% reduction in production costs

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

- 1 Identify options for increasing poultry production in Congo, in order to develop a detailed plan for program implementation.
- 2 Increase poultry production and diversify the livelihoods of bushmeat value chain agents through targeted investments.
- 3 Engage new private sector partners to expand the program by securing new investments.



INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

- 1 Identification of barriers and solutions to **increasing poultry production** in the Republic of Congo.
- 2 Identification of barriers and solutions for the production of **sustainable and affordable poultry feed**.
- 3 Identification of barriers and solutions for the **provision of veterinary services** in northern Congo.
- 4 Identification of barriers and solutions to **diversify the income of agents in the bushmeat value chain**.



Contact:
151 av. de Gaulle,
Brazzaville
B.P. 14537
Rep. of the Congo
www.congo.wcs.org
wcscongo@wcs.org



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



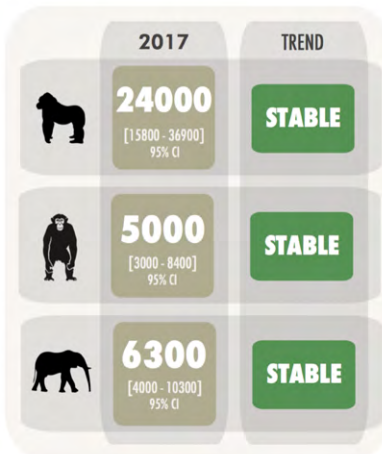
Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park's single greatest asset is its remarkable biodiversity: at over 400,000 hectares, the Park is one of the last remaining undisturbed wilderness areas on the planet, harboring iconic large mammals, such as elephants, gorillas and bongos. We believe the tourism opportunities this creates can play a central role in the ongoing efforts to conserve it. This will reduce Congo's dependency on resource extraction and contribute to a green economy. For the Park, currently reliant on donations, tourism revenue is a key strategy in creating a sustainable future for its wildlife and communities.



Adoption of ecotourism principles, and the selection of "high-value, low-impact" tourism business models, can amplify tourism benefits.

WCS and the Ministry of Forestry Economy will pursue this in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park through a partnership with the Congo Conservation Company, a Congo-based company with international backing and management expertise. CCC has been pioneering tourism in Central Africa since 2011.

The area's biodiversity is increasingly threatened by ivory poaching and unsustainable hunting of bushmeat, fueled by international markets and exacerbated by a lack of local economic opportunities.



In recent years, Park staff have succeeded in mitigating these threats. In the fact of regional declines, 2017 ecological surveys showed that the populations of great apes and elephants within the Park are stable.

However, the sustainability of this success is in question. The management of protected areas in Central Africa is heavily dependent on funding from foreign governments. While this will continue to be essential in the medium-term, new mechanisms that generate sustainable sources of finance need to be developed to secure the future of the Park's unique biodiversity.



Congo has world-leading natural attractions and wildlife-based tourism solutions are an essential part of the country's strategy to generate green economic growth.

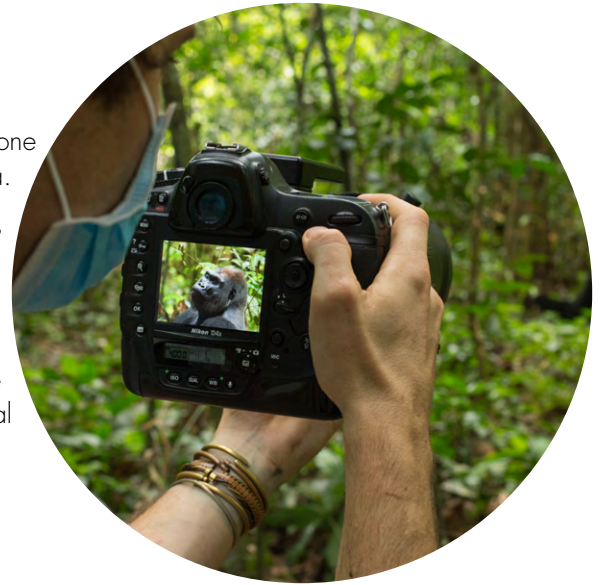
10%
Target for the share of the country's GDP from tourism

15%
Target for the share of the Park's budget from tourism



NOUABALÉ-NDOKI'S FIRST TOURISM CONCESSION

- CCC will construct and operate 2 tourism lodges – one at Mombongo on the Sangha River, one at Mondika.
- WCS operational capacity at the Park headquarters in Bomassa will be deployed to ensure access to these sites by maintaining the roads and airstrips.
- Developing the legal text of the tourism concession agreement. Progress to be made towards the annexation of the Djeke Triangle into the National Park.



PROTECTING THE FOREST AND ITS BIODIVERSITY



- WCS research field teams will habituate 3 groups of western lowland gorillas at the Mondika gorilla site.
- Park rangers will increase anti-poaching patrols in the south of the Park, in areas around the tourism sites, improving protection of the Park's biodiversity assets.
- New operations posts will be established at key strategic locations in the southern sectors of the Park.

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOURISM

- Training programs, delivered through a 'community tourism project', will empower local people with the skills they need to benefit from increased tourism.
- A benefit-sharing model will deliver at least a 30-fold increase in tourism revenue going to local communities.
- Mondika employs over 50 indigenous people – the traditional ecological knowledge and forest tracking skills of the Ba'Aka, are essential for our fieldwork.



CREATING INNOVATIVE TOURISM PRODUCTS

CCC will run commercial marketing campaigns to attract tourists to Ndoki, while WCS will promote wildlife conservation in the local and international media.

New products will be developed to attract tourists – such as opening the world-famous Mbeli Bai to tourism.



151 av. de Gaulle,
Brazzaville
B.P. 14537
Rép. du Congo
+(242) 05 722 7411
www.congo.wcs.org
[wsccongobrazza@wcs.org](mailto:wcscongo Brazza@wcs.org)



SUCCESS STORY

“Congolese women think they don’t belong in the forest. But we do!”



© S. Ramsay / WCS

Esther Nkoussou, watching a group of gorillas feeding on fruits up in a tree.

“It’s hard to live in the forest for a long time. But if Alice could do it. Why couldn’t I?”



© S. Ramsay / WCS

Silverback Metetele and his group have been habituated to the presence of humans, which allows daily observation.

“I don’t know why I always wanted to be in the forest,” says Esther Nkoussou, shrugging her shoulders as she packs to get ready to go gorilla-tracking, deep in the Congo Basin forest.

For a year now, Esther has been working as a research assistant in Mondika, observing habituated gorilla groups and collecting behavioral data from dawn till dusk. “Honestly, it’s not an easy job, but if you know what you want, it works” she explains, smiling, “I adapted quickly, it took me three weeks to feel comfortable”.

Mondika is a research camp located in the periphery of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, in the northern Republic of the Congo. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) manages the site on behalf of the Congolese Government, through an innovative Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for delegated protected area management. As an important future site for wildlife-based tourism, Mondika benefits from the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its tourism expansion activity.

Esther is the first female Congolese research assistant to be hired in Mondika for 15 years, a research site created in 1995 by Dr. Diane Doran-Sheehy, where female leadership is almost a tradition. The previous site manager, Alice Zambarda, has played a big role in Esther’s swift adaptation. “I saw Alice as a mentor, who coached me on how to behave, we worked on the ground, she gave me courage,” she explains.

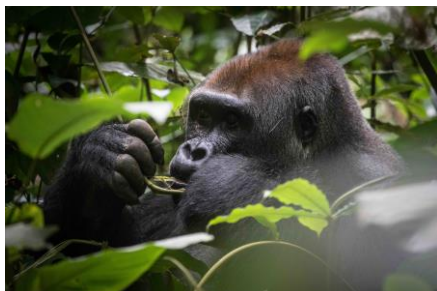
Esther’s story with the forest also dates back to the 1990s, when, as a teenager, she saw the Mayomb forest for the first time: “I could see the forest from the train as I passed. I didn’t really have any idea what was in it, and was curious to know”.

It is this insatiable and inexplicable curiosity for the forest that has led her to where she is. “I remember the first time I entered a forest was in Brazzaville, in the ‘Patte-d’oie’ forest [an urban, artificial acacia forest]. It gave me a first idea, and I was already wowed.” Esther then studied forestry, and worked for the National Reforestation Service.



© S. Ramsay/WCS

Data are collected on a tablet, at a safe distance from the gorillas, while wearing a surgical mask to prevent disease transmission to the apes.



© S. Ramsay/WCS

Data collection is necessary for a better understanding of gorillas, to allow a more efficient protection of this endangered species

“Women generally like secretarial work, being in an office. I wanted to work in the forest, and see where it would take me” she explains. “Some people thought it was cool, because not many women do this. Some were doubtful. It motivated me even more.”

When asked how it is to work in a male-dominated field, Esther shrugs again: “I like it, I have always worked with a lot of men, even during my studies. I’m used to being in a male environment.” To her, “the most important thing is to be welcomed, not to feel any difference, whether you are a woman or a man. Mutual respect and esteem can only be achieved by letting go of prejudices.”

Four days out of five, Esther is in the field, walking in the dense vegetation, looking for western lowland gorillas, then thoroughly recording every aspect of the group’s life. Every vocalization, interaction, move, is a precious addition to a more than 20 year old database that helps understanding this critically endangered, and most under-studied species of great ape.

“In the forest, there is something exceptional that I can’t explain. A certain chemistry that I’m attracted to” she explains, lacking words to explain her life-long fascination. Yet “for women, the forest is something to be afraid of”, she deplures.

To Esther, this is due to misinformation and incorrect preconceived notions. “People have a mistaken view of these professions,” she says, “the job of a research assistant is no more problematic for a woman than for a man.” Not everyone can adapt to the forest, where the living conditions are fairly basic, but Esther does not believe that this is something changed by gender.

“Women should be encouraged to apply more. In today’s world, women must aspire to the same positions as men” explains Esther. And she intends to set an example, and to see her career progress. “I can’t say I want to stay an assistant, but I have to take it one step at a time. I’d like to do a training course in five years’ time, so that I can continue to progress.”

Her only condition for her future is the same as it has been since she was a teenager: “The main thing is to stay in the forest, and in Congo!”.

-- The American people and the Wildlife Conservation Society are working together with the Government of the Republic of the Congo

and local communities in northern Congo to conserve the wildlife and forests of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park by expanding wildlife-based tourism.



© S. Ramsay/WCS

Data are collected on a tablet, at a safe distance from the gorillas, while wearing a surgical mask to prevent disease transmission to the apes.



© S. Ramsay/WCS

Data collection is necessary for a better understanding of gorillas, to allow a more efficient protection of this endangered species

The USAID Tourism Expansion in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park Activity is a four-year program that started in April 2020 to create professionally managed tourism concession that provides a sustainable source of finance to Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, supporting the conservation of its biodiversity and the sustainable development of its communities. The program is a partnership between WCS, a leading international wildlife conservation non-profit with 30-years' experience operating in Congo; the Congo Conservation Company, a company pioneering the development of tourism in Central Africa; and USAID, the world's pre-eminent leader in development assistance.

SUCCESS STORY

Empowering women through tourism development



©N. Radford/WCS

‘Maman’ Saida Nola, proud owner of one of the only restaurants in Bomassa, a remote village at the entrance of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park Republic of Congo

“The restaurant has become more than just somewhere to eat. It’s become a real meeting place for the community”



©N. Radford/WCS

With the help of the Association of Women United for Biodiversity in Bomassa, Maman Saida has been able to open a 12 seats restaurant, and she plans to expand.

A new sound can be heard ringing out across the Sangha River in the rainforests of northern Congo—the clinking of cups and cutlery at Saida Nola’s new restaurant. ‘Maman Saida’ as she is affectionately known in Bomassa village started her restaurant, ‘La Main de Dieu’, on the banks of the river in January 2019. At the time, it was the first real place that people could find a meal in the village outside of their homes.

“I noticed that the fishermen who travel up and down the river would stop for the night in the village, but they would struggle to find something to eat. I saw an opportunity and decided to innovate,” she remembers.

Two years later, people are queuing out the door to get a seat in the cozy 12-seat restaurant.

“Often, I’m so busy that as soon as one customer finishes his food, another one is right there waiting to take his seat!”

Many of Saida’s customers are the staff of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) who work at the headquarters of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park a short walk outside of the village. As part of a long-term vision to protect wildlife and wild places by engaging with communities, WCS collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for almost three decades. Today, WCS works to protect the unique biodiversity of the park through a Public-Private Partnership with the Congolese Government.

At over one million acres, the park is one of the largest areas of intact lowland tropical rainforest left in the Congo Basin. Inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012, it is a remarkable refuge for endangered rainforest species, such as lowland gorillas and forest elephants, in a region plagued by poaching and habitat loss.

“I used to bake bread, but it was hard to grow my business,” Saida recounts. “I started the restaurant slowly. At first, I just offered grilled chicken from a barbecue, with outdoor seating”.

In mid-2020, as a member of the Association of Women United for Biodiversity in Bomassa, she was approached by the park with a new capacity-building opportunity.

WCS and USAID had just embarked on a collaboration to help the park develop its tourism potential. Under this partnership, WCS and USAID a two-week hospitality training at a restaurant and hotel in a nearby provincial town. This training improved local people's capacity to capitalize on the future expansion of the tourism sector.

"The training opened my eyes to new possibilities. I thought, why can't I do this in Bomassa? It gave me the confidence to expand and improve my restaurant," says Saida.

The Women's Association played a key role in supporting her, especially by providing access to a savings scheme that released enough money to construct a proper restaurant for her customers. Her neighbors pitched in to help her with tables, chairs, and cutlery; and, in August 2020, the refurbished restaurant reopened to acclaim.

"The restaurant has become more than just somewhere to eat. People come here from all across the village to sit and talk. It's become a real meeting place for the community," Saida said.

In a culture where women are often constrained by traditional gender roles, she is a role model for a better future. She is even inspiring some of her customers to try foods that they have not eaten before.

"This restaurant has given me a name. I now have status in the community," she said. *"Many of my young male customers are eating vegetables for the first time—and enjoying it!"*

The Association of Women United for Biodiversity in Bomassa was created in 2017 by a group of local women with the support of WCS and USAID. It has now become the driving force of success for local women.

"It has created a real 'can-do' attitude in the village," explained Parfait Bakabana, the Park's Head of Community Development. *"The structure of the association enables women to provide a lot of support to each other, sharing ideas, projects, and even their finances through a Likelemba savings group."*

'Likelemba' is a Lingala word that describes a communal savings group concept. Each group contains 3 to 50 members who make monthly deposits, and members take turns making withdrawals. In a culture where many manage their finances day-to-day, it provides essential injections of capital at critical moments in people's lives.

Now, Saida's restaurant is providing delicious meals for dozens of satisfied clients each day. But it has also brought her family a long-sought sense of financial security. She and her husband, a park employee, now feel much more secure about the futures of their eight children, half of whom are still students.

"The restaurant is busy all the time, and money is coming in regularly. This helps us manage our finances throughout the month."

Saida's story is one of empowerment and sustainable change that was created by long-term partnerships between USAID, WCS, the Congolese Government, the park, and local communities. And her journey is far from over since the park is working to attract more and more tourists over the next few years. Up to 15 percent of the park's budget may soon come from tourism, with a 30-fold increase in tourism revenue going to local communities; and a community-run campsite and two high-end lodges will soon be built at park entrance.

"I would love to sign a contract to provide catering services for the park or even the new tourism lodge they are planning to build at Mombongo," said Saida.

Maman Saida—a proud restaurateur and successful entrepreneur—plans to keep expanding her restaurant. She wants to invest in a refrigerator so that she can offer a wider range of dishes and increase the number of tables; and her big ambition includes hiring a staff member to help her with her thriving business.