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# SANGHA TRI-NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

## THE LANDSCAPE

The second smallest and northernmost of the nine USAID under CARPE supported landscapes; Sangha Tri-National World Heritage Site straddles the borders of the Republic of Congo, Cameroon and the Central African Republic. It encompasses three contiguous national parks<sup>1</sup> and adjoins the Lac Télé-Lac Tumba landscape along its eastern edge.

Sangha Tri-National is considered to be one of the most important conservation areas in Central Africa, with a large and valuable block of pristine tropical lowland forest. Centered along the Sangha River, a tributary of the Congo River, the relatively flat landscape is covered in dense forest punctuated by shallow drainages, seasonally flooded areas, swamps and swampy clearings known as “bais,” which attract large numbers of different species.

Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, in the center of the Republic of Congo portion of the landscape, is the single most biologically intact area in the Congo Basin. It has vast tracts of different types of forest and a remarkable level of ecological integrity. Most of the species in the park are near their historical population levels, and there have been no known species lost.

The landscape’s mosaic of pristine ecosystems is home to large populations of forest elephants and critically endangered species of western lowland gorillas and chimpanzees. It has large populations of forest buffalo, leopards, red river hogs, duikers, crocodiles, bongos and situnga as well as hundreds of bird species and a large variety of plant types, including the critically endangered Mukulungu tree.

In addition to harboring an array of globally important wildlife, Sangha Tri-National’s vast forests are important carbon sinks, acting as a critical buffer against climate change.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO – 2004: Western lowland gorilla in Mbeli Bai, Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park. Photo by Thomas Breuer for USAID

**Area:** 21,470 km<sup>2</sup>

### Protected areas:

- Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park

### Main biodiversity threats:

- Unsustainable hunting for bushmeat
- Capture and illegal trade of live African grey parrots
- Poaching of elephants for ivory trade
- Expanding road networks facilitating access to protected areas

### Intervention strategies:

- Reinforcing management capacity within the protected area with a public-private partnership
- Working with timber concessions in the fight against poaching

### Partners:

Wildlife Conservation Society (lead), local non-governmental organizations, government partners

<sup>1</sup> Lobeke National Park (Cameroon), Dzanga National Park (Central African Republic) and Nouabalé Ndoki National Park (Republic of Congo)

# THREATS

Although population density is low, the Sangha Tri-National is increasingly being threatened by poaching for ivory, the capture and illegal trade of live African grey parrots and unsustainable hunting for bushmeat. Poaching for ivory is largely fueled by growing demand in Asia, coupled with a thriving illegal market that can pay high prices. African Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) have experienced marked population declines throughout their range due to years of unsustainable harvest and trade for the pet industry, as well as increasing habitat loss. The illegal hunting of bushmeat is primarily due to increased commercialization, a lack of alternative sources of protein, poverty and widespread unemployment.

These threats are exacerbated by a growing network of roads in forest concessions that provide access to the landscape, allowing poachers, hunters and illegal logging operations to exploit new areas.

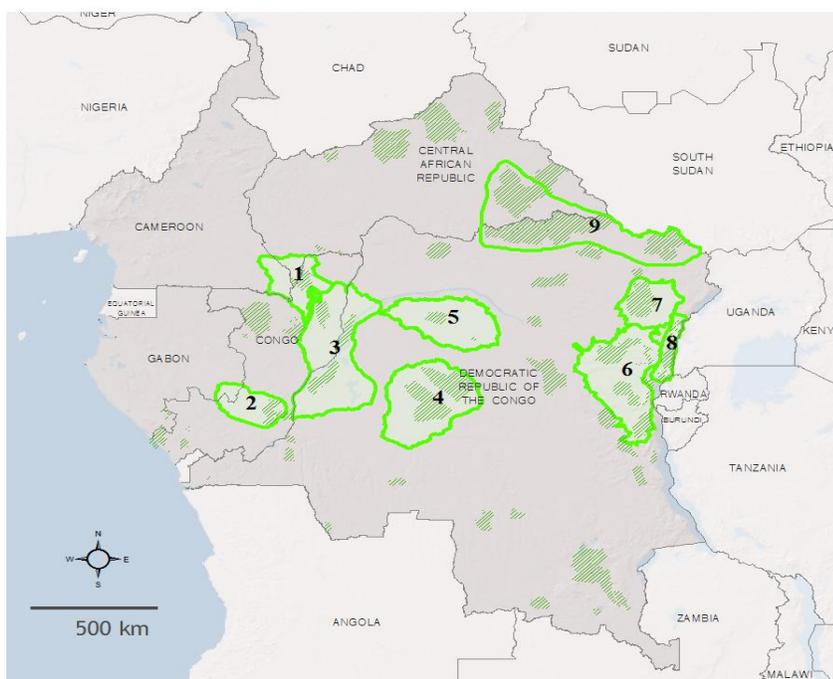
As the transportation system continues to develop, future logging and mining operations, along with commercial agriculture, could also pose additional threats as more of Sangha Tri-National is opened to commercial ventures.

## CAFEC at a glance

USAID's Central Africa Forest Ecosystems Conservation (CAFEC) program focuses on sustainable forest management, wildlife conservation and REDD+ activities in nine carbon-rich, biologically sensitive and diverse natural forest landscapes covering 32 million hectares of land; spread of covering four countries, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, the Central Africa Republic and the Rwanda.

CAFEC and the Environmental Monitoring and Policy Support (EMAPS) program, which improves environmental policies and regulations, builds capacity of public and private institutions to support conservation of forest and biodiversity, and boosts the quality and scope of conservation management, climate change mitigation efforts, and data collection to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of the Congo Basin.

The CAFEC and EMAPS program are interdependent. The information collected and shared through the local efforts of CAFEC informs national and regional policy work, while improved policies supported under EMAPS allows for better conservation efforts and land use management at the local landscape level. These programs align with and contribute to the Presidential Initiative on Global Climate Change and the National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking (CWT).



### MAP KEY

- Protected Area
- CARPE Priority Area

### USAID Supported Landscapes

- 1 - Tri-National Sangha
- 2 - Léconi-Batéké-Léfini
- 3 - Lac Télé-Lac Tumba
- 4 - Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru
- 5 - Maringa-Lopori-Wamba
- 6 - Maiko-Tayna-Kahuzi-Biega
- 7 - Ituri-Epulu-Aru
- 8 - Virunga
- 9 - Garamba-Chinko

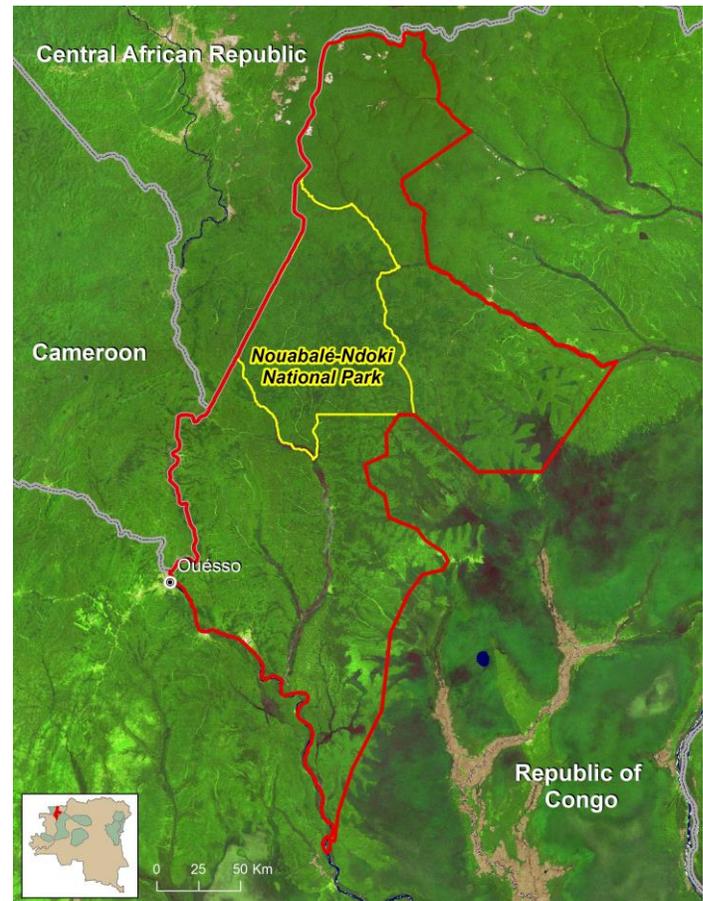
# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

USAID's CARPE implementing partners are working to ensure conservation of Sangha Tri-National's biodiversity and carbon stocks by supporting the effective management and protection of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and the surrounding forest concessions.

A key approach is the establishment of a public-private partnership – the Nouabalé-Ndoki Foundation – to formalize the relationships between forest residents, government agencies and conservation organizations. The foundation is based on a new, innovative governance structure that delegates the majority of park management authority to the Wildlife Conservation Society, which has the resources and experience to implement efficient and effective systems.

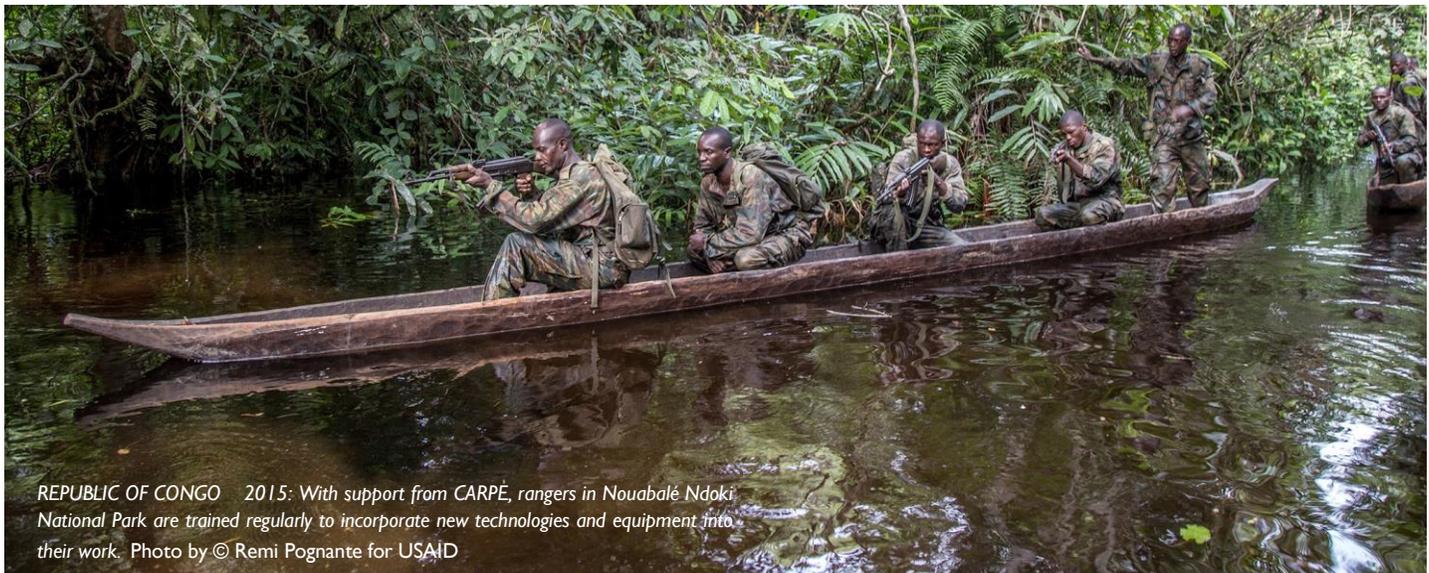
Local communities are also actively engaged to develop more sustainable livelihood approaches, such as introducing alternative protein sources to reduce dependency on bushmeat, working with logging companies to import products to reduce reliance on other forest resources and developing an eco-tourism industry to create jobs and generate income.

Poaching and illegal hunting are being reduced through the ongoing recruitment and training of rangers, the use of SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) technology and better provisions and equipment to support patrols. This work is complemented by improved monitoring of wildlife crime cases in the courts to ensure that those arrested are effectively prosecuted. In forest concessions, a new partnership initiative with a Congolese logging company and the Congolese



Landsat composite image courtesy of the University of Maryland

government is working to implement improved management plans. The project is providing eco-guards to patrol the concessions, conducting roadblocks to check vehicles for forest bushmeat and monitoring the collection and sale of bushmeat by distributors in both rural communities and surrounding towns.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO 2015: With support from CARPE, rangers in Nouabalé Ndoki National Park are trained regularly to incorporate new technologies and equipment into their work. Photo by © Remi Pognante for USAID



REPUBLIC OF CONGO – 2004: Endangered western lowland gorillas in Mbeli Bai, Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park enjoy better protection due to USAID's conservation efforts. Photo by Thomas Breuer for USAID

## Select FY 2017 Accomplishments

- Introduction of aerial surveillance as new law enforcement aviation program with minimum 15 hours of surveillance flights per month.
- Performed 327 patrols covering a total of 49,987km.
- Combating Wildlife trafficking efforts led to the arrest of 95 individuals, the seizure of 455 African grey parrots and more than 100kg of ivory.
- Africa standard distance sampling methods survey estimate 2932 elephants in the Landscape with an increase of an estimated 850 elephants since 2010.
- A sustainable fisheries management plan and associated mini-charter developed and validated.
- 124 visitors including 76 tourists visited the park.
- Three western lowland gorilla groups habituated and ready for ecotourism.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO 2012: Eco guards regularly inspect vehicles for illegal bushmeat and timber transport in Nouabalé Ndoki National Park buffer zones. Photo by Jean Robert Onononga for USAID

### For more information:

[www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional](http://www.usaid.gov/central-africa-regional)

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