



# SANGHA TRI-NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

## THE LANDSCAPE

The second smallest and northern-most of the eight USAID-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 forests 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 sitatunga. It also has 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 also important carbon sinks, acting as a critical buffer against climate change.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO – 2004: Western lowland gorilla in Mbéli 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:**

- Poaching for bushmeat
- Poaching for ivory trade

**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 the population density is low, Sangha Tri-National is increasingly being threatened by ivory poaching and unsustainable hunting for bushmeat. The ivory poaching is largely fueled by the growing demand in Asia, coupled with a thriving illegal market that can pay high prices. The illegal hunting of bushmeat is primarily due to increased commercialization, a lack of alternative proteins, 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.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO – 2015: USAID is supporting more effective patrolling against illegal poaching activity in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, resulting in better protection for the park's important forest elephant populations. Photo by Thomas Breuer for USAID

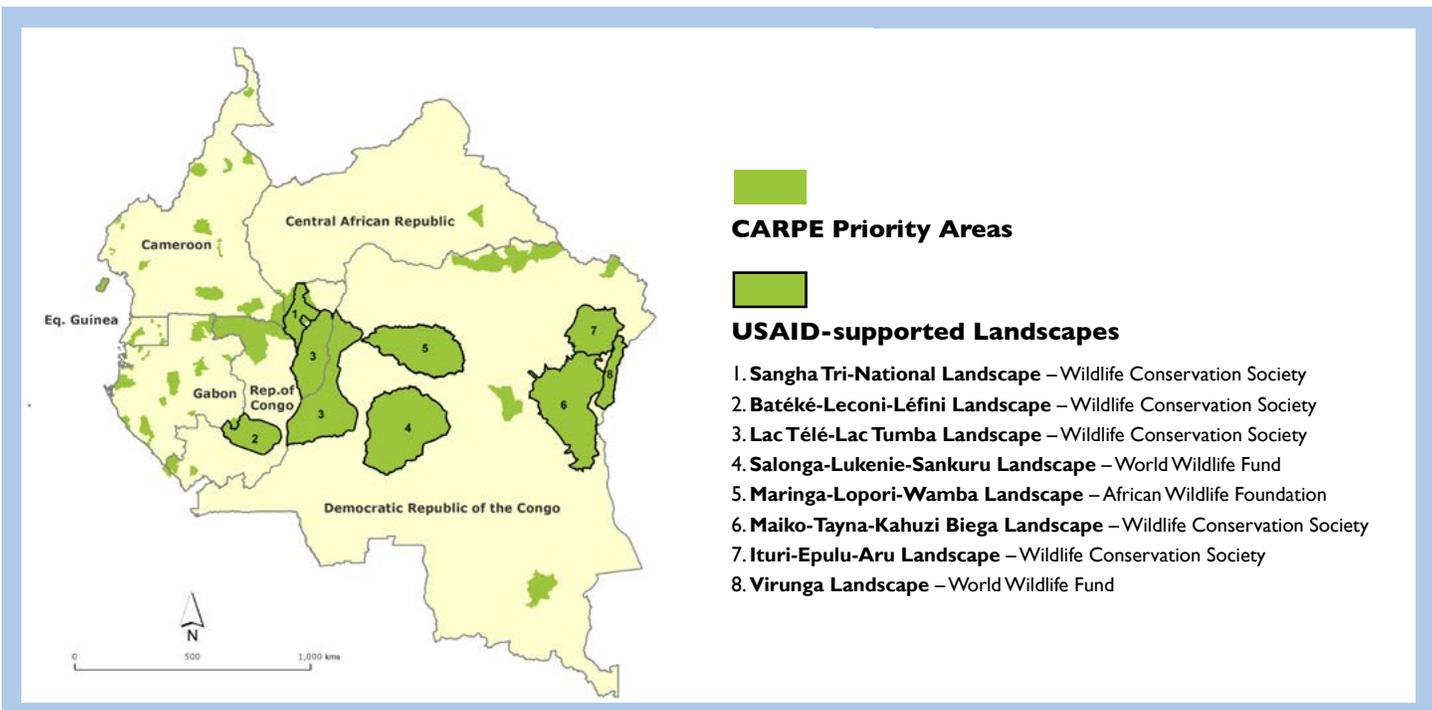
## CAFEC at a glance

USAID's Central Africa Forest Ecosystems Conservation (CAFEC) project supports the sustainable management of targeted forest landscapes representing some of the most important ecosystems found across the vast Congo Basin as the foundation for building low carbon emissions economies and mitigating threats to biodiversity.

USAID's implementing partners – the African Wildlife Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund – protect and build capacity to manage eight landscapes covering 29 million hectares of land, six in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and two in the Republic of Congo.

CAFEC and the Environmental Monitoring and Policy Support (EMAPS) project, which improves the quality and scope of conservation policy-making, and forest monitoring, analysis and information dissemination, are “institutionalizing” the management of the Congo Basin forests by building individual, organizational and systems capacity during the third phase of USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) program.

The CAFEC and EMAPS projects are complementary. 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. They both align with and contribute to the Presidential Initiative on Global Climate Change and the National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking.



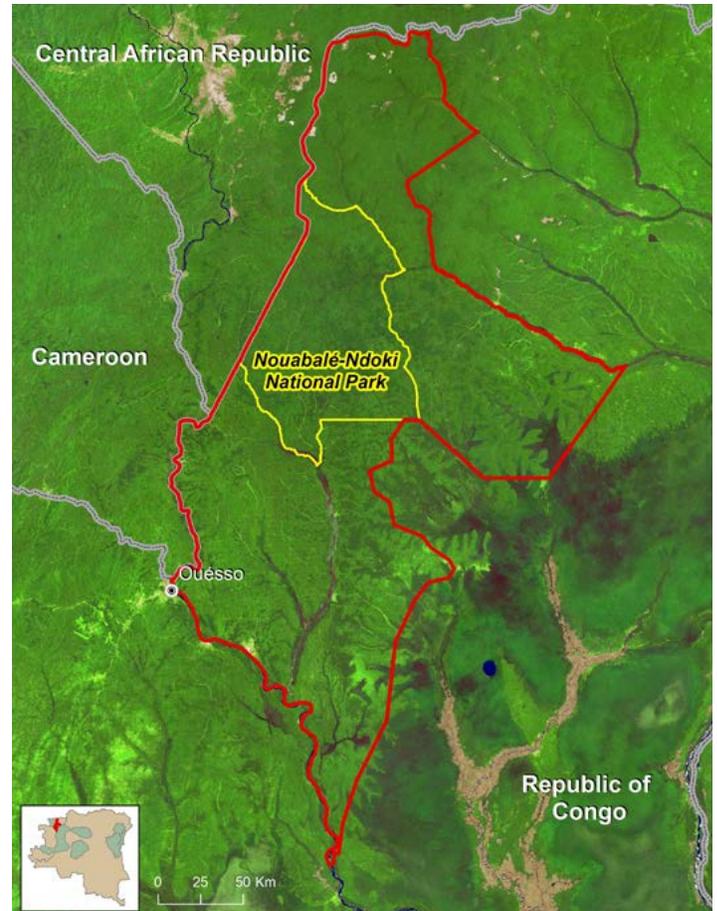
# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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.

To help accomplish this, USAID's programming established 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 proteins 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 on-going 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 Recent Accomplishments

- Establishing the Nouabalé-Ndoki Foundation and recruiting five new senior management staff.
- Developing park management and business plans for Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park.
- Recruiting and training an additional 44 eco-guards, representing a five-fold increase in the number of guards since 2014 and resulting in more than 5,000 days of fixed and mobile patrols.
- Updating protocols developed with the village association in Bomassa village, located closest to the national park, and formally mapped agreed hunting zones.
- Generating \$200,000 in tourism revenue for park operations, and \$20,000 in direct support for local community programs.



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.carpe.umd.edu](http://www.carpe.umd.edu)

[CARPEManagement@usaid.gov](mailto:CARPEManagement@usaid.gov)