Landscape Highlights

Surface Area: 102,847 km²

Partners: ICCN, WWF, WCS, ZSM, MPI, LWRP

National Parks: 1 (2 sectors), covering an estimated 36,560 km² (36% of landscape)

Biodiversity (N species)
TBD

Mammals: 53 (est.)
Birds: > 101
Plants: TBD

Threatened Species

Animals
- Forest elephant
- Bonobo
- Congo peacock
- Bongo

Plants
TBD

Major Threats to Landscape

Direct
- Commercial hunting
- Settlement and resource use in the national park
- Heavily armed poachers and national lawlessness

Indirect
- Lack of information
- Weak capacity
- Exclusion of local communities in decision making and management
- Lack of alternative protein and work for local people
- Civil strife and war

Key Interventions

- Initiating land use planning through socioeconomic and resource use studies
- Reinforcing ICCN capacity
- Including local communities in decision making and management
- Establishing site-based GIS database with links to national databases
- Reinforcing park management structures
- Lobbying provincial and national entities to stop armed, uniformed poachers

The focal point of the Salonga-Lukenie-Sankuru Landscape is Salonga National Park, established in 1970 and classified as a World Heritage Site in 1984. It is best known as the only national protected area in DRC sheltering the endemic bonobo, as well as being the second-largest tropical forest park in the world. Dominant forest types are swamp, riverine, and *terra firma* forests with some savanna in the south. Despite limited accessibility (by rivers and air only), recent surveys under the auspices of the MIKE program reveal that the fauna of the park is threatened by heavy illegal hunting pressure—the result of years of unchecked commercial hunting and insufficient management capacity. Other landscape-level resource use includes logging, mining, fishing, and subsistence agriculture.

Sustainable Resource Management

As a first step in the development of land use plans, socioeconomic studies are being conducted in villages bordering the national park. These studies will be extended geographically and integrated with more participatory approaches to assess land use, resolve park boundary conflicts, and complete an assessment of threats to and opportunities for conservation. Plans for baseline studies of fishing by local populations are under way. Management capacity in the landscape is low, and ICCN requires technical training, restructuring, strategic planning of activities, and improved infrastructure, transport, and communication systems. A park advisor will be responsible for ensuring a coordinated approach to capacity and planning exercises for the park's antipoaching and surveillance forces. A base map is being finalized for the national park and a landscape-level base map will be completed in early 2005.

Natural Resource Governance

Six ICCN management posts distributed widely across the landscape are responsible for park management. However, these posts are largely dysfunctional because of limited budgets, poor training, poor staff management and support, and bad infrastructure. Since the creation of the park, local populations have been excluded from management decisions. Their exclusion, combined with limited ICCN capacity, civil war, and centralized yet inefficient government structures, has contributed to the anarchistic use of natural resources in the landscape. A first step in developing management and decision-making capacity will be to create a management structure—called CoCoSi—for the national park, comprising ICCN and partner organizations. Community and private sector (logging and mining) representatives in the CoCoSi will be encouraged,

and the possibility of community-based natural resource management committees, ideally using existing civil structures, will be discussed with local communities. Mandates for engagement with communities will be clarified with ICCN. Parallel natural resource sector initiatives such as the creation of community-managed forests will encourage community involvement in landscape-level activities.

Natural Resource Monitoring Institutionalized

Recently completed MIKE surveys have provided important baseline information as well as capacity necessary for future monitoring of park wildlife—in particular forest elephants, human use, and illegal activities within the park. Several research institutions are studying the ecology, distribution, and behavior of bonobos. A national-level GIS database for World Heritage Sites exists and has produced a preliminary park and buffer zone base map. This database will be directly linked to the development of similar capacity at the field level. A critical activity will be to develop the means to assess and monitor bushmeat exploitation, transport, and commerce, possibly through collaboration with neighboring landscapes (Lac Tumba and Maringa-Lopori-Wamba).