



FONDATION  
POUR LE  
TRI-NATIONAL  
DE LA  
SANGHA

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Fondation pour  
le Tri-national  
de la Sangha - FTNS



Fondation pour  
le Tri-national  
de la Sangha - FTNS



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFD</b>	French Development Agency
<b>APB</b>	Anti Poaching Brigade
<b>DSPAs</b>	Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas
<b>EO</b>	Executive Office
<b>BLAB</b>	Tri-national Anti-Poaching Brigade
<b>BMZ</b>	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>BD</b>	Board of Directors
<b>CAFE</b>	African Environmental Funds Consortium
<b>CAWHFI</b>	Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative
<b>COMIFAC</b>	Central African Forestry Commission
<b>TPIC</b>	Tri-national Planning and Implementation Committee
<b>TMC</b>	Tri-national Monitoring Committee
<b>TSAC</b>	Tri-national Supervision and Arbitration Committee
<b>NNF</b>	Nouabalé Ndoki Foundation
<b>FTNS</b>	Sangha Tri-national Trust Fund
<b>KfW</b>	German Development Bank/German Financial Cooperation
<b>LAB</b>	Anti-poaching campaign
<b>MINFOF</b>	Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (Cameroon)
<b>MEFCP</b>	Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing (Central African Republic)
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>PEA</b>	Operating and Development Permits
<b>LNP</b>	Lobéké National Park
<b>NNNP</b>	Nouabalé Ndoki National Park
<b>SINFOCAM</b>	Société Industrielle des Forêts Centrafricaines et d'Aménagement
<b>STBC</b>	Société de Transformation de Bois en Afrique Centrale
<b>TNS</b>	Sangha Tri-national
<b>UFA</b>	Forest management unit
<b>ULAB</b>	Anti-Poaching Unit
<b>WWF</b>	World Wide Fund for Nature
<b>WCS</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society



## A WORD FROM FTNS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DR THEOPHILE ZOGNOU

The past year has been marked by the growing complexity of the issues facing our organisation: the role to be played by the various technical and financial partners, the search for new funding, the fight against poaching, the inequality and uncertainty of the economic outlook in the Sangha Tri National, the worsening of the climate emergency, conflicts between wildlife, particularly the destruction of crops by large mammals. Systematically, it is the poorest and most vulnerable populations that are hardest hit.

The resolutions of the 31st meeting of the Trust Fund's Board of Directors, held in Douala in November 2023, in prescribing an audit of our investment portfolio and an institutional audit of the Trust, were already laying the foundations for profound changes: redefining the roles of the various players, refocusing on the Trust's objectives and many others.

On the ground, we have seen a marked improvement in performance, particularly in the fight against poaching, where we have recorded no elephant poaching in the three parks. The problems associated with wildlife conflicts are gradually being resolved with the purchase and installation of electric fences around farms.

In terms of seeking new funding, we have succeeded in obtaining the necessary sponsorship from the three TNS countries to mobilise multilateral funds. New projects have also been launched. Under the RESSAC programme, an applied research programme in the ecology and social sciences of Central African forest ecosystems implemented by CIFOR-ICRAF, which aims to strengthen the impact of research on the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems, FTNS received around €160,000 to address "The issue of the cocoa economy at the interface of protected areas in the TNS".

FTNS has also benefited from two grants from the Consortium of African Funds for the Environment, one to help support private sector initiatives related to sustainable agricultural practices and access to financial services by local organisations in the TNS, and the other to build the capacity of FTNS's governing bodies.

More than ever, we remain convinced of the importance of our mission, which has continued to grow since the foundation was created in 2007. In an international context of extreme tension, we are redoubling our efforts on the ground, with results improving every year, in the TNS, where our partners are protecting and restoring natural environments, while helping to transform value chains to make them sustainable.

*Enjoy your reading*



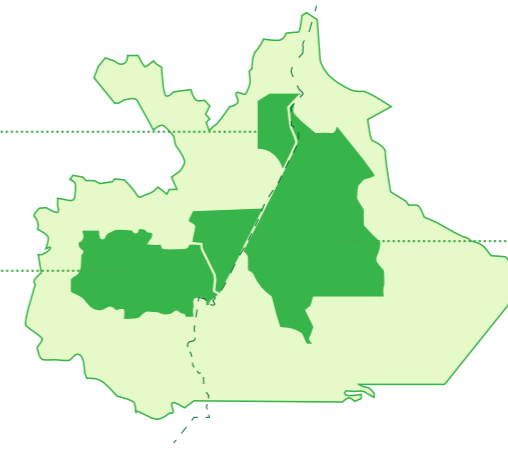
## DISCOVERING FTNS



**Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas**  
Central African Republic



**Lobéké National Park**  
Republic of Cameroon



**Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park**  
Congo Republic

## A TRUST FUND FOR TNS!

The Sangha Tri-national Trust Fund (FTNS) was created in March 2007 with the mission of contributing to the sustainable financing of conservation, eco-development and trans-border cooperation activities in the Sangha Tri-national (TNS). It supports the 2015-2025 Convergence Plan of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), in its strategic axis 6, which is to develop innovative mechanisms for sustainable conservation financing, for instance trust funds.

FTNS is a member of the African Consortium of Environmental Funds (CAFE), an institution that brings together 18 environmental funds in Africa and is part of the global Conservation Finance Alliance.

**66,5 million €**  
INVESTMENT CAPITAL

**1,8 million €**  
IN ANNUAL GRANTS

**17 ans**  
EXPERIENCE

**03 COUNTRIES**  
PROTECTED AREAS

## TNS, A WORLD HERITAGE SITE FOR THREES

The Sangha Tri-National (TNS) is a transborder forest complex of 27,000 km<sup>2</sup> straddling three Central African countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo. It was created in December 2000 following a cooperation agreement between the three states. It is the first concrete manifestation of the will of Congo Basin countries Heads of States to converge towards a concerted management of these transborder protected areas.

### TNS IN FIGURES

Date of creation  
**2000**

Date of inscription on the World Heritage List  
**Juillet 2012**

Surface area  
**27 000 km<sup>2</sup>**

Inhabitants  
**191 000**



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## OUR COMMITMENT

To contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and socio-economic development in the Sangha Tri-national, the first transboundary forest complex in Central Africa and a World Heritage Site.

## FTNS' GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors (BoD) is the strategic, coordinating and FTNS' decision-making body. Its main internal role is to oversee the trust fund's technical, financial and contractual management. Externally, the Board acts as an FTNS ambassador and defends its interests without being compromised by conflicts of interest.

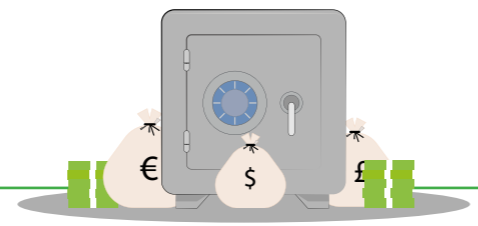
Board meetings are held twice a year in rotation in each of the three TNS member countries. The board's chair has a three (03) year mandate, renewable once.



### THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Executive Office is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Board of Directors, institutional development of FTNS, fundraising and grant provision to TNS parks. It is composed of an Executive Director, a Programme Officer and an administrative and logistical department made up of 3 people. This team is supported by an accounting firm and technical assistance from AGRECO-INTEGRATION represented within the Executive office by a Technical Advisor.

## OUR FUNDING MECHANISM



FTNS supports park operations through two mechanisms: endowment funds, which are revenues generated by the capital invested in the financial markets, and sinking funds, which are one-off contributions from financial partners intended primarily to improve the parks' basic infrastructure. FTNS' capital of about 67,5 million euros at the beginning of 2022, is invested in the international financial markets through an internationally renowned portfolio manager, assisted by an investment advisor. The expected annual income is around 4% of the capital, of which 3% is taken to finance the operating needs of the three TNS parks as well as tri-national cooperation activities.

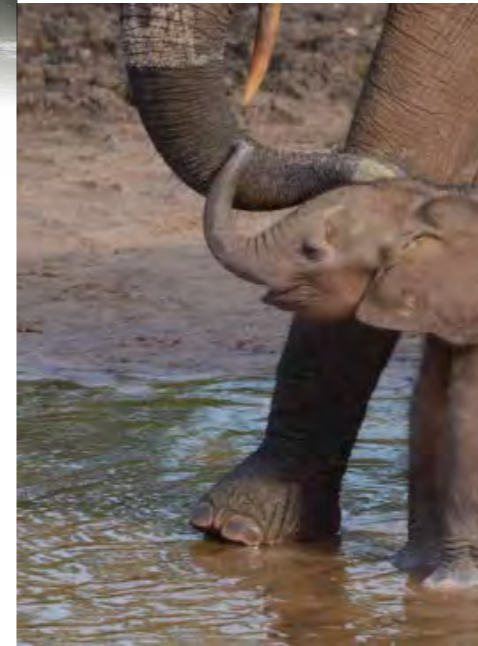
In 2021, FTNS' support for the operation of the parks was €1.8 million (and comes from the endowment and sinking funds). This represents only about one third of the budgets of the three parks, which face several growing threats (poaching, gradual demographic pressure, tourism infrastructure to be developed, to name a few).

## DISCOVERING TNS!

### The Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas (DSPA)

The Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas (DSPA) were created on 29 December 1990 and cover an area of more than 400,000 ha (4,000 km<sup>2</sup>). They are located in the prefecture of Sangha-Mbaere, precisely in the south-west of the CAR, and comprise two sectors: the Ndoki sector, which covers 725 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Dzanga sector, which covers 495 km<sup>2</sup>. As part of the State's heritage, the special reserve is placed under the supervision of the CAR's Ministry of Water, Forests, Fishing and Hunting. The area has as a geographical characteristic is a Guinean forest type climate.

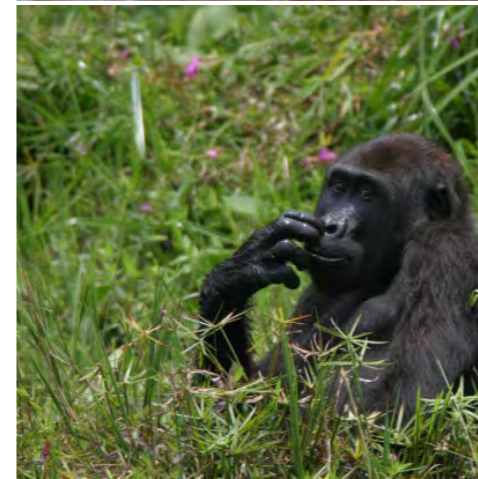
The open layout of the Dzanga salt clearing allows a very good and unique visibility of the fauna, a main asset for the development of tourism in the region. The complex also contains a rich socio-cultural content and serves as a habitat for the BaAka forest pygmies and Sangha-Sangha fishermen. Dzanga Sangha also offers tourists and the scientific community several exceptional assets such as the imposing elephants of Dzanga Bai, the habituated gorillas of Bai Hokou accompanied by sublime modern infrastructures.



### Nouabalé Ndoki National Park

Located in the far north of the Republic of Congo, the Nouabalé Ndoki National Park covers almost 4000 km<sup>2</sup> of primary forest. It was created in 1993 and is one of the largest reserves in the forest regions of West Central Africa. The park covers almost 2% of Congo's forests.

This virgin area, which has never been exploited by logging companies, is of botanical and biological interest. Rich in fauna and flora, this park has many species of large mammals such as elephants, western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, panthers, bushpigs, buffaloes, etc. Also, more than 300 species of birds, 1000 species of plants and a rich diversity of forests.



### Lobéké National Park

The Lobéké National Park, mainly made up of equatorial forest, is part of the Congo Basin in the far south-east of Cameroon. It covers an area of 217,854ha.

Created on 19 March 2001, the Lobéké National Park has a network of swampy clearings, particularly on the eastern side of the park. It also has a varied and very rich biodiversity of fauna and flora. Many of these species are endemic and the park has one of the highest concentrations of elephants and gorillas in the western plains of Africa.

Whether it is eco-tourism or ethno-tourism, Lobéké National Park has many attractions. Many investments have been made to convert it into an eco-tourism site. One can thus find living bases with equipped bungalows and trained guides to walk tourists through the forest.



## SOME OF TNS'S FLAGSHIP SPECIES

### Sitatunga *Tragelaphus spekii*



<b>Class:</b> Mammalia
<b>Subclass:</b> Theria
<b>Subclass:</b> Eutheria
<b>Order:</b> Artiodactyla
<b>Family:</b> Bovidae
<b>Genus:</b> Tragelaphus
<b>IUCN Conservation status</b>
Minor concern

The sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*), or water guib, is a bovine of the genus *Tragelaphus* (formerly of the genus *Limnotragus*). It is the most aquatic of the antelopes because it has the ability to feed while partially or completely immersed in water. This antelope is closely related to the bongo, kudu and eland. The Water Guib is an excellent swimmer and diver.

### Agile mangabey *Cercocebus agilis*



<b>Class:</b> Mammalia
<b>Phylum:</b> Chordata
<b>Order:</b> Primates
<b>Suborder:</b> Haplorhini
<b>Family:</b> Cercopithecidae
<b>Genus:</b> Cercocebus
<b>IUCN Conservation status</b>
Minor concern

The agile mangabey (*Cercocebus agilis*) is an Old World monkey of the white-eyed mangabey group found in the swampy forests of Central Africa in Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

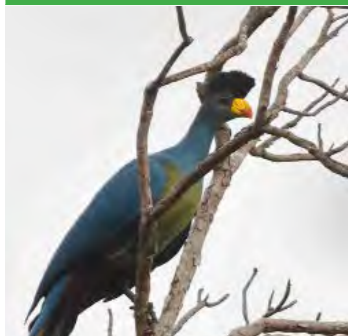
### Forest buffalo *Syncerus caffer nanus*



<b>Class:</b> Mammalia
<b>Phylum:</b> Theria
<b>Infra-classe:</b> Eutheria
<b>Ordre:</b> Artiodactyla
<b>Family:</b> Bovidae
<b>Genus:</b> Syncerus
<b>IUCN Conservation status</b>
Minor concern

The African forest buffalo is a small subspecies of the African buffalo. They weigh between 250 and 320 kg. The shape and size of the horns distinguish the African Forest Buffalo from other subspecies. The horns of African forest buffalo are much smaller than those of their savannah counterparts, the Cape, Sudan and Nile buffalo.

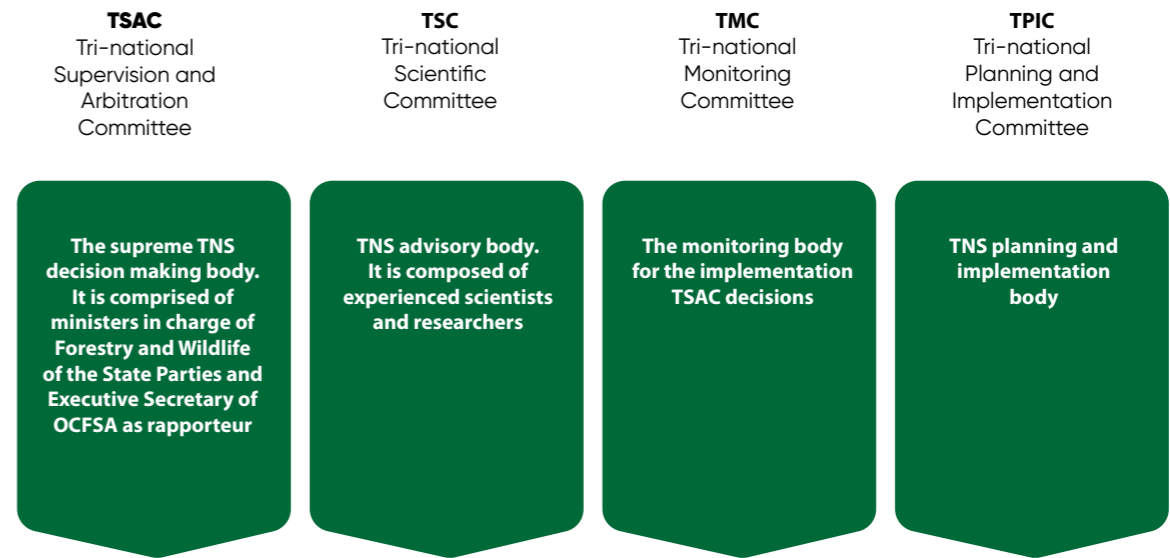
### Giant Turaco *Corythaeola cristata*



<b>Kingdom:</b> Animalia
<b>Phylum:</b> Chordata
<b>Subclass:</b> Vertebrata
<b>Class:</b> Aves
<b>Order:</b> Musophagiformes
<b>Family:</b> Musophagidae
<b>IUCN Conservation status</b>
Minor concern

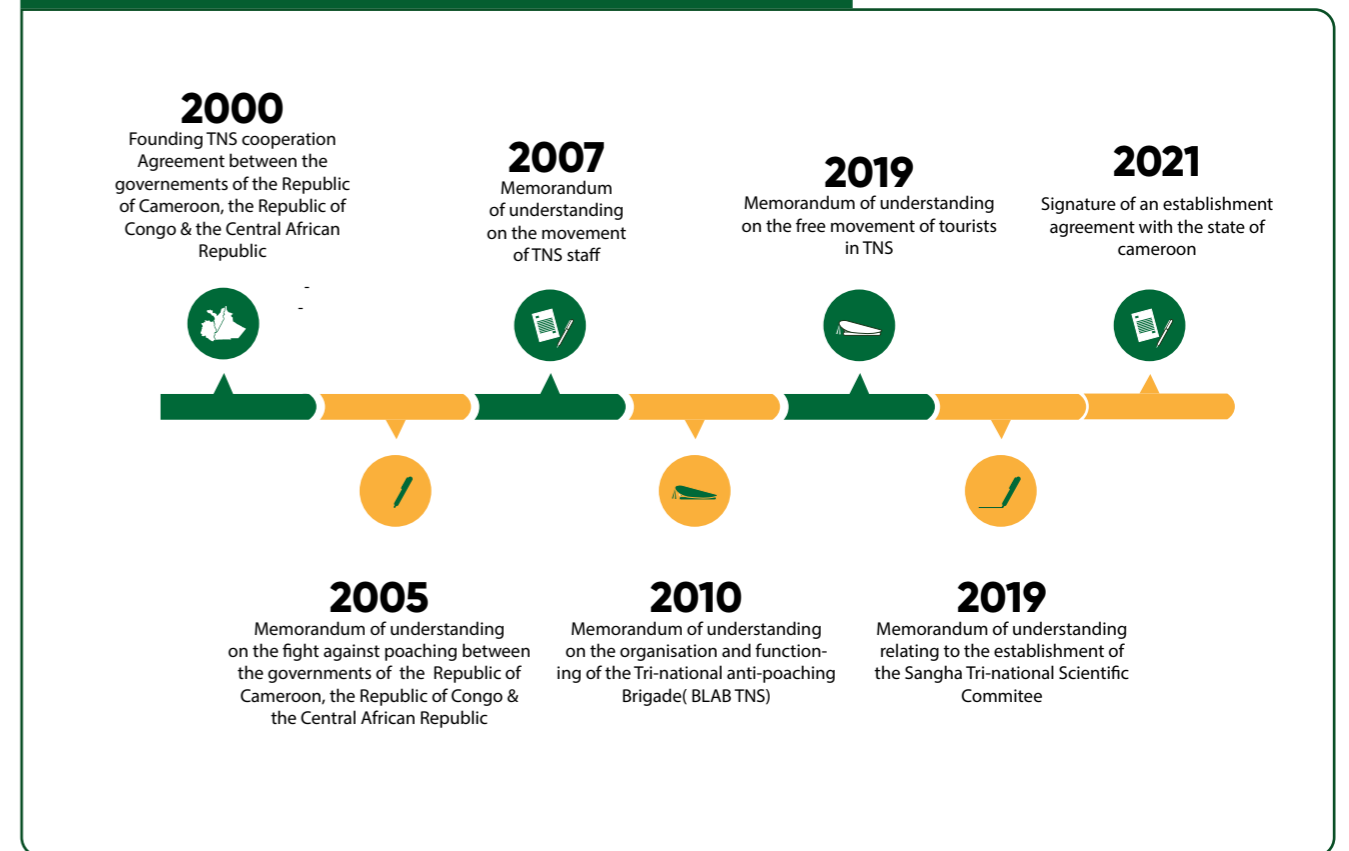
The Greater Blue Turaco (*Corythaeola cristata*) is a species of bird in the Musophagidae family. With a length of 70 to 76 cm, it is the largest species of turaco. Its plumage is predominantly blue-grey with an erect blue-black crest about 10 cm high. Males and females have similar plumage. It is widespread throughout the African rainforest.

## TNS AGREEMENTS & BODIES



06 Memorandum of understanding have been ratified by TNS governments to regulate cross boundary cooperation.

### TNS AGREEMENTS SIGNING TIMELINE



## FTNS 2023 SUBSIDY BREAKDOWN

### BREAKDOWN OF FUNDS ALLOCATED BY SOURCE 2023

PARK	KFW	CAPITAL INCOME	TOTAL
DSPAs	524 342 918	442 054 145	<b>966 397 064</b>
FNN	169 679 716	317 985 144	<b>487 664 860</b>
LNP	298 102 779	212 195 107	<b>510 297 886</b>
EO	216 060 281	12 086 659	228 146 940
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 208 185 694</b>	<b>984 321 055</b>	<b>2 192 506 749</b>

### BREAKDOWN OF OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT PER PARK IN 2023

COMPONENT	DSPAs	NNF	LNP	TOTAL
Surveillance / Protection	272 639 280	115 931 698	53 596 568	<b>442 167 546</b>
Co-management and development	61 583 229	56 956 319	35 632 300	<b>154 171 848</b>
Ecological research and monitoring	32 011 902	51 959 412	18 711 380	<b>102 682 694</b>
Tourism, marketing and communication	0	1 402 000	7 290 900	<b>8 692 900</b>
Infrastructure and equipment	4 808 500	180 659 450	16 371 825	<b>201 839 775</b>
Cross-border cooperation	14 312 332	2 503 470	1 835 500	<b>18 651 302</b>
One Health	62 644 130	34 458 550	44 046 368	<b>141 149 048</b>
Administration, monitoring and assessment	135 811 570	43 793 961	279 979 214	<b>459 584 745</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>583 810 943</b>	<b>487 664 860</b>	<b>457 464 055</b>	<b>1 528 939 857</b>

### BREAKDOWN OF OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT BY SOURCE 2023

COMPONENT	KFW	CAPITAL INCOME	TOTAL
Surveillance / Protection	53 596 568	388 570 978	442 167 546
Co-management and development	119 378 831	34 793 017	154 171 848
Ecological research and monitoring	18 711 380	83 971 314	102 682 694
Tourism, marketing and communication	7 290 900	1 402 000	8 692 900
Infrastructure and equipment	125 410 933	76 428 842	201 839 775
Cross-border cooperation	4 338 970	14 312 332	18 651 302
One Health	97 102 680	44 046 368	141 149 048
Administration, monitoring and assessment	149 918 533	309 666 212	459 584 745
<b>Total</b>	<b>575 748 795</b>	<b>953 191 063</b>	<b>1 528 939 857</b>

## CONSERVATION

### LOBÉKÉ NATIONAL PARK

## OVER 60% OF THE PARK COVERED IN 2023

Lobeke National Park (LNP) main conservation objective is to attain significant improvement in the biological resource monitoring system, the fight against poaching and the reduction of illegal exploitation of resources. It was on this basis that the park set the goal of developing, operationalising and significantly improving effective management systems for the central core and peripheral zone of the park by 2023.

To achieve this, the LNP focused on monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the surveillance strategy. The activities carried out within this framework have made it possible to present and discuss the APF (Anti-Poaching Fight) agreement with hunting safaris and COVAREFs at the Mambélé convention. Following these discussions, the LNP obtained the approval of the latter to continue raising awareness among the indigenous populations and local communities on sustainable traditional hunting methods.

The service also worked to expand surveillance patrols in the park and the peripheral zone. These efforts resulted in 96 anti-poaching patrols covering a distance of 1,7208 km, 5,786 man-days carried out in and around the national park, 12, 408 metal traps dismantled, 167 empty cartridges collected, 07 rifles (12 gauge) seized, 63 rounds of ammunition confiscated, and 98 hunting camps destroyed. It is important to note that FTNS funds were also used to pay seizure bonuses to ecoguards and COVILABs. By way of innovation, of the 2,322 1 km grids, 1,403 (60%) were patrolled, which is a first in the Lobéké National Park since its creation. An analysis of patrol data between 2017 and 2023 shows that gun hunting is preferred in the southern part of the park, while hunters use cables in the northern part.

Another ambition of the LNP was to effectively monitor litigation relating to the illegal exploitation of forest and wildlife resources. This was achieved through support for the effective application of laws relating to wildlife crimes affecting the LNP and its periphery, including direct support for human rights training and the monitoring of legal proceedings and cases.

Mobilizing the support and interest of local populations for conservation is one of the challenges that the park faced for a long time. But this year, the park established a successful new approach, namely conservation bonuses. Through this approach, the park is committed to financially compensating the villages/communities that have contributed most significantly to the fight against poaching. This resulted in a significant increase in systematic denunciations by villages,

thus intensifying the information network. The financial compensation granted is used to carry out community works for the well-being of local populations. Moreover, more than 28 million FCFA has been made available to local populations thanks to this system in 2023!

### Joint cross-border monitoring and control

The park also aimed to ensure that ecoguard teams are regularly involved in cross-border surveillance and control initiatives. Our efforts resulted in 11 monthly anti-poaching deployments of LNP ecoguards to B-LAB/TNS. In addition, 08 bi-national patrols were also carried out in 2023.

### Welcome acoustics!

In an unprecedented move, we installed our first acoustic unit in the park this year. This unit works by installing equipments to record the sound emissions produced by gunshots. The recorded data is stored on memory cards, which are then retrieved, downloaded, and analysed by the office's acoustic monitoring units. Based on algorithms, each recorded sound has its own range of emission signals (gunshots, elephants) which provide us with the data we need.

We have also begun analysing data relating to poaching activities using firearms. Based on the shots recorded around Djembé and Ngoa, we were able to discover that around 85% were fired at night, compared with 14% during the day. This provided the conservation department with a great deal of information for planning and monitoring.

### The ecoguard camp takes shape step by step

Construction work on the ecoguard camp is currently 60% complete. Despite delays, the work carried out in 2023 enabled the walls to be completed, the roofs to be installed and the doors to the buildings planned for the project to be erected. Local workers have also been recruited to facilitate the production of the additional 60,000 clay bricks required by the project. Completion and inauguration of the camp is scheduled for July 2024. Once completed, we believe that this project of around 40 homes will greatly improve the living conditions of our eco-guards, enabling them in turn to deliver better results.

### Ongoing challenges

The greatest difficulty is the inaccessibility between Mambélé (our headquarters) and Ndjembe, which lies at the heart of the park and represents an entry point for tourists and poachers alike. This situation ampli-

fies the prevalence of illegal activities, given that the ecoguards do not have easy access. This could have been avoided if there was a motorable road between Mbolo and Djembé, the two towns being only 100 km apart. By transiting through Libongo, the poachers (who are often better equipped than we are) are informed of our presence and take action.

We are also faced with a shortage of logistical resources, rendering us unable to carry out our missions effectively. We need more vehicles to reinforce our deployment on the ground. In 2024, we plan to continue developing our conservation activities to achieve even greater results. One of our priorities will be to increase the park's spatial coverage rate from 60% to 80%.



### SOME RESULTS IN 2023

 <b>96</b> patrols carried out	 <b>08</b> bi-national patrols	 <b>12 408</b> cables seized & dismantled
 <b>63</b> ammunition seized	 <b>07</b> weapons seized	 <b>0</b> elephant carcasses discovered outside the park



DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS 

## ZERO ELEPHANTS POACHED IN THE PARK IN 2023!

In 2023, the APDS Protection and Surveillance department endeavoured to ensure the continuity of the capacity-building programme for its staff. In terms of results, our teams carried out 482 regular patrols (449 by APDS teams and 33 by ULAB PEA 190) on all APDS, including 371 regular foot patrols (76.97%); 51 at the fixed checkpoint at the Yobé barrier (10.58%); 09 river patrols (01.87%); and 01 one-off patrols (00.2%).

These patrols resulted in a cumulative effort of 21,987 H/d (including 20,633 H/d by the APDS and 1,354 H/d by the ULAB PEA 190) and a distance covered of 48,636 kilometres (46,182 km by the APDS and 2,454 km by the ULAB PEA 190). To illustrate, 26,785 km were covered on foot (24,878 km by the APDS and 1,907 km by the ULAB PEA 190), i.e. 55%, 19,035 km by vehicle (18,488 km by the APDS and 547 km by the ULAB PEA 190), i.e. 39%, and 2,816 km by outboard motor during river patrols, i.e. 6%.

In terms of training, personnels took part in a number of courses to enhance their operational capabilities on weapons and ammunition management (by MINUSCA in Berberati), advanced use of SMART (in Gabon), river navigation, management of the Earth rangers software to improve the capacity of the Operational Command Centre, and the application of the law on protected areas in the sub-region.

### The return of our dog unit

APDS, with the support of Chengeta Wildlife, introduced a dog unit in 2018, consisting of 02 dogs, Boby and Mitch. The programme that had been interrupted to replace the dogs in this unit was finally relaunched in June 2023 with 2 dogs and 4 handlers.

The dogs, prepared and trained in Europe, are suitable for detecting ivory, pangolin scales and ammunition. This diversifies surveillance methods offers ecoguards a variety of career opportunities.

The deployment and satellite tracking of our teams have made great strides since the introduction of our Command Centre, which enables us to monitor their activities in real time. Given the importance of this revolutionary aspect, some measures have been taken to boost its effectiveness, including making the Command Centre self-sufficient in energy by securing the system and installing an additional UPS to ensure uninterrupted operation; acquiring mapping and navigation equipment to better prepare patrol routes; and installing an additional control room for patrol briefings and debriefings.

Added to this, a VSAT system has also been installed exclusively for the centre to support internet communications more effectively and ensure prompt reactions when needed. Thanks to these innovations, the Command Centre now operates 24 hours a day.

A major aspect of our activities in 2023 was the strengthening of river surveillance. Our work led to the identification of locations for the installation of a patrol post on the Sangha River, as well as the acquisition of new boats and the mobilisation of the necessary resources to increase river surveillance on the said river.

Another innovation for 2023 is the drafting and validation of a simple management plan for the Hunting Zone (ZCC), and the approval of the decentralised State services, the local political and administrative authorities and the representatives of the communities bordering the DSPAs. The document, drafted for over 2 years, was validated at a local feedback workshop chaired by the Regional Director No. 2 for Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing, assisted by the Sangha Mbaéré Divisional Inspector.

As part of the development of new and innovative approaches to conservation, 34 new acoustic units have been placed at poaching hotspots, in collaboration with the Elephant Listening Project (ELP). The use of these acoustic methods makes it possible to estimate elephant populations and the impact of logging, and to

quantify illegal hunting with firearms in protected areas. We also renovated the conservation infrastructure to ensure greater comfort for staff. These included the dormitories, kitchen, and refectory at the Kongana training centre, to make it easier to accommodate the trainers and ecoguards taking part in the advanced anti-poaching training provided by our partner Chengeta. We also replaced the mosquito nets and floorboards at the Dzanga Bai outpost and built a kitchen for the security post at the park entrance.

In terms of litigation management, the actions carried out by the Protection and Surveillance Department in collaboration with the Defence and Security Forces and

the Nola High Court resulted in a total of 190 arrests. Of these arrests, only 10 cases were brought to court, while the other 180 resulted in sensitisation and release, the latter being considered as minor cases.

Four criminal court hearings were organised and supported by the APDS in Bayanga and in Nola by the High Court of Nola.

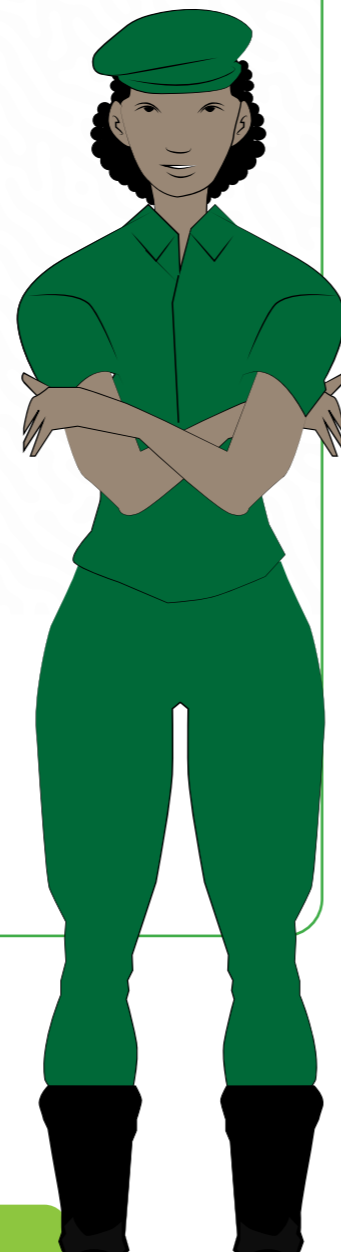
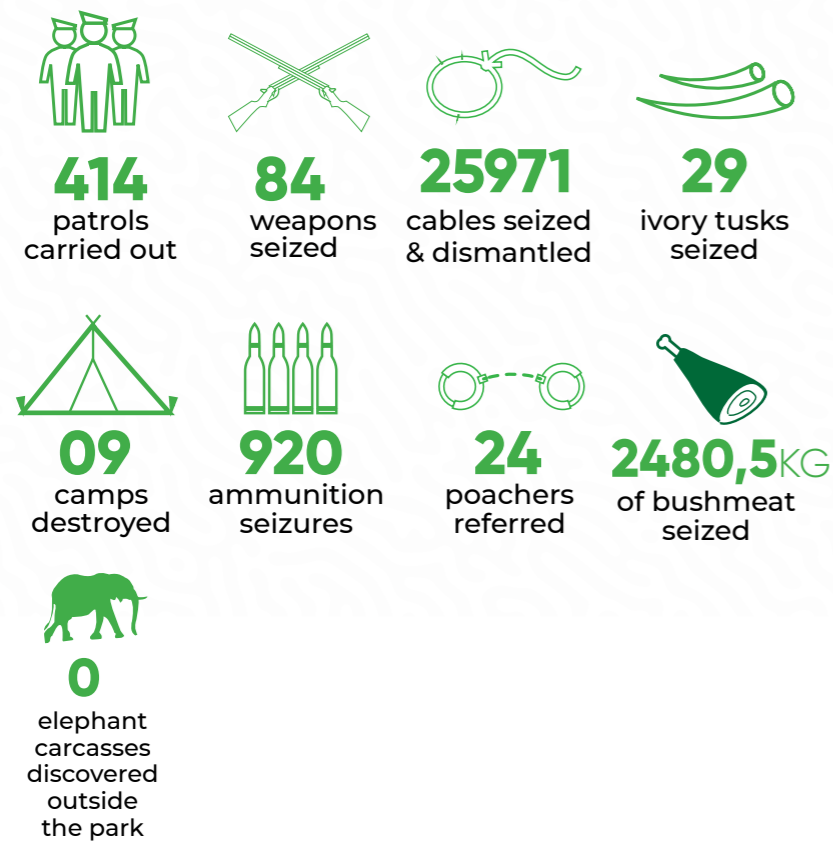
**Execution of cross-border patrols (Bi-national)**

A total of 18 joint cross-border patrols were conducted in 2023, as part of the practical collaboration to secure certain areas of the NNNP and the APDS from the Kongana training centre (cross-border zone with the NNNP).



**THE TNS ANTI-POACHING BRIGADE IN 2023**

DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS  
**SOME RESULTS IN 2023**



**WHAT'S "BLAB"?**  
A MIXED BRIGADE FOR THE TNS

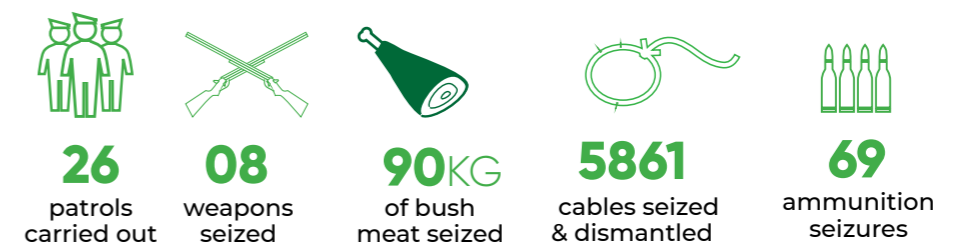
**BLAB IS MADE UP OF ...**

- 01** A BRIGADE COMMANDER
- 02** A CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
- 03** ECOGUARDS OF THE 03 TNS SITES

**THE BLAB'S ECOGUARDS COME FROM 03 TNS PARKS/COUNTRIES**

**ITS LOCATION IN NYANGOUTE MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO CONTROL CROSS-BORDER POACHING**

**SOME RESULTS IN 2023**







## NNNP IN 2023: AVIATION MARKS ITS "COMEBACK"

For the first time, no poached elephants were discovered on the park's periphery! This information consolidates NNNP's position as one of the most intact areas in the Congo Basin. These efforts by the LAB team are a result of deep, long-term investment in NNNP and the wider Ndoki-Likouala landscape to maintain the progress made in the fight against wildlife crime, particularly elephant poaching. Nevertheless, 22 elephant carcasses were discovered by ecoguards on the park's periphery, of which 03 were poached, with the remaining 19 deaths resulting from natural or unknown causes. Of the 03 poached carcasses, one was discovered inside the park, while the other two were found on the outskirts. However, analysis revealed the poached carcass discovered in the park was more than a year old.

In terms of results, the ecoguards seized 3138 kg of bushmeat, 4131 metal cables (146 of which were within the park), a weapon of war, 55 rifles, 481 rounds of ammunition and 0.08 kg of pangolin scales. In addition, 134 illegal hunting camps were destroyed, and 43.4 kg of ivory (13 ivory tips) collected. The park continues to direct its patrols towards sensitive areas targeted by bushmeat poachers, a strategy that helped to reduce the number of snares and bushmeat seized.

### Bolstered eco-guards for enhanced surveillance.

The PNNN PMU (Parc Management Unit) also placed particular emphasis on strengthening the leadership skills of the LAB team. Based on this, the heads of ecoguard units and technical officers from the Congolese Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) benefited from a 3-phase training course organised by Chengeta Wildlife. The training sessions included lessons on planning and implementing activities with the ability to adapt and learn, communication and the division of tasks between different levels of leadership, practical application of learning during accompanied patrols, individual coaching, and theoretical tests.

In terms of recycling, 30 ecoguards (33% of the PNNN ecoguard force) benefited from 02 training sessions on various themes, including human rights. WCS also supported by the NNNP law enforcement trainer to provide important training for another site in Central Africa. The annual refresher programme has therefore been suspended for the rest of the year and will resume in March 2024.

One of the priorities for 2023 was the deployment of "reconnaissance" patrols based on the SMART tool in the Park and its surrounding area, including the TNS Anti-Poaching Brigade (BLAB), Binational, Tri-national and Mixed (USLAB) patrols. The team's patrolling efforts resulted in 225 patrols being carried out, representing a surveillance effort of 10,481 man-days. In total, 60,879 km were covered, representing 21% of the conservation area, 57% of the Park, 24% of the sensitive zone and 23% of the periphery. Regarding arrests, 119 people were arrested and 17 poachers apprehended in the NNNP and its surrounding areas. Eight of these arrests were transferred to the Impfondo or Ouessou courts.

Following a quarterly review, patrols were redirected to cover higher-priority areas and ensure that some less-watched areas were visited during the six-month period. Patrols carried out in areas considered less risky confirmed the absence of human signs, a reassuring result.

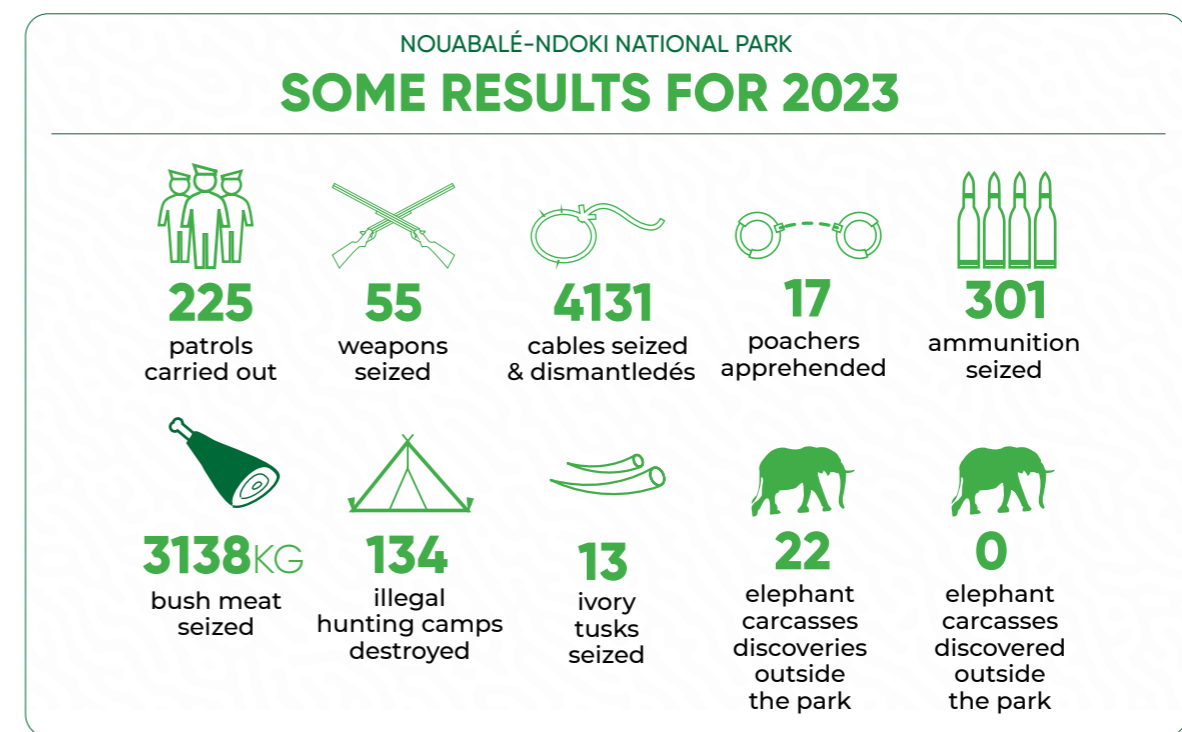
A positive note this year was the resumption of our aviation programme, which had been temporarily suspended for three years. Its 31 aerial patrols also enabled 403 people and 163 camps to be observed, recorded in the EarthRanger software and quickly passed on to the patrol teams for potential deployment in the event of suspected poaching. The aviation team also received information on poaching incidents to locate outlaws. In addition, the programme also provided several logistical flights, transporting personnel and supplies to and from Brazzaville and other sites in northern Congo. (32 surveillance/overflights; 46 logistics flights; 185 flight hours; 34974 km).

One of the major achievements was the launch of the pilot phase for the initialisation of the EarthRanger software. The introduction of this innovative software enabled us to optimise the planning, monitoring and implementation of patrols. Its special feature allows us to obtain and view patrol data in real time and to be better informed and more capable of making operational decisions. This data also grants us the ability to inform and deploy our teams more quickly to where the poachers are. For a start, six members of staff have been trained in the use and administration of EarthRanger, with more to follow.

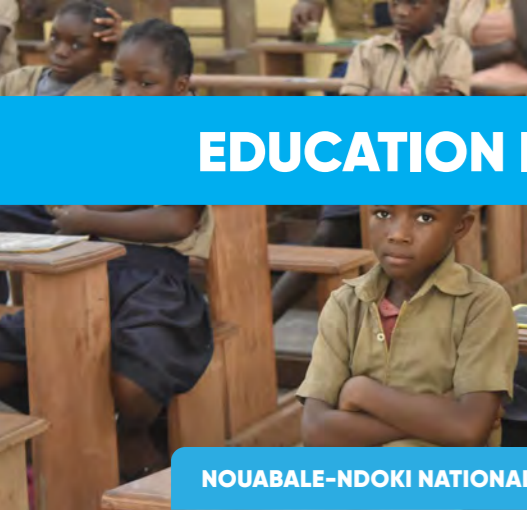
In 2023, the frequency of discoveries of human presence in and around the park fell significantly compared with the previous year. Rangers recorded a decrease in signs of human presence to 0.003 per kilometre in the park and 0.009 per kilometre in the periphery, contrasting with the 2022 figures of 0.02 in both the park and the periphery. At the same time, the number of arrests made by ranger teams fell to 17 individuals, a significant reduction on the number of poachers apprehended (48) in 2022. Despite

these changes, the patrol effort remained relatively stable between 2022 and 2023. This could be a sign of effective deterrence on the part of the patrols or a change in strategy on the part of the poaching groups, who maybe targeting new areas.

One of the difficulties encountered is the lack of usable weapons. Of the 17 weapons in the inventory of PNNN's western sector, only 5 were fully functional (with all parts). This implies that if the park fully applies the security rules, only two patrols at a time can be deployed in the western sector. If there is no change in the allocation of weapons by the end of the year, the park could be forced to drastically reduce the number of patrols to avoid any danger to law enforcement personnel.



**31**  
Anti-poaching air flights carried out



## EDUCATION IN 2023



NOUABALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK



DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREA



### BOMASSA PRIMARY SCHOOL : OPERATION & INAUGURATION

The Park Management Unit continued to promote education in the villages of Bomassa and Makao. In terms of educational support, the park provided assistance to 386 primary and secondary school pupils. At secondary level, 16 beneficiary pupils from Bomassa and Makao were enrolled, as well as 2 students during the 2022-2023 academic year. Through this, we hope to contribute to the education of future generations in the communities of Bomassa and Makao.

Another major event was the inauguration of Bomassa's modern primary school by Ms Rosalie Matondo, Minister of Forest Economy, and Mr Jean-Luc MOUTHOU, Minister of Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education and Literacy, in the presence of the Divisional Officer of the Sangha Department and the Sub-divisional Officer of the Kabo district. The construction of the school was financed in partnership with FTNS and KFW, and provides pupils and teachers with modern classrooms and equipment. The procurement process for the construction of the Makao school is continuing is ongoing.

In terms of environmental education, the Ebobo club was once again on the spotlight in 2023 with three (03) sessions. These activities were marked by a presentation of specimens collected during research aimed at cataloguing the insects found in and around the NNNP, by Violette Derozie, an entomology researcher invited to educate the children of Bomassa primary school about aspects of conservation. Pupils from Bomassa primary school were also taught about the habituation process of lowland gorillas during a session led by Mondika's research assistants. The broadcasting of several videos enabled them to share their experience and the stages of habituation that enable scientists and tourists to study and visit the gorillas.

Pupils and members of Club Ebobo also organised a cultural day in Bomassa in September to raise community awareness of the importance of protecting the forest and its biodiversity, as well as the sustainable management of flora and fauna. Students performed poems, songs and skits, and engaged community members in interactive games and discussions.

#### SOME KEY RESULTS IN 2023

**386**

Pupils Freely sent to school in 2023

**05**

teachers supported

**16**

students in care at secondary level

**03**

Club Ebobo awareness-raising sessions

### 1,659 PUPILS CARED FOR IN 2023

SYLVAIN DANGHOLO DEPUTY HEAD OF ECODEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

The Community Development and Law Department of the APDS is responsible for ensuring the interface between the population and the protected areas. Given that the local community's illiteracy rate is almost 80%, one of the department's main focuses is education. Nevertheless, thanks to several awareness-raising campaigns organised in the field and on the radio, we have seen an increase of 2,379 pupils in 2023 compared with the previous year.

One of our achievements in 2023 was supporting parent teachers. Bayanga and the surrounding area are suffering from a growing shortage of trained teaching staff. For example, we currently have only 03 trained teachers for thousands of pupils. This situation pushes schools and colleges to rely heavily on parent-teachers to provide lessons. This year, we paid the incentive bonuses of 87 teachers (including 10 kindergarten teachers, 70 parent-teachers and 07 part-time teachers from the Lycée) in the districts of Bayanga, Obessanga, Salo, Bilolo and Nola, to the tune of around FCFA 23.5 million.

We have also contributed to building the capacity of teaching staff. More specifically, we supported the training of 143 Basic 1 teachers, as well as the recycling of 11 Basic 2 teachers. This enabled teachers and parent-teachers to adapt to the changes and current needs of the education system.

It is important to note that many of the children in our locality, particularly the indigenous BaAka people, come from disadvantaged social backgrounds. In order to alleviate this situation, we covered the schooling costs (en-

rolment, insurance, PTA, examination and competition fees, etc.) of 1,659 pupils, including 1,439 BaAka children and 220 orphans. In addition, we also provided 2,950 primary school pupils with school supplies and distributed teaching kits to schools in the districts of Yobé-Sangha, Salo and Bilolo.

Facilitating the emergence of a local elite has always been one of our objectives in promoting education. To make this vision a reality, for several years we have been supporting two BaAka students (one girl and one boy) enrolled in the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the University of Bangui. This year in particular, our candidates obtained their bachelor's degrees, a great achievement for the BaAka community, which has a very low school enrolment rate. We hope that this will encourage other members of their community, particularly the younger ones, to enrol and continue their education.

In addition to academic education, we also carried out a number of environmental education activities. We created and ran environmental clubs and organised weekly visits to the salt works with village children to observe the elephants and discover the forest. During the excursions, the little adventurers were taught about the layers of the forest, the role of the forest, the role of animals, etc. These initiatives enable these young people, the adults of tomorrow, to acquire knowledge about the richness of the park and to develop an affinity with this natural space. In addition, the Friends of Nature clubs have regularly sent a number of young people to Dzanga Bai to discover and immerse themselves in the field of research.

#### SOME KEY RESULTS IN 2023

**87**

teachers supported

**02**

baAka students taken care of at university

**154**

teachers recycled/ trained

**1659**

Pupils & students freely sent to school in 2023



## PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

NOUABALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK



### ELANGA BOMASSA 2: RELOCATION, EXPANSION AND DUPLICATION



### 144 STUDENTS SUPPORTED IN 2023

As in other parks, the Lobéké National Park generally ensures the well-being of the Baka people, who are in a fragile social stratum. The LNP provided school fees for 144 Baka pupils from primary to secondary school, living in and around the park. This included 106 primary school pupils (46 in Salapoumbe and 60 in Moloundou) and 38 secondary school pupils (29 in Salapoumbe and 9 in Moloundou). This initiative helps to reduce the drop-out rate and promote quality education for people from these communities.

In addition, 2,676 notebooks (with information on the LNP and its biodiversity) were distributed to 732 pupils and 80 students. These actions help to promote quality education for Baka and Bantou children in the Salapoumbe and Moloundou districts.

The schools located in the peripheral zone of the park

face a shortage of trained teachers. Temporary teachers are routinely recruited to remedy this precarious situation for the socio-economic development of this area of the TNS. As a solution, the LNP supported the catering of 58 teachers for the 2022-2023 school year in the districts of Moloundou and Salapoumbé.

#### The park opens its doors to local pupils and students

To promote careers in the conservation sector, the conservation department opened its doors to 36 students for holiday internships. The group was made up of 22 boys and 14 girls (including 7 Baka and 29 Bantu) who received training in logistics, finance, and the establishment and management of tree nurseries. They also received training in fish farming, entrepreneurship, sanitary hygiene and nutritional health.

#### SOME KEY RESULTS IN 2023

**144**

Pupils & students freely sent to school in 2023

**58**

teachers supported

**36**

students on internship

**2676**

distributed to 732 pupils & 80 students

One of the park's objectives is to develop measures to mitigate conflicts between humans and wildlife. In 2019, our efforts led to the development of a project called Elanga, which enabled an electrical protection system to be set up around a 4-hectare field to enable 58 households and families to re-discover and practise farming once again. In terms of yields, we estimate that this agricultural area produced around 500 kg of chilli peppers and 11 tonnes of cassava, impressive results in terms of agricultural production.

#### Enlargement from 4 to 10 hectares

Several meetings were also held during the year between the manager of the Human Elephant Conflict (CHE) programme and representatives of households benefiting from the project. The discussions highlighted problems of theft (which affect the ability of households to pay their monthly contributions towards the upkeep of the electric fence), as well as a decline in the quality of the soil.

Following these circumstances, and at the request of local people, we decided to extend the previous site to increase the number of beneficiaries. One of the innovations was the identification of a new site based on research findings that confirmed the impoverishment of the previous site. The new site will be around 10 hectares in size (compared to the 4 hectares of the previous site) and will contain around 109 plots. This will allow for field rotation and proximity to a more

populated area to mitigate problems associated with theft. This change also demonstrates the advantage of an electric fence, which can easily be moved from one location to another.

The procedure for purchasing the electric fencing equipment for the project to replicate and extend the Elanga model in Kabo has been launched. Agricultural and solar equipment has been delivered at Bomassa, pending completion of the fencing, scheduled for the first quarter of 2024. PNNN also plans to replicate this initiative in Kabo and Makao.

#### Yes to chicken...no to bushmeat!

The park's action programme also includes promoting the production of domestic animal proteins. The consumption of bushmeat is a major problem that protected areas need to address. In order to remedy this situation, PNNN, with the support of the SWM and EPP programmes, supported 339 pioneer livestock farmers and 251 aspiring livestock farmers on the outskirts of PNNN and in northern Congo in the production of domestic animal protein. A total of 5,618 Sasso chickens were sold during the second sales round in 2023 thanks to this initiative.

In terms of improving animal care, 40 pioneering breeders from Kabo, Bomassa, Leme and Boundzélé received training in basic animal health.



LOBÉKÉ NATIONAL PARK 

## THE BRIDGE TNS PROJECT: A BRIDGE TOWARDS THE LABELLING, IMPROVEMENT AND PROCESSING OF COCOA

Cocoa cultivation is one of the major agricultural activities carried out by the populations living on the periphery of the Lobéké National Park (TNS Cameroon). Despite the interest in this activity, the cocoa farmers of Lobéké and its surroundings face several difficulties that prevent them from making a decent living from their products, a situation that pushes many to turn to other subsistence alternatives (deforestation, poaching, etc.) that threaten the integrity of the LNP and the TNS as a World Heritage site.

It is with this in view that FTNS aims to implement the project “Market-based approach to promote community engagement in wildlife conservation and climate change mitigation in the TNS landscape”.

Transformation, productivity and labelling...

This initiative aims to engage more than 7 villages and about 1490 households around the LNP to contribute to the protection of biodiversity, through the development of a sustainable cocoa value chain. The overall objective is to develop an economic value chain with the capacity to guarantee a higher income for farmers. This in turn should enable them to make a decent living (throughout the year and not just at harvest time) and consequently limit the alternatives of hunting and ex-

pansion of their cocoa farms into the Lobéké National Park in particular and the protected areas of the TNS in general.

At the social level, FTNS also has the ambition to contribute to better socio-economic equity, including the reduction of social abuses on the indigenous Ba’aka people. The latter are regularly recruited as labourers in the fields of the Bantu at very low wages and sometimes rent their cocoa farms (for those who own them) for a very low price. The project therefore aims to empower them and facilitate the development of their plantations to mitigate this social injustice.

On the climate front, the FTNS-bridge project also aims to facilitate the establishment of a sustainable mechanism while guaranteeing an increase in the value of cocoa from the peripheries of the Lobeke National Park. To this end, approaches to regulating pesticide use and introducing other sustainable farming techniques will be introduced. The completion of these innovations should facilitate the certification process, particularly that of the Rainforest Alliance Label. Obtaining this certification should significantly increase the value of the labelled agricultural products and allow people to actively contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

One of the project’s innovative aspects is cocoa processing. According to Mr. Romain Kana, FTNS Programme Officer, a kilogram of cocoa processed into butter could generate 3 to 4 times more value compared to the sale of the beans, thus greatly improving the incomes of local populations. This value chain could also contribute to the creation of several jobs.


In terms of funding, farmers generally lack adequate fi-

nanical services to pre-finance their agricultural activities (purchase of seeds, fertilisers, etc). In order to facilitate their financial growth, the project also aims to contract a microfinance structure in order to facilitate the savings of the income generated by the farmers.

The cost of the 04-year project is USD 363,700, including USD 120,700 from the Bridge project through the French Global Environment Facility.

### USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT



 **Location or geographical area :**  
The councils of Moloundou and Salapoumbe in the Boumba and Ngoko department, East Cameroon

 **Executing agency :**  
Sangha Tri-National Trust Fund

 **Technical implementation partners :**  
AAFEFEN, CIFED, CRA, Express Union Microfinance, Telcar Compagnie d’exportation du Cacao, Coopératives des producteurs du Cacao.

 **Project duration :**  
4 yrs

 **Donors :** FFEM, CAFÉ (African Consortium of Environmental Funds) – Projet BRIDGE and FTNS

**Budget :** USD 363 700 avec USD 120 700 from Projet BRIDGE



## ABOUT 4000 CONSULTATIONS IN 2023!

The NNNP also aims to help improve the living conditions of people living near the park through access to healthcare. Its regular support enabled the Bomassa and Makao health centres to function normally throughout 2023. As confirmation of this, the health workers supported by the park were regularly present in the centres, spending an average of 30 days a month in their respective centres. In addition, the Makao centre now has a full-time nurse, a status that has made a major contribution to patient care. In view of the growing demand, the option of including an additional member of Makao's staff as part of the PTAB 2024, following a request from the local community, is currently being considered.

In terms of consultations, the Bomassa and Makao health centres carried out 2,588 and 1,405 consultations respectively. The most common illnesses treated by health centre staff were malaria, gastrointestinal infections/intestinal parasites, sexually transmitted infections and diarrhoea. In addition, the PMU also facilitated 22 medical evacuations to the Pokola and Kabo hospitals.

Monthly awareness-raising sessions were organised by the Makao health centre for members of the community. Topics covered included neglected tropical diseases, genital infections, abdominal pain, the importance of vaccination and the fight against malaria.

The community development agents worked closely with the health departments to ensure the coordination and organisation of the health centres, the management of equipment and a good drug supply chain, as well as the delivery of services to the communities.

In addition, two supervision missions were organised by the Sangha Health District to the Bomassa health centre to assess the challenges faced by the health centre and propose solutions to improve patient care. Using a participatory approach, 45 members of the community (27 Bantu women and 18 indigenous women) took part in focus group discussions organised by health centre staff.

Awareness campaigns on neglected tropical diseases, tuberculosis and HIV-AIDS were also held in Bomassa. These campaigns were marked by working sessions with health and screening workers. Awareness-raising sessions and discussions were also held between the Community Development department and the leaders of the religious congregations in Bomassa.

In August, a team from the national mass vaccination campaign against poliomyelitis for under 5 kids, visited Bomassa and Bon-Coin. This resulted in the vaccination of the majority of children in the range of 0-5 age group, reinforcing efforts to ensure the health of the child population.

In order to remedy the irregular monthly cleaning of the village (Salongo), a discussion meeting was organised to raise awareness among the young people of Bomassa on this subject and on the career opportunities available in Bomassa. This was also an opportunity to encourage young people to become more involved in the running and development of the Bomassa community. As a result of this initiative, a youth project to promote cleanliness will be launched in the village in 2024.

## KEY FIGURES AND RESULTS IN 2023

**3993**  
consultations  
carried out

**22**  
medical  
evacuations  
carried out

**06**  
employees  
supported

**02**  
health  
centres  
supported



DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS



## A NEW LABORATORY FOR NEW PERSPECTIVES

FREDERICK SIGHALA HEAD OF BIOMONITORING AND ONE HEALTH

In terms of results, we also collected data from regular observations of 3 groups of habituated gorillas, and non-invasive samples from 4 groups of monitored primates. In addition, 10 carcasses found and reported to the veterinary team during the year (gorillas, elephants, bongo, buffalo, giant pangolin, etc.) were sampled. Of the 10 carcasses reported, poaching was determined to be the cause of death of one of the gorillas. Assessments of the gorillas' state of health were carried out exclusively on the group used to human presence by the veterinarian and PHP staff during 2023.

Our department also took part in a joint awareness-raising session organised by veterinary teams from the Dzanga Sangha protected area and the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (NNNP) on zoonotic diseases and carcass swabbing. Around fifteen staff (ecoguards and wardens) working at the Nyangouté Tri-National Anti-Poaching Brigade (BLAB) took part in the awareness-raising session.

Awareness-raising sessions were also organised for the Babongo, Kounda-Papaye, Kanza, Nguenguéli and Mona-Sao communities on the risks of transmitting zoonotic diseases. More than 1,500 local and indigenous residents took part in the exercise. Several rabies vaccination campaigns were also carried out. We also seized this opportunity to vaccinate 41 domestic animals (dogs and cats) against rabies.

In terms of cross-border collaboration, we received WWF Cameroon staff from Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks as part of an exchange visit. We discussed several issues, including the way in which the various APDS departments and some of our programmes operate.

### Strengthening the One Health Programme team

The APDS now has a field laboratory following completion of construction works which began in 2022. One Health team already moved in while awaiting the installation of the solar panel system and the delivery of additional laboratory equipment from the Helmholtz Institute from One Health (HIOH) in Germany.

The carcass samples collected during the year were tested for filoviridae (Marburg and Ebola) and anthrax, with negative results. All these samples are stored in freezers to be sent to HIOH for further analysis.

We also took part in a training course on techniques for immobilising and capturing wildlife in Namibia. A microbiologist and a ward officer were recruited during the year to strengthen the capabilities of our One Health team.

Our department also facilitated the examination of the human and animal samples collected. More than 1,027 human samples were tested for COVID 19 using a rapid test. Of the 1027 samples, 5 were positive and were confirmed by PCR. This measure enables the APDS to mitigate the risks of disease transmission from humans to wildlife and vice versa. We also carried out the annual review of the APDS staff, as well as acquiring the necessary medicines and equipment.

### Outlook for 2024!

We plan to continue with these regular activities in 2024, wildlife monitoring and the monitoring of gorilla groups accustomed to human presence. We will also continue to monitor all the habituation camps to maintain the hygiene programme set up in our camps.

We also plan to carry out an annual staff health check, including vaccination sessions against infectious diseases. With our partner Helmholtz, we plan to expand

our One Health activities in protected areas to include a human health component. For the time being, the partner is in the process of signing an MOU with the Central African government so that we can extend our activities on site and get the community more involved in our activities.

DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS

## FIGURES & RESULTS IN 2023

**1500**  
people sensitised

**07**  
groups primates followed

**1027**  
human samples tested

**41**  
animals pets vaccinated

**10**  
carcasses reported

# ECOTOURISM IN 2023

NOUBALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK



## LOCAL POPULATIONS ARE POSITIONING THEMSELVES

PNNN received a total of 848 visitors for a total of 4512 overnight stays this year. Notable visits included delegations from FTNS, USAID and WCS, including the new CEO of WCS. The national park aims to develop a community-based tourism approach as a driver of economic development for local people. It is on this basis that the project to build a tourist hosting site - known as the Ngolio camp - was initiated in 2021. This year was marked by the validation of the statutes of the governing body and the progress of discussions for the appointment of community members to the governing body.

The tourism teams from PNNN and Odzala-Kokoua National Park (PNOK) organised an exchange visit marked by an excursion to the Imbalanga camp, which serves as a model for the Ngolio camp. The exchange enabled the teams to identify a potential circuit between PNOK and PNNN, and to share experiences on tourism safety protocols and capacity-building for local communities in the field of tourism.

In terms of capacity building, the PMU carried out 20 training sessions, 221 sessions of regular English courses for staff and community members and 133 sessions of literacy courses (12,273 person hours of training). This enabled staff to improve their knowledge of tracking, hospitality, first aid, tourism and communication in the forest. Four staff members and one community member also travelled to OKNP for a Kamba Africa training course on hospitality, spa management and catering. In addition, the tourism manager took part in a month-long training course on interpretation and guiding techniques.

Initiatives to strengthen literacy courses for staff and local people were pursued in 2023 with the support of the association "Le Mentaliste". Nevertheless, the participation rate proved to be average despite the awareness-raising sessions organised beforehand, due to the difficult timetable (after working hours) and conflicting schedules with socio-economic activities such as harvesting.

Two Mondika trackers were selected for an exchange between the Mondika and Ngaga great ape sites in the Odzala Kokoua National Park. This enabled them learn about the great ape tourism programme at Ngaga and guide tourists on hikes.

The tourism team organised eight awareness-raising sessions in Bomassa and Makao to discuss the tourism income distribution strategy, the training plan and training opportunities for community members, including English, literacy and tracker training. Between the two villages, 483 people have been reached.


With a view to developing cross-border cooperation and future tourism opportunities, the NNNP tourism team and members of the community visited the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (APDS) to discover their tourism offers. The trip also provided an opportunity to talk to the Bayanga communities about their tourism activities, including net hunting and traditional dances.

The Ndimakali association from Bayanga (CAR) carried out a cultural exchange visit with the Iyelé-Omba in-

igenous associations from Kabo and Lih Ngolio from Bomassa. Over 350 people (mainly indigenous people) took part in discussions on indigenosity and the challenges associated with it, indigenous identity, the rights of indigenous people, access to education and basic social services, and the dangers of alcoholism, among other topics. The event also featured an exhibition of cultural objects such as necklaces and bracelets, and a demonstration of traditional dances.

Several meetings were also held with tour operators Kamba Africa, Ducret Expéditions, Wild Safari Tours and Bomboka Tours in Brazzaville to discuss the status of the tourism development project (in particular the construction projects). In addition, other topics such as the free movement of tourists in the TNS, a proposed visit to the DSPAs, new marketing material, the new PNNN website and the inclusion of the Djeke Triangle were also discussed.

### NOUBALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK A FEW RESULTS IN 2023

 **483**  
people sensitised

 **221**  
English lessons provided

 **133**  
sessions of literacy classes delivered



LOBÉKÉ NATIONAL PARK 

## TOURIST NUMBERS UP BY 35 %

### 102 tourists in 2023

During the year 2023, 102 tourists visited the LNP to observe unhabituated gorillas and other wildlife. This represents 63 more tourists than in 2022 (39 tourists). Studies also show that the level of positive perception of the LNP by local and indigenous communities improved by more than 50%, an important indicator for community participation and the promotion of ecotourism.

The LNP also aims to continue promoting its ecotourism potential through the development of a marketing and communications programme supported by the production of promotional tools for dissemination and popularisation. In concrete terms, more than 10 participants were trained in the use of Photoshop and Illustrator software to improve the layout of documents, particularly the Lobéké Newsletter.

In terms of media coverage of 2023, several audio and video reports and articles on the LNP were broadcast on national channels (CRTV, Equinoxe, Cameroon Tribune and Mongabay). An article on the implementation of conservation bonuses was also published in Cameroon Fact Finder (<https://cameroonfactfinder.com/how-the-conservation-bonus-empowers-cameroon-communities-contributes-to-conservation/>).

The Conservation Department also took part in the Tourism Café organised in Bertoua to promote the tourism potential of the Lobéké National Park. This event provided an opportunity to promote tourism products to private tourism promoters and operators. In addition, 200 leaflets on the tourist potential of the LNP were produced and distributed to raise awareness among PACL and other local stakeholders of their rights, the values of protected areas and environmental and social laws and regulations.

### Identification and awareness-raising

The year 2023 also saw the continuation of mapping activities and the production of signage for the LNP's tourist sites and attractions. The equipment needed to produce the signs has been purchased and 90% of the signs produced have been displayed in the park.

An awareness-raising campaign for local stakeholders on ecotourism, incorporating the cross-border aspect, was also carried out in 2023. This initiative raised awareness among staff at three of the four border posts in Congo and CAR. In addition, at least four traditional and security authorities were met to encourage their support for a more concerted approach by all stakeholders. Partners in the development of ecotourism were also involved during this mission.

However, the project to rehabilitate and develop the Djembé reception and accommodation site has been postponed until 2024 due to the difficulty inaccessibility. The Bolo Djembe road has not been rehabilitated. It should be noted that rehabilitating the Bolo Djembe road would be an important infrastructural element in boosting ecotourism in the Lobéké National Park and facilitating access to our sites for tourists and visitors. This road, which links the park to other neighbouring TNS segments, is very important for cross-border collaboration and for ensuring the free movement of tourists within TNS.



DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS 

## 12% INCREASE IN TOURISM REVENUE

LAMBERT PADOU DEPUTY ECOTOURISM DEPARTMENT MANAGER

Ecotourism activity continued to grow since its resumption following the interruption of the covid-19 pandemic. In 2023 we recorded 513 visitors compared with 543 visitors in 2022, a reduction of 2%. (Of these visitors, 352 stayed at Doli Lodge). However, the tourist activities resulting from these visits enabled us to generate financial revenue of 410,667,962 FCFA (€681,731), an increase of 12% compared to the 327,739,901 FCFA generated in 2022.

In terms of breakdown, our tourists were made up of international visitors (85%), national tourists (6%), resident expatriates (5%), and nationals from the CEMAC zone (4%).

Despite several national and international socio-political upheavals, the DSPAs continued to be a popular destination for many holiday makers. A particular feature this year was the unprecedented arrival of young children as tourists for a full tourism stay. This trip enabled the young adventurers to enjoy our activities and interact with the children of Bayanga to share their cultural experiences. This confirms our site as a safe and suitable destination for tourists of all ages.

One of the objectives of the Ecotourism Department is to strengthen the collaboration between conservation and the communities bordering the APDS. Thanks to this collaboration, part of the financial income generated by our activities is allocated to the local communities to support efforts to conserve the ecological values associated with the APDS, create jobs for the population and improve the living conditions of households living in and around the APDS.

### Tourism promotions

The Dzanga Sangha as a renowned tourist destination was promoted in several international audiovisual productions in 2023. These include BBC documentary and TV series like BIG BEASTS, which was partly produced in Dzanga Sangha protected areas and premiered on networks like Apple TV+, Disney+ and the BBC in April 2023.

A team from the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) also stayed with us to make a documentary on conservation efforts through the fight against poaching in the Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas (APDS). In addition, the Wildstar TV Dzanga Sangha film crew also featured in a new documentary, Animals Up Close with Bertie Gregory (formerly Epic Adventures). The film has been available on Disney+ since September 13, 2023.

### Maintenance work

Our Ecotourism department also carried out several maintenance operations to make our tourist and hotel facilities more comfortable for our visitors.

Amongst these works, we have rehabilitated the deteriorated roof of the Tourist Welcome Centre with new roof tiles and strips. As for the Doli Lodge, the roofs of the 4 bungalows, the reception, the bar-restaurant, the kitchen and the commissary have all been renovated.



## HUMAN RIGHTS & CULTURE



LOBÉKÉ NATIONAL PARK 

### ASBABUK: ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The ASBABUK association was created on 15 September 2015 in Moloundou, to promote the rights and development of the indigenous peoples of the Boumba and Ngoko department. However, following the signing of the MINFOF agreement in 2019 and its renewal in 2023, the association is extending its activities to other protected areas in Cameroon with indigenous Baka populations. Today, ASBABUK works with 93 Baka communities living around the protected areas of Lobéké, Ngoyla, Nki and Boumba Bek. Our areas of activity are support for the promotion of human rights, education, health, culture and heritage of the indigenous Baka peoples.

#### An operational and functional complaints mechanism

In the event of human rights abuses, the communities inform ASBABUK first to facilitate conciliation. If the problem is minor (land grabbing by a Baka from a Bantu, etc.), the involvement of third-degree traditional authorities will be sought to find conciliatory solutions. Once the resolutions have been implemented, we contact the complainant to assess his or her level of satisfaction. If there is dissatisfaction, we will apply a second resolution, which is to involve the officials in charge of social services to find solutions.

In terms of promoting citizenship, with the support of the park, we engaged in procedures to make it easier to obtain birth certificates and national identity cards. We are also supporting community leaders and community relays to take a census of children without birth certificates, particularly in the districts of Moloundou and Salapoum-

bé. Our approach also involves approaching civil registrars to issue birth certificates during Youth Celebration Week. The case of adults requiring identification papers is a little more complicated, as they must travel to the Moloundou court to obtain a suppletive judgement. This requires the identification of 02 witnesses who will have to travel with the person concerned to Moloundou. We do not yet have funding for travel and accommodation for each case.

As far as schooling is concerned, ASBABUK is helping to facilitate access to quality education for Baka children. Its involvement makes it easier to establish birth certificates, an essential document for school enrolment. With the support of the conservation department, the association facilitates the identification and granting of scholarships for Baka pupils.

One of the NLP's objectives for 2023 was to organise a session to strengthen the organisational and technical capacity of ASBABUK and its delegates to implement, monitor and report on the progress of the parties' commitments under the MoU. ASBABUK's executive board was elected with Bibi Johson as president and its sphere of influence extended to cover the entire Western region. The support of the NGO RACOPY also facilitated the identification of roles and the drafting of internal regulations, which were then adopted by all the members of the ASBABUK executive board.

The park, with financial support from FTNS, also provided equipment to facilitate the operational deployment of ASBABUK as part of the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the progress of the parties' commitments

under the MoU. Specifically, two motorbikes and two laptops were purchased to help the association disseminate the new MINFOF ASBABUK MoU.

An annual session of the consultation body at NIP level to ensure implementation of the MoU was also organised in 2023. Several recommendations were made at the meet-

ing, in particular concerning support for the BAKA-BANTOUS communities in acquiring birth certificates and national identity cards, and the search for other sources of funding for the implementation of ASBABUK activities (ASBABUK and the setting up of an archiving system for ASBABUK documents).

### THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMEROON ONCE AGAIN UNDERTAKES TO GUARANTEE BAKA COMMUNITIES ACCESS TO PROTECTED AREAS

Commonly referred to as "the people of the forest", the Baka are a group of nomadic hunter-gatherers living in forest camps. They live mainly from hunting, gathering, and fishing, and their mobility depends on the availability of natural resources in their territory. With the introduction of protected areas, regulated access to forests for these indigenous peoples has become a major problem. It was against this backdrop that the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Baka association "Sanguia Baka Buma'a Kpode" (ASBABUK) renewed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 20 September in Bertoua to establish the terms and conditions for regulating their access to the forests.

Unlike the first MoU, this second signature extends to the Baka of the Ngoyla wildlife reserve and surrounding area. Through this signature, MINFOF and ASBABUK undertake to work together to facilitate regulated access by the Baka to the forests to promote their ancestral rights in terms of biodiversity conservation and the exercise of traditional activities in their resource areas.

The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the access rights of Baka communities to the Lobéké and Nki national parks, the Ngoyla

wildlife reserve and their surroundings was crowned by the signing and exchange of initials between the Minister of Forests and Wildlife, H.E. Jules Doret Ndongo and the President of ASBABUK, Mr Bibi Joseph. The historic exchange was marked by cheers from the Baka people and the authorities present.

"We would like to thank FTNS and the German cooperation agency for supporting us in this process. We hope that they will continue to mobilise funds and provide technical support to ASBABUK for the implementation of the MoU," said Mr Johnson Bibi, President of ASBABUK.

Present at the signing were the Governor of the Eastern Region, the President of the Eastern Regional Council, the Mayor of the city of Bertoua, the Prefect of the Lom-et-Djérem department, and many other representatives of administrative and diplomatic bodies. The atmosphere was also marked by several cultural events, notably those of the Baka people, who made no attempt to hide their joy at this signing, which once again ensures them access to the forests to carry out their social and cultural activities.



## THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUES

LIMBAYA MICHELIN DIRECTOR OF THE BAYANGA HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



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## VERY SOON, A GRIEVANCE MECHANISM IN BOMASSA



© FTNS

Access to justice is an important pillar of the Bayanga Human Rights Centre's legal and judicial assistance activities. More specifically, we support communities through the payment of legal fees and the preparation of the required files. Next year, we plan to step up this work with local communities, particularly the Baka.

In 2023, the centre helped to handle more than 278 cases of complaints brought to their attention. Other cases are still before the Nola High Court and the Boa Criminal Court.

We have also carried out awareness-raising campaigns to change people's minds about human rights violations in their localities. This was done through awareness-raising campaigns in villages and local communities. We also produced and took part in radio programmes on various human rights issues. One of the changes we have observed today is that members of the minority Baka community are now able to earn respect, knowing that they can lodge a complaint if they are insulted. This was made possible thanks to training courses organised to make them aware of their rights.

We have also observed a change in behaviour, with women now coming to the centre more regularly to report cases of abuse (particularly abandonment and physical violence). In these cases, we regularly (depending on the seriousness of the offences) initiate conciliation procedures between the parties concerned.

Our efforts regularly result in the perpetrator signing an undertaking. In the event of non-compliance with the agreement, the centre will take legal action to bring the person responsible to justice.

This procedure also applies to cases of home abandonment. In such cases, we get the accused to acknowledge their faults and sign a commitment to take care of the abandoned children. We also set up a platform that allows them to pay money monthly to the centre for the care of the abandoned family. The money is given to the abandoned spouse or partner at the end of each month.

The human-elephant conflict is one of our greatest challenges. Elephants and other animals continue to devastate the plantations of local populations, causing huge losses, yet the law does not yet provide regulations to settle this perpetual conflict. We are considering a few solutions to resolve this problem fairly. One of the solutions we are considering is a seed bank as a compensation system. This mechanism should enable us to assess and compensate farmers who have suffered damage from elephants and others. This approach could help to ease tensions within the community.

FTNS funding has been crucial to the implementation of our activities in Bayanga, but more funds are required to achieve more results. For example, we would like to have such a large facility to accommodate our growing staff and the people who constantly come to the centre to complain.

Since its creation, the NNNP has implemented several actions to promote respect for gender and minorities in community activities. The PMU has continued to support four community groups: the Bomassa Community Women's Group, the Bomassa Fishing Association, the Bomassa Hunting Association and Lih Ngolio, an indigenous and Bantu cultural group. The PMU and the community development team provide governance support with ongoing dialogue to address the challenges faced by the communities.

In terms of promoting citizenship, 96 birth certificates have been issued and distributed to indigenous people in the Bomassa community. Collaboration is underway with the Dongou sub-prefecture and the Likouala authorities to ensure that the Bomassa communities also benefit. Meetings have been held with the local authorities in Makao to guarantee government support, as well as free access and compliance with procedures as stipulated by national law. An information-gathering campaign was also organised in October and November, to collect information on late birth declarations by indigenous people in Bomassa and Makao. Around 480 indigenous people from Bomassa and Makao and 300 others registered under this scheme.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was celebrated in Linganga-Makao under the theme "The Games of the World's Indigenous Peoples". This gathering of around 200 people, including the chiefs of Makao and Bomassa, provided an opportunity to raise awareness among the local population of the rights of indigenous populations, in accordance with law no. 5-2011 of 25 February 2011 in Congo.

In terms of cross-border collaboration, a cultural exchange visit was organised with the Ndima Kali association, based in DSPAs (Bayanga) in the CAR. This activity enabled cultural exchanges with the indigenous asso-

ciations Iyelé-Omba from Kabo and Lih Ngolio from Bomassa. The exchange was enlivened by a talk-debate centred on crucial subjects such as indigeness and its challenges, including acculturation, identity, indigenous rights, access to education and social services, and the risks associated with alcoholism. In addition, an exhibition of cultural objects and a demonstration of traditional dances were held at this gathering of over 350 people.

Indigenous people of the region were made aware of the importance of education and obtaining an identity document. Some 65 children are currently enrolled, and other parents have pledged to enroll their children in the school. Over 51 participants attended the meeting.

Two meetings were held in the Djeke triangle with local communities and indigenous people to discuss the operation of the designated community use area. In addition, discussions on the demarcation of the Triangle community zone were launched. The communities want to be involved in the management and security of the area, and proposals have been made to monitor the area to ensure that the rules are respected. A total of 79 people attended the two meetings. In December, the Community Development team (DevCo) launched a mission to physically demarcate the Djeke triangle community use zone. The mission, led by the DevCo team, included ten members of the Bomassa community, comprising of five women (four Indigenous and one Bantu) and five indigenous men. The objective of the mission was to identify and demarcate the community use area in the Djeke triangle. By the end of the mission, the demarcation line had been fully materialised on the ground, extending from the bordering layon to its junction with the Djeke stream.

As a follow-up to the community consultations and baseline research, WCS's Safeguarding and Gender Advisor conducted an outreach mission to launch the MRG. The advisor introduced the MRG to key stakeholders, includ-

### SOME KEY RESULTS IN 2023



**278**  
cases of complaints reported



**48**  
radio programmes produced



**79**  
educational talks conducted



**12**  
Mass awareness campaign



**128**  
routine missions



**114**  
conciliations initiated

ing local communities and indigenous peoples (CLPAs), how grievances could be submitted, and how grievances would be handled. The communities and WCS discussed the MRG and selected community focal points to support implementation.

In the second half of the year, the park helped the villages

of Bomassa and Makao to organise meetings and elections to select community focal points. These focal points will help the communities to submit grievances to the PMU and discuss them. Three community focal points are elected per village and must include at least one woman and one indigenous person.

## BIOMONITORING AND RESEARCH



### LNP EMBRACES ACOUSTIC MONITORING.

Biomonitoring in LNP was quite rich 2023. Among our main achievements, we succeeded in carrying out a pilot study of installing camera traps alongside with acoustic monitoring units at Ngoa and Njembe. This is very important because it enabled us to monitor the behaviour of the wildlife, especially the elephants, the gorillas, the chimpanzees, the buffaloes, and little monkeys. Our teams were able to obtain very good results, notably image capture of a rare albino chimpanzee in the wild (the first time in Central Africa inside the forest). Added to that, we were equally able to have some photographs of chimpanzees feeding their little ones, juveniles or infants with fruits, information which demonstrated more on behavioural ecology in great apes.

Added to that, we also started analysing the data on poaching activities that are being carried out using firearms. Based on gunshots recorded around Njembe and Ngoa, we were able to discover that about 85 percent of gunshots recorded were fired at nighttime, compared to about 14 percent fired during daytime. This provided the conservation service with a lot of information for the planning and deployment of their anti-poaching activities. We also trained eco-guards on how to use camera traps and acoustic monitoring units to monitor wildlife and human presence within the national park. In addition to that, we also trained eco-guards on how to collect data in the forest through android phones with SMART tool installed. Based on the data analysed in 2023, we realized that our patrols were able to perform a ratio coverage of 60 percent of grid cells per kilometre in the national park. This is the first time such as a scope has been covered by the park since its creation.

The acoustic monitoring unit operates by installing equipment to record sound produced by gunshots. The

data recorded is saved in a memory which is later picked, downloaded, and analysed by the acoustic monitoring units in the office. Based on algorithms, each sound has its own range of emitting signals (gunshots, elephants) provides us the data that we need.

#### Importance of FTNS funds

FTNS is the major donor of Lobéké National Park. Its funds have enabled us to carry out several community engagements, community livelihoods, park protection, trans-boundary co-operation activities, among others.

Since 2019, its funds have been very instrumental for the implementation of the activities in the absence of other donors. They also helped establish a complaint mechanism for indigenous people around the vicinity of the Lobéké National Park.

Of recent, we've started implementing the conservation bonus (a fixed amount that is given out to a community on recognition of the conservation activities such as assisting the park in doing biomonitoring assisting the park in probably installing the camera traps installing the acoustic monitoring unit participating in park activities that conservation bonus recognizes that and in fact it has done a really great job because the communities now directly receive the benefits of the national park

In 2024 we plan to set up the elephant listening project through the installation of acoustic monitoring units at Njembe and Ngoa sites for an indefinite period. They will only require that the biomonitoring team with eco-guards change the memory cards and the batteries to make sure they are functioning. The results obtained will be compared with that of the elephant listening project in Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas at Bayanga



NOUABALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK 

## KINGO, THE FIRST HABITUATED GORILLA IS GONE!

### Farewell Kingo!

The year 2023 witnessed the natural death of Kingo, the first habituated western lowland gorilla in the park. He left behind a legacy of over 30 years and invaluable information about his species and enriched scientific understanding of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park's intact forest ecosystem and other key species, inspiring a generation of scientists and conservationists.

In terms of cross-border cooperation, the NNNP continued to work with partners in other parts of the TNS and across the Congo. Within this framework, two Mondika trackers were sent to the Ngaga research site in the Odzala Koko National Park in Congo. Thanks to this initiative, the trackers were able to observe how gorilla research and trekking are conducted with partners there. The close collaboration with Dzanga Bai colleagues in DSPAs was consolidated in 2023 through the hosting of their team for a visit to Mbeli Ba. This also enabled discussions on exchanging joint research opportunities, including potential research collaboration with the ELP team and bio-acoustic monitoring.

Training sessions were organised by the OneHealth team for the PNNN research teams, to build the capacity of Congolese researchers to monitor the region for possible epidemics. In a total, seven awareness-raising missions were organised, reaching around 988 people in northern Congo. Work to monitor animal populations and strengthen community information networks is making a major contribution to preparing for a possible pandemic in the Congo. The programme's activities involve monitoring the health of animal populations by developing diagnostic capacity, setting up protocols for action in the event of respiratory epidemics and carcass surveillance networks, and vaccinating FNN employees in contact with habituated gorillas. In 2023, the Unit recorded: 03 carcasses sampled; 4045 gorilla health scans; 1270 chimpanzee health scans; 914 samples collected and 988 people sensitised.

### Completion of fieldwork and data collection for the Ndoki-Likouala landscape inventory

One of our major achievements was the completion of the fieldwork and data collection for the fourth iteration of the Ndoki-Likouala landscape survey. It is important to note that despite the unseasonal flooding, the teams managed to implement the survey by introducing new techniques, notably the use of camera traps. Initial results indicate that populations of key species have remained stable overall in the park. Full analysis and publication of the results will continue in 2024 and 2025. It is important to note that researchers and trackers covered an area of 34,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

### Numerous publications and articles

Several of our scientific results have been published through several international platforms in which our research teams have participated. One of the key events was the presentation of work on the conservation of chimpanzee culture in the Congo rainforest by Goulougo researchers at the International Congress of Conservation Biology in Kigali. In total, the park achieved 08 collaborations and 11 publications in 2023.

A publication on the habituation process of western lowland gorillas was also released. The article provides detailed scientific methods on the habituation of the Metetele group. The results will help other sites to refine and develop their own habituation processes.

Park research staff have also conducted several training workshops for researchers from NNNP, other parks in Congo, and more widely for researchers and conservationists in Central Africa. These included two training workshops on passive acoustic monitoring methods and data analysis, as well as a training workshop on line transects and camera trap data and analysis for analysing the results of the Ndoki-Likouala inventory.

Several bachelor's and master's students spent time in

the NNNP and its sites to carry out their academic work. During the year, six interns worked with the ELP, CHE, SWM, Mbeli and Goulougo teams. Internship projects included developing communication materials to raise awareness of human-elephant conflict, developing an elephant body score index and learning how to monitor great apes in the field.

In addition, the research team benefited from eight ongoing collaborations and two research agreements on phenological data and DNA samples. Collaborations include studies on crop-raiding factors by elephants, collaboration between PNNN and the Her Institute One Health laboratory, GTAP, Bai monitoring methods, and a study on African small cats.

In February, a team of entomological researchers from the African Natural History Research Trust (ANHRT) carried out a data collection mission to study seasonality and collect wider insect species. During this visit, the

team was able to identify a new species of moth, which they named after the Mondika site where it was found. Since ANHRT began its entomological studies in PNNN, 7 articles have been published (5 in 2023) and others are still in preparation. This means that 21 new species have already been described: 14 lepidopterans, 1 diptera and 6 orthopterans.

The park is also developing collaboration with One Health research institutions, which will support ongoing research projects linked to the health of the great apes at Mbeli, Mondika and Goulougo.

Steps have also been taken to purchase materials to renovate the centre. In 2024, the research team will work closely with avian experts to modernise the rehabilitation centre, ensuring that the animals receive the best care and that the habitats are improved.



DZANGA SANGHA PROTECTED AREAS 

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## THE QUEST FOR NEW HABITUATED GORILLA GROUPS

FREDERICK SIGHALA HEAD OF BIOMONITORING AND ONE HEALTH

In 2023, we made several achievements in the area of research, monitoring and forest management department, particularly in the primate habituation programme. It is important to note that in 2022 we lost two groups of habituated gorillas, which disintegrated following the death of their silverbacks. As a replacement, in 2023 we set about identifying new groups that we are in the process of habituating to the presence of humans. One of the positive points is the discovery of some silverbacks already accustomed to human presence, a favourable factor for the habituation process.

In terms of capacity building, additional trackers and guides were also recruited to facilitate this process. We also received a new vehicle to make it easier for us to travel to the habituation sites, which are generally a considerable distance away. As far as monitoring the clearings is concerned, we were unable to monitor certain clearings due to a lack of staff.

However, we have continued to work with our partner, Elephant Listening Project, to monitor our largest clearing, Dzanga Bai. In terms of improvements, we can now carry out ecological monitoring at night thanks to the acquisition of thermal cameras, which was previously impossible. We also undertook new environmental education and immersion activities, which involve taking young children to visit the glades. Some of them could spend a week there to learn about the field of research and related occupations. Through this, we hope to develop the interest of the future generation of the community in conservation.

In terms of forest management, we made two working visits to the forestry companies located in the reserve, particularly STBCA. We noted improvements, particularly in terms of efforts to comply with certain standards. But we note that there is still progress to be made, particularly in terms of reducing the pressure on wildlife from the local people who live very close to this forestry company. Joint anti-poaching initiatives in its concessions, with the collaboration of the APDS, are in the pipeline.

### Data collection on the use of clearings

Apart from the monitoring of the Dzanga clearing, the clearings were not monitored on a continuous basis, except for part of the year when we welcomed an intern from the Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural (ISDR) at the University of Bangui for an internship. This student was interested in wildlife use of the clearings and cameras were redeployed during his internship in the salt pans in the Dzanga sector.

In 2023, the 21 elephants wearing collars were regularly monitored. However, at the end of the year, we lost track of many of the collars and we wrote to the company to find out why, but tilldate, we have not received a concrete response. We however continue to track 9 elephants with collars.

## INFRASTRUCTURES



NOUABALE-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK 

© FTNS / WATSON EUSTACHE

## A NEW FOOTBALL STADIUM FOR THE PEOPLE OF BAYANGA

Weekends and late evenings now have a new look in Bayanga. This is thanks to the new regularly packed stadium in the town, which is the venue for peaceful clashes between football fans.

The stadium was built following an exceptional visit by a German development cooperation delegation in 2015. During this incursion, the previous BMZ Minister and current Director General of UNIDO (the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation), Mr Gerd Muller, made a promise of a stadium to the local population of this small village located on the border of CAR. To follow up on this decision, a series of actions were launched to build this structure to promote social activity and sport in the village of Bayanga and the surrounding area.

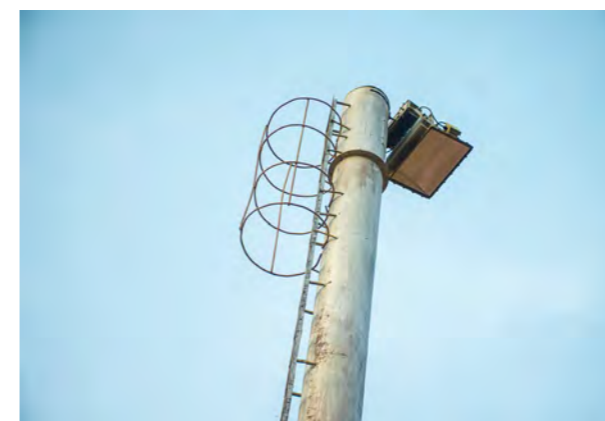
With this in mind, the Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas, with FTNS's technical and financial support, initiated construction work on this long-awaited building in 2018. The objective was to level the surface and build the stadium and its stands. As the icing on the cake, a rural electrification system and floodlights have also been installed to ensure games can be played in the dark.

### Promise made, promise kept...

After several months of work, this facility, which is now the pride of the Bayanga municipality, the Sangha Baéré department and the TNS in general, has finally been handed over. The people of Bayanga are hoping to see an increase in sporting activity in their area, the staging of several championships, and why not, the growth of a future 'Ballon d'Or'.

Work carried out with the financial support of the German cooperation and the technical coordination of the FTNS and the Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas (DSPAs) has enabled the stadium surface to be laid out and the stands to be built.

The icing on the cake was the installation of a solar electrification system and floodlights to ensure that the games could go on for longer periods and to guarantee safety in the evenings.



Flood lights panels



Solar electrification system



You too can contribute  
to our mission

#SupportTNS

## OBJECTIVE 100 MILLIONS € TO SAFEGUARD TNS!

With over 15 years' experience (2007-2019), FTNS provides an average annual financial support of around € 2 million to TNS parks (from endowment and sinking funds). However, this represents only a third of the budgets of the three parks, which face a number of growing threats (poaching, gradual demographic pressure, etc.).

For this reason, FTNS aims to increase its investment capital from €62 to €100 million. This should enable the trust fund to generate annual revenues capable of covering most of the operating needs of the Sangha Tri-national (TNS) parks.

Contributing to TNS capital means helping to sustainably preserve TNS, one of the Congo Basin's priority ecoregions, the world's second largest green lung.



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