



Background

Found within the “Northwest Congolian Lowland Forest”, Dzanga-Sangha is situated in the southwestern corner of Central African Republic. Long recognized for its outstanding biodiversity and exceptional regional and international importance, the area is characterized by its numerous forest clearings, locally termed “bais”, harbouring mineral-rich soils.

In 1981 the Central African government acknowledged Dzanga-Sangha’s uniqueness by formally controlling hunting in the area and creating a sanctuary for elephants and bongo. Since 1984 numerous scientific studies have confirmed the high abundance of wildlife in the region, including endangered: forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), bongo (*Tragelaphus e. euryceros*), forest buffalo (*Syncerus caffer nanus*), western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla g. gorilla*), and chimpanzee (*Pan t. troglodytes*).

The complex is also home to BaAka-Pygmy forest hunter-gatherers (approximately one third of the Reserve’s population - still true?), and Sangha-Sangha fishermen. In 1988, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), in collaboration with the Central African Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, and Fishing, responsible for the environment. (MEFCPE) initiated the Dzanga-Sangha Project (DSP). By December 19, 1990, the multiple-use Dzanga-Sangha Special Dense Forest Reserve (3159 km²), and the strictly-protected Dzanga-Ndoki National Park (divided into the Dzanga [495 km²], and Ndoki [727 km²] sectors), were officially established.

In 1993, the capacity of the DSP was greatly increased by the arrival of GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, previously subcontracted to LUSO consult, and presently, to GFA consultancy group), allowing the incorporation of sustainable development initiatives.

In total the complex protects nearly 4,500 km² of intact moist tropical forest: the Dzanga-Ndoki NP meeting the traditional criteria for national park classification; and the Dzanga-Sangha Special Dense Forest Reserve allowing controlled human activities (such as fishing, gathering, subsistence and sports hunting, and logging). In 2007, the Dzanga-Sangha Project, its long-term durability proven, was renamed Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (DSPA).



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gtz



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DZANGA SANGHA
Central African Republic

Protected Areas



Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas: Principal Activities

In accordance with Agenda 21 and the Biodiversity Convention, and more recently the Millennium Goals, the DSPA's approach has always been based on conservation and sustainable management of its faunal and floral biodiversity. In this manner, its objectives aim to achieve a balance between the preservation of certain natural resources, in particular those that are increasingly rare not only regionally but also globally, and the livelihood of the local population.

DSPA financial assistance comes from an array of sources, in particular from WWF, the German and the Central African government, but also various institutional and private donors. These funds have allowed the DSPA to establish an adequate infrastructure and administration, and substantially expand its activities. In 2008, the DSPA employs close to 200 staff, a third of which are skilled BaAka forest people mostly employed as trackers in anti-poaching and gorilla-tracking activities.

Conservation (WWF)

From its beginning the DSPA has emphasized conservation activities such as ecological monitoring, as well as controlling illegal hunting and forest exploitation, the latter two defined by Central African governmental texts and laws.

Rural development (GTZ)

The rural development sector of the DSPA emphasizes the integration of the local population into the management of the special reserve. It concentrates in particular on activities like agro-forestry, livestock rearing, environmental education, as well as support to pre-school education and public health service and clean water.

Ecotourism

In the past decade, the DSPA has successfully developed its eco-tourism programme, raising substantial revenue for conservation, and making available 40% of all park entry fees to the local community. Today Dzanga-Sangha offers a wealth of tourist activities including: visiting the forest elephants at the world-famous Dzanga bai; enjoying the unique experience of observing habituated western lowland gorillas in the wild; participation in traditional net-hunting with the BaAka; and canoe trips on the magnificent Sangha river.

Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas: central to the Tri-National Sangha River complex

Today, DSPA represent the central part of the Tri-National Sangha River complex (TNS). Together with the Lobeke (Cameroon) and Nouabale-Ndoki National Parks (Republic of Congo) and their respective buffer zones, the TNS forms an extensive trans-border conservation initiative, covering 21.000 km². This collaboration aims to build stronger landscape-

based conservation efforts among the three countries like cross boarder anti-poaching patrols. It provides one of the last remaining wildlife refuges for such species as the forest elephant and western lowland gorilla. In 2007, the TNS was listed as a potential World Heritage Site.

The three protected areas are aided by the financial support of WWF and the German Government in Central African Republic and Cameroon, as well as WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) in Republic of Congo. In addition a TNS-Trust Fund has been established to safeguard the long-term financial security of the region. The starting point for this trustfund was the establishment of the Rainforest Foundation by WWF and the German brewery Krombacher in 2003 to finance the conservation work in the Dzanga-Sangha part.



Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas: A Successful Collaboration

In order to attain its goals of integrating nature conservation and sustainable development, the active participation of the local population is crucial. The DSPA is now working towards the close collaboration of the Central African government, foreign financial and technical assistance, and the local population, all within the framework of the