



**Towards a participative, inclusive and sustainable management of the forest landscape complex of Outamba-Kilimi (Sierra Leone), Kuru Hills (Sierra Leone) and Pinselli-Soya (Guinea) – PAP4 OKKPS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Field Research Mission – Preliminary report  
Summary of human activity findings within the Outamba NP**



<b>Reference</b>	<b>PAPFor grant contract FED/2021/ 423-977</b>
<b>Date</b>	From 31 January to 2 March (total days = 31)
<b>Activity in the logical framework</b>	A.1.1.1. Prepare, implement and monitor a systematic inventory of targeted species for baselines;
<b>Funder</b>	European Union
<b>Location</b>	Outamba
<b>Reference Mission</b>	OKKPS_TCS_01

## **Summary**

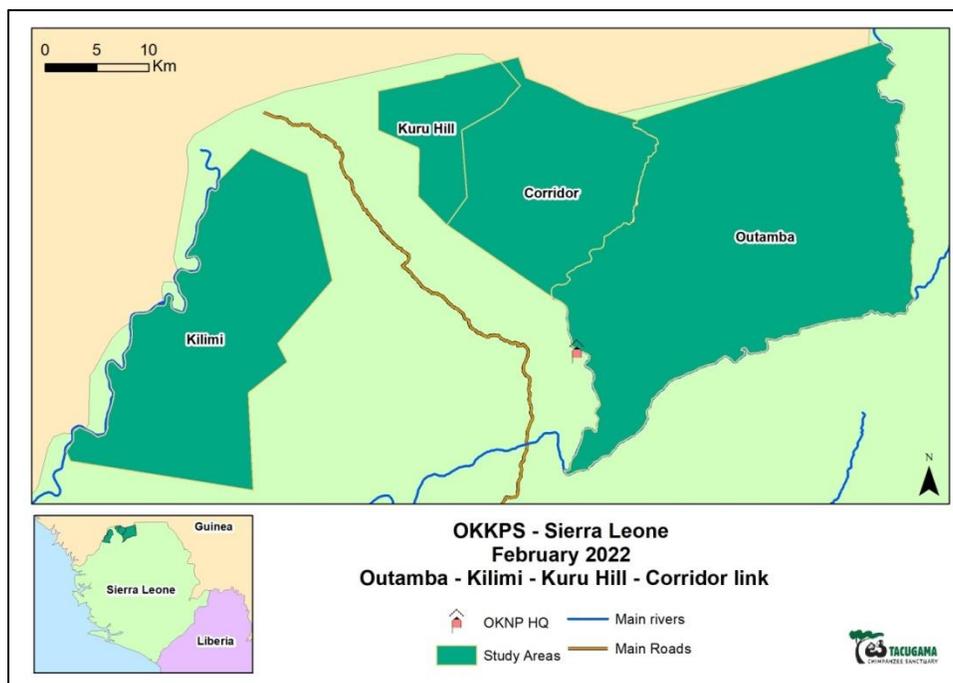
During the month of February, staff of Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (TCS) travelled to the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) Headquarters in Outamba to carry out the selection of the community bio-monitors, to attend the training, and to conduct the 1<sup>st</sup> survey field mission. After the training, the TCS team embarked on the first part of the camera trap and line transect survey with the newly recruited bio-monitors and selected rangers from the NPAA. During the survey, the teams encountered concerning amounts of rosewood logs across the surveyed area waiting to be transported outside the NP. We considered that the current deforestation rate is alarming and requires careful consideration and exposure to the authorities before continuing with the implementation of further project activities.

## **Context**

The PAP4 OKKPS project covers several areas on the southern site of Guinea and the northern site of Sierra Leone. In SL, the study area covers the Outamba section of the OKNP, the northern section of the Kuru hills and the corridor between the Kuru hill and the Outamba section of the National park comprising a total of 1,137 km<sup>2</sup>. The Kilimi section (413 km<sup>2</sup>) of the OKNP will be surveyed later in the year (Map 1).

## **Objective**

The goal of this biodiversity study is to obtain density estimates of key protected species such as the chimpanzees and elephants. Our results will be compared to the results obtained during the SL 2010 national chimpanzee census and therefore allow an assessment of the park protection measures over the last decade. The aim of this preliminary report is to summarise the human activity findings encountered during this first mission that are not supposed to occur within the national park.

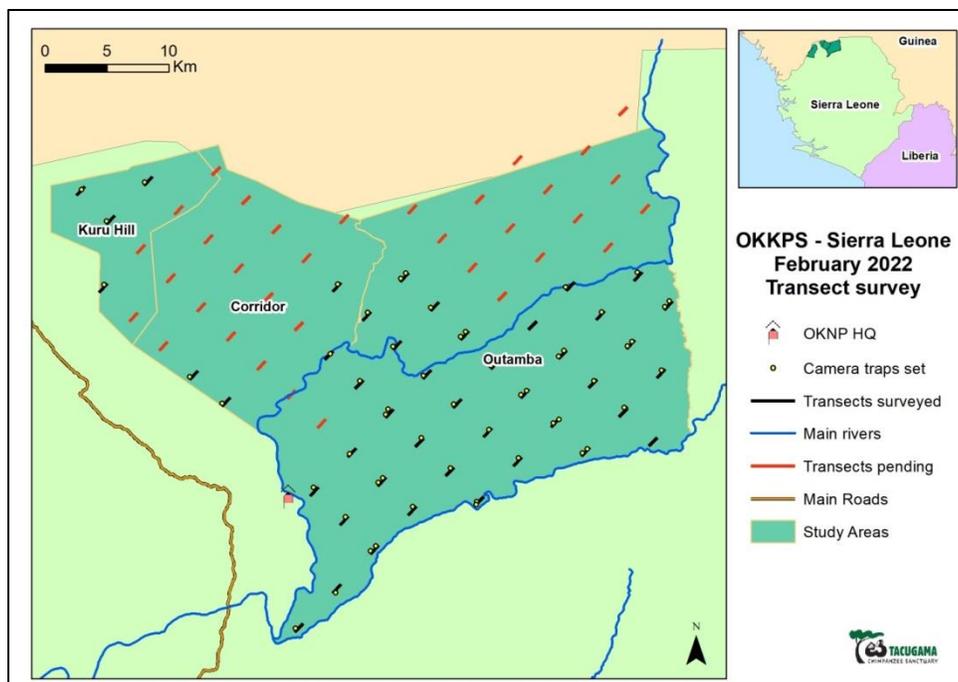


Map 1: Overview of the study areas planned to be surveyed in Sierra Leone: Outamba and Kilimi National Park, Kuru hill and the link connecting both parts.

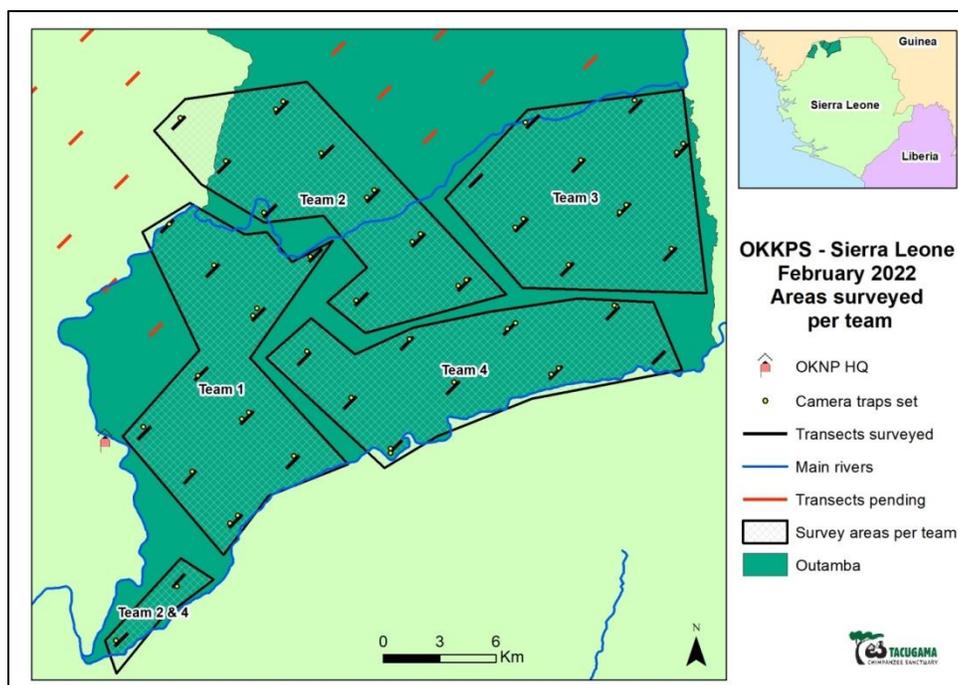
## Methods

The biodiversity survey is designed to collect data on direct and indirect observations of animals and human activities using the method of linear transects systematically placed across the study area. There are 79 transects of 1-km length separated 3.3 km from each other. A maximum of two camera traps will be set 150 m away from the transect line and at least 500 m between cameras on the same transect line. Cameras will be left operating between 9 to 12 weeks. Due to the limited number of camera traps (59) the survey will be carried out in several missions lasting from February to August 2022.

The first field survey mission was from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> February. We deployed four field teams. Each team consisted of one TCS team leader, three bio-monitors, one NPPA ranger. Cooks and porters were also hired with each team to assist with cooking and transportation of the camping equipment in the field. During this first mission we surveyed 45 transects and set 57 camera traps.



Map 2: Transect design across the study area. The map shows transects already surveyed and camera traps set during the first mission in February 2022.

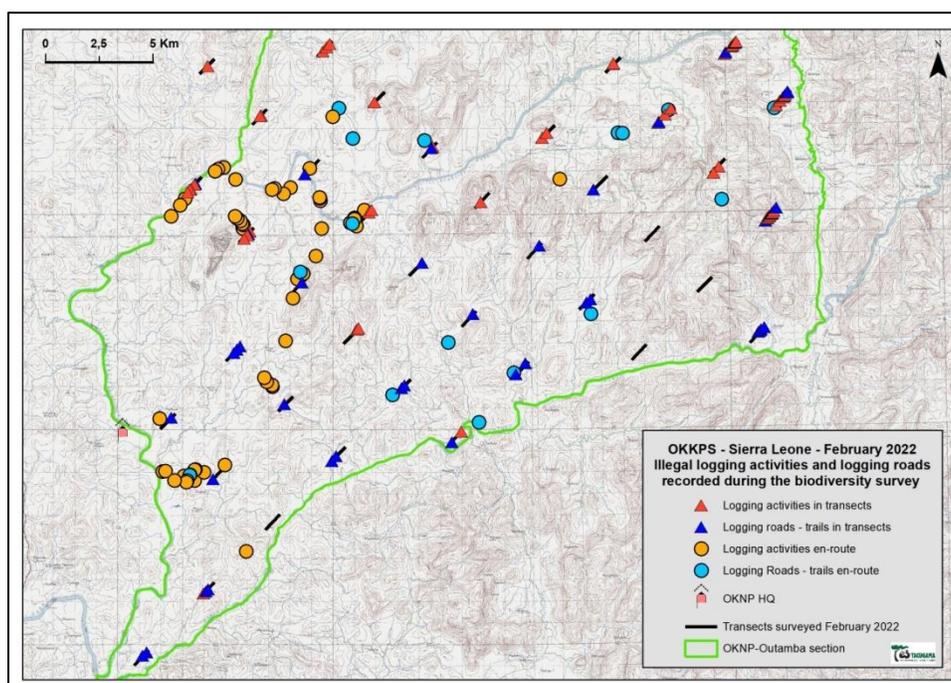


Map 3: Areas surveyed per team inside the Outamba section of the national park during the first mission.

## Results

The field work involves collection of transect data and occasional en-route findings, however, the main researcher leading team 1 realized of the large amounts of timber logs of African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) lying across the park and after two days her team started also to record each site with logs. Due to the impossibility to contact the other teams, they were not informed about collecting en-route data of logs. Therefore the en-route findings shown in this first survey, that is not transect data, have been mostly collected in the area covered by team 1 (Map 3).

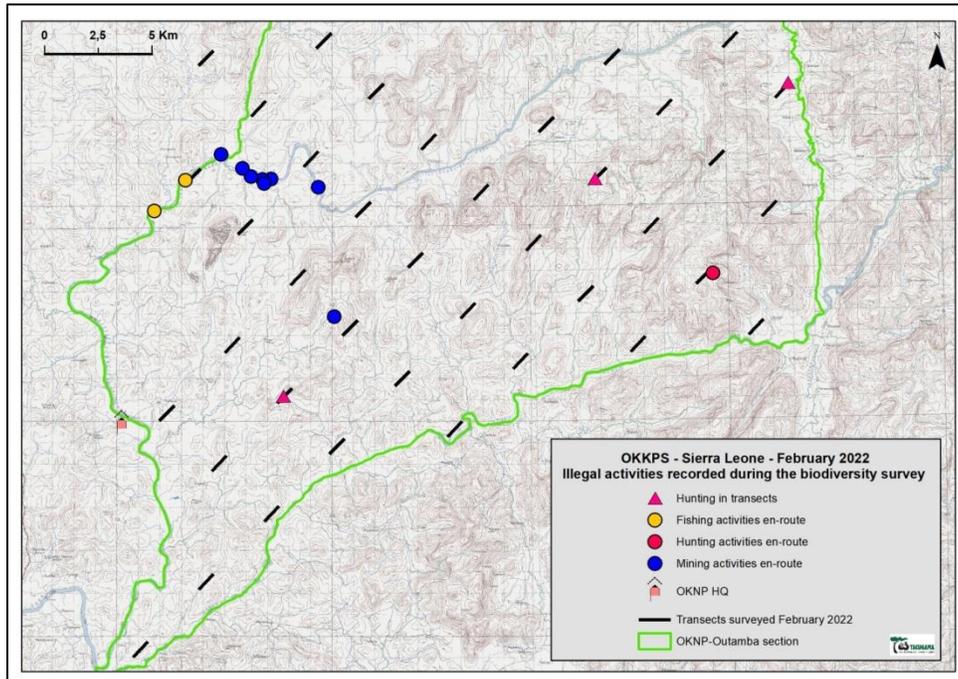
The area surveyed has many car roads due to the activity of loggers. The logs are harvested and packed along these roads awaiting for the end of the dry season when the river are at its lowest so the logging cars can access the park to remove the logs and transport them to larger trucks. Logs, abandoned timber cars and logging camps were encountered all over the area surveyed. Most of the logs are left in the field until further collection and are painted with the names of the main loggers. Logs were recorded in 19 transects of the 45 surveyed, that is 42% of the transects surveyed (Map 4).



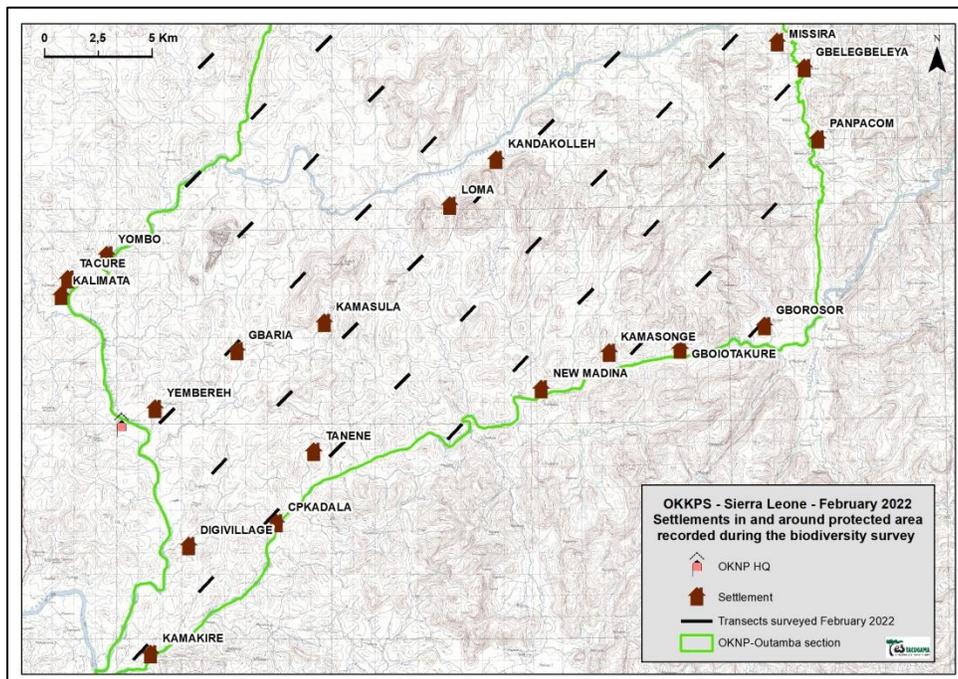
Map 4: Logs, logging camps, logging roads recorded on the transects (all teams) and en-route (Team 1).

Other illegal activities recorded include five mining camps along the northern side of the Kabah River as well as three gold dredge machines and two fishing camps (Map 5). Team 3 encountered two hunters with

shotguns on the eastern side of the Outamba section. We also recorded human settlements inside the park some of which were not present a decade ago (Map 6).



Map 5: Fishing and hunting activities were also recorded acting inside the park boundaries



Map 6: Human settlements recorded during the survey inside and on the buffer areas around the park

## Conclusion

*Pterocarpus erinaceus* is a rosewood species native to the semi-arid Sudan-Guinea savanna forests of West Africa. The last few years have seen a dramatic increase in trade of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* timber, in response to rising demand in Asia for rosewood furniture. Unless rapidly checked, unsustainable exploitation of the species for international trade is therefore likely to have serious negative impacts on the environment and human population of the West African savanna.

In March 2022, and after our first survey mission, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) announced a policy change in relation to mass logging inside the Park. Prior to the policy change, considerable timber logging had already occurred inside the Park. However, there was a ban on its transport. On 6th March GoSL approved the removal of all timber from the National Park. Despite GoSL stating that monitoring would be in-place and loggers can only remove timber that has already been logged, our understanding is that all timber-groups have been reunited with their machinery suggesting that further logging will indeed take place.



Logs found at various locations across the Outamba Park during biodiversity survey.



Logs are marked with the names of the loggers. Logging trails and roads are found across the whole study area. Logs are piled near the roads to be transported outside the park during the dry season.



Other illegal activities recorded in the park: fishing camps, drench machines, traps in a hunting camp, bushmeat bag left by a hunter who fled when seeing the survey team.