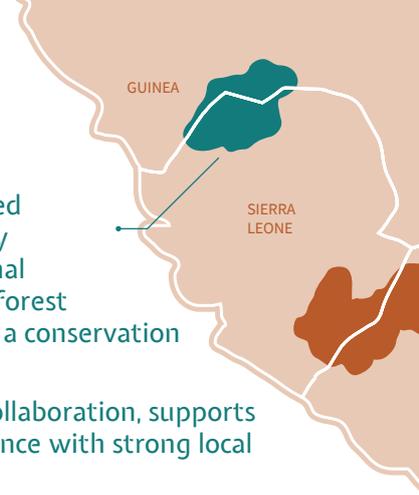




# OUTAMBA KILIMI KURU HILLS PINSELLI SOYAH (OKKPS)

The OKKPS landscape in Guinea and Sierra Leone is comprised of a wide variety of habitats; from dense rainforest to grassy savannahs, and montane grasslands, spread over an altitudinal gradient of 61 to 1134 m. The confirmed presence of African forest elephants and high densities of chimpanzees make this area a conservation priority for the subregion.

PAPFor, in support of Protected Areas and transboundary collaboration, supports government agencies in improving natural resource governance with strong local community involvement.



## Legend

- Watercourse
- Main road
- International border
- Administrative boundary

## Conservation areas

- OKKPS PAPFor Landscape
- National Park/ Classified Forest
- Nature Reserve
- Proposed Protected Area

## Aires protégées

GUI	Pinselli Classified Forest	Classified Forest	120 km <sup>2</sup>
GUI	Soyah Classified Forest	Classified Forest	72,23 km <sup>2</sup>
GUI	Sabouyah Reserve	Reserve without legal status	250 km <sup>2</sup>
SL	Outamba National Park	National Park	738,15 km <sup>2</sup>
SL	Kilimi National Park	National Park	388,5 km <sup>2</sup>
SL	Kuru hills reserves	Forest Reserve	69,93 km <sup>2</sup>

## Main habitats

- Dense humid forests (1150km<sup>2</sup>)
- Open forest (772 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Shrubby savannahs (616 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Grassy savannahs (111 km<sup>2</sup>)

## Main threats

- Illegal logging
- Slash and burn agriculture
- Poaching
- Bushfires
- Mining

## Conservation targets

- The 50 species of mammals, including two critically endangered species (CR): the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) and the African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*); and two endangered species (EN): the giant ground pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*) and the white-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*). Seven species are classified as vulnerable (VU): the African golden cat, leopard, Bourlon's genet, black-bellied pangolin, sooty mangabey, and hippopotamus.
- Gallery forests and periodically flooded lowland areas that provide refuges for African forest elephants.



## PAPFor Programme

**Project start date:** June 2021

**Project end date:** April 2024

Initiative of the WAEMU and ECOWAS Commissions funded by the 11th European Development Fund for support to conservation landscapes in West Africa.

## Implementation

The PAPFor programme in the OKKPS Landscape is implemented by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (TCS), with field teams based in Mamou and Soyah in Guinea, and Outamba in Sierra Leone.

## Partners

**OGPRF (Office Guinéen des Parcs nationaux et Réserves de Faune) :** Management of the national network of three national parks and about twenty reserves and classified forests in Guinea

**AGEE (Guinean Agency for Environmental Studies)**

**NPAA (National Protected Area Authority)** in Sierra Leone

# SELECTED CONSERVATION TARGETS



## African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*)

It has recently been proven that the Pen-selli-Soyah-Sabouyah area hosts the largest elephant population in the country, which were previously unrecognised. Recent videos have shown movements of these elephants towards Sierra Leone in the Guinea-Sierra Leone migration corridor.

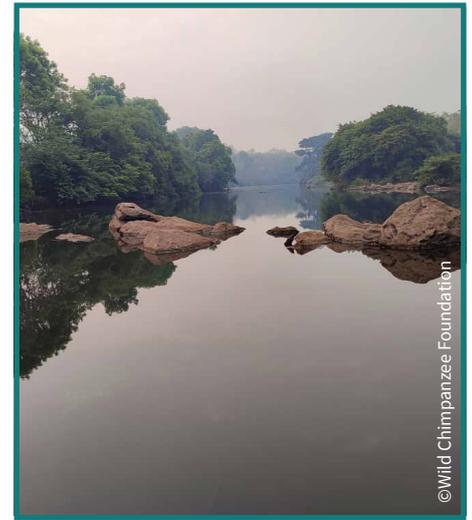
It is important to maintain the gallery forests along rivers and the periodically flooded savannahs, as they are essential to ensure the survival of the only viable elephant population in Guinea. Coordinated and cross-border conservation activities will be of great support in the safeguarding of these elephants.



## Western chimpanzee (*Pan Troglodytes verus*)

Listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN since 2016, Guinea has the largest chimpanzee population of any country in West Africa. The OKKPS landscape area is one of the hotspots identified for this species.

As the closest living relative of humans, behavioural studies have shown many similarities between us and our closest cousins. As such, humanity has a moral duty to direct efficient protective measures to ensure the survival of this ape, hence the need to strengthen the conservation status of the OKKPS landscape.



## Natural habitats of the OKKPS Landscape

With no less than 30 mammal species, 13 of which are conservation priority species, and nine species of reptiles, including one vulnerable species (African dwarf crocodile), the OKKPS landscape is an important conservation area. Key species include the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), green monkey (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*), western black-and-white colobus (*Colobus polykomos*), sooty mangabey (*Cercocebus atys*) and spot-nosed monkey (*Cercopithecus petaurista*), as well as hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), black duiker (*Cephalophus niger*), African golden cat (*Caracal aurata*) and various species of genets. These habitats constitute a priority conservation area to ensure the ecosystem services that guarantee the wellbeing of both wildlife and the local communities.

The PAPFor programme in the OKKPS landscape is implemented by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation in collaboration with Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. Both partners work closely with the national park services and governments of Guinea and Sierra Leone. The programme is developing synergies with the USAID-funded WABiLED project, and private partners such as Winning Consortium, Simandou Railway and Rio Tinto. Particular emphasis is placed on working with decentralised and deconcentrated entities in the prefectures of Mamou and Kindia in Guinea, and the districts of Koinadugu and Karene in Sierra Leone.



# THE CHALLENGES

The OKKPS landscape is also a focal point for the railway line for the largest iron ore mine in West Africa. It is also surrounded by large settlements, and national and regional road construction projects. The development of these activities will not be without negative impacts on biodiversity.

## Challenge 1: Expanding slash-and-burn agriculture

Community members' fields are usually on land where almost all the trees are felled and the vegetation is burned. This slash-and-burn method of cultivation rapidly depletes the soil of nutrients, and is not guaranteed viable beyond two years. As local communities repeatedly clear a new fields, this unfortunately leads to **deforestation and the premature desiccation of rivers**. Original fields are abandoned and it takes several decades of fallowing for the land to be usable again. In the OKKPS landscape, as the need for fertile land increases with population expansion, farmers make illegal incursions into the Soyah and Penselli Classified Forests, and into the Sabouyah Reserve in **search of new cropland**. However, these communities then settle and hunt in these forests. This accelerates the **degradation of natural habitats and the decrease in wildlife**.



## Challenge 2: Industrial mining operations

The OKKPS Landscape area is bisected by the railway line that will be used to transport minerals for export. The railway line passes through the heart of the priority area for the conservation of threatened species.

Close collaboration with the mining operators is needed to establish an agreement of mitigation activities to **reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity** (deforestation, changes in watercourse regime, fragmentation of natural habitats, and disruption of corridor connectivity).



## Challenge 3: Bushfires

In the OKKPS landscape, fires have visible negative impacts on forests and waterways. The slash-and-burn method is an ancient practice in the culture of local farmers, however, when left unchecked, fire causes damage to crops in the fields and to livestock.

The fire dynamics in the OKKPS zone are poorly studied. It is therefore essential to implement a bushfire management strategy using satellite imagery and field interventions.



# SOLUTIONS

## Maintaining forest cover and protecting threatened species

In the context of rapid development of economic projects, illegal logging and urban expansion, the priority is to maintain the **connectivity of high conservation value areas** at the forest landscape level. PAPFor envisages the **restoration of forest corridors** with a strong involvement of the riparian communities. The programme works with local authorities and riparian communities to restore degraded areas in the corridor connecting Sabouyah (in Guinea), Kuru Hills and Outamba (in Sierra Leone). These areas are currently subject to illegal exploitation of rosewood, poaching, and degradation of natural habitats. Most recently, CITES has banned the exploitation of rosewood in Sierra Leone. The Guinean authorities have already taken strong measures to **reduce timber trafficking** in the Mamou and Faranah regions. The project will support these two governments in their efforts to **combat illegal logging and law enforcement**.



## Support for Protected Areas

PAPFor provides direct support to the two national agencies responsible for protected area management. A key support activity is WCF working to **establish the Penseli-Soyah-Sabouyah area as a National Park** and to update the management plan of the Outamba National Park which will serve as a basis for the interventions of technical and financial partners. PAPFor also supports **training in management tools** such as IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) and village territory management plans. These tools help guide decision-making for effective management of threats and pressures on priority conservation targets. The programme also provides support for vehicles, computers, field equipment, and monitoring patrols. A **vegetation monitoring** system has been established to quantify the positive effects of restoration actions in the identified corridor at the landscape level.



## Community-based participatory management

One of the major challenges of the PAPFor programme is to help the populations living around the high conservation value areas, through free and informed consent, to take ownership of the governance of natural resources at the local level and to adopt a sustainable development system. This system should enable the **improvement of ecosystem services and agricultural practices**, which will have a positive effect on the **quality of life and income of households** with a positive impact on the local development of the decentralised entities.

The project places particular emphasis on a gender and vulnerable people approach in the implementation of its activities.



[www.papfor.org/-OKKPS-](http://www.papfor.org/-OKKPS-)

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