



TAÏ – GREBO-KRAHN – SAPO (TGKS)



The Taï - Grebo-Krahn - Sapo (TGKS) Landscape stretches from south-east Liberia to south-west Côte d'Ivoire. It contains the last large block of intact Guinean forest, of which more than 7,000 km² are protected, including Taï National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The landscape is a mix of natural ecosystems and areas that have been degraded to varying degrees, particularly so on the Ivorian side. These forested areas contain a very rich biodiversity, with a high level of endemism.

PAPFor aims to strengthen ecological connectivity in this landscape, to improve the management of Protected Areas and to support local communities on the path to sustainable development.



Legend

- Watercourse
 - Main road
 - International border
 - Administrative boundary
 - Forest Management Unit
- Conservation areas**
- TGKS PAPFor Landscape
 - National Park
 - Wildlife Sanctuary/Classified Forest
 - Proposed Protected Area
 - Community Forest

National Parks

CI	Parc national de Taï et Réserve partielle de Faune du N'Zo	National Park	5 360 km ²
LIB	Parc national de Sapo	National Park	1 804 km ²
LIB	Parc national de Grebo-Krahn	National Park	960 km ²

Main habitats

- Closed-canopy dense humid forests
- Degraded dense humid forests forest
- Swamp forests
- Agricultural and fallow lands
- Watercourses and lakes

Main threats

- Illegal exploitation of natural resources (poaching, wood and non-wood products)
- Clearing for agriculture, particularly cocoa farming
- (Semi-)artisanal mining and illegal gold panning

Conservation targets

- Dense lowland evergreen forests (50-400m), with more than 1,400 plant species, including more than 100 species endemic to West Africa;
- Several threatened animal species, including 21 classified as «Vulnerable» and 10 as «Endangered», among them the Pygmy hippopotamus, Jentink's duiker, Zebra duiker, Diana monkey and the White-breasted guineafowl.
- One of the most important carbon reservoirs in all tropical forests.

PAPFor Programme

Project start date: june 2020

Project end date: march 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 TGKS Landscape is implemented by the technical agency of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), with offices in Abidjan and Monrovia, and two field teams, based in Tai and Zwedru. Agreements have been established with institutions and bodies with responsibility for the environment and Protected Areas in both countries to ensure optimal ownership.

Partners

MINEDD (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - Côte d'Ivoire): for the implementation of biodiversity conservation strategies and sustainable management of parks and reserves, with OIPR (Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves).

MINEF (Ministry of Water and Forests - CI): on the sustainable management of classified forests belonging to the State Forest Estate, with SODEFOR (Société de Développement des Forêts).

FDA (Forestry Development Authority - Liberia): sustainable management of protected areas and forest resources.

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency - Liberia): sustainable management of the environment and natural resources.

PAMAC (Protected Area Management Advisory Committees - Liberia): participatory management of protected areas.

SELECTED CONSERVATION TARGETS



The dense humid forests and their endemic plant species

More than 1,400 plant species including, among those endemic to West Africa, more than 100 so-called «**Sassandrian**» species, such as the giant tree *Brachystegia leonensis* or the beautiful liana *Duparquetia orchidacea*. These species are located only to the west of the Sassandra River, in the most humid part of the evergreen forest, and define the floristic hotspot known as «Bas-Cavally» or «Grabo Hills» on either side of the Cavally River, a former forest refugium during drier climates.

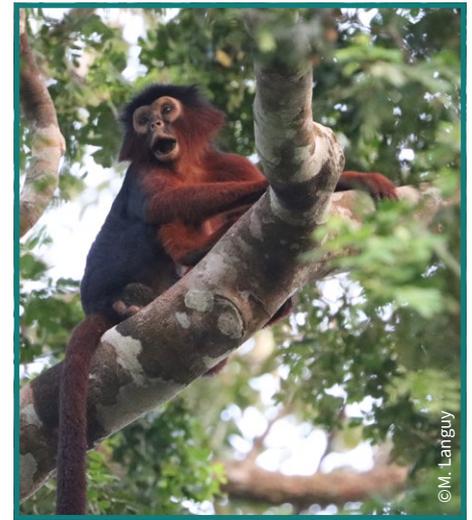


Ungulate mammals

Endemic to West Africa, the unique and highly threatened **Pygmy hippopotamus** (*Choeropsis liberiensis*), now found only in the most remote and intact forests.

Strictly confined to the west of the Sassandra River, the **Jentink's duiker** (*Cephalophus jentinki*) is emblematic of the Taï Grebo-Krhan Sapo Landscape.

A keystone species, the **Forest elephant** (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) is dependent on the extent of the protected areas for its conservation and is instrumental in dispersing many tree species.



Primate species endemic to West Africa, west of Sassandra River

Not less than 13 species of primates are found in the TGKS landscape, of which 8 are endemic to West Africa. In addition, several of these species, or their subspecies, have a so-called «sassandrian» distribution, being restricted to the west of the Sassandra River in Côte d'Ivoire. These include the endangered **Western chimpanzee** (*Pan troglodytes verus*), **the Sooty mangabey** (*Cercocebus atys*), and **the Diana monkey** (*Cercopithecus diana*).

To ensure better results, the PAPFor programme in the TGKS Landscape, implemented by GIZ, works in synergy with the following institutions: FDA, OIPR, SODEFOR, FPRCI (Fondation pour les Parcs & Réserves de Côte d'Ivoire), Regional Councils, as well as administrative and customary authorities and village communities.

The programme also interacts with other programmes, the TGS 'Corridor' project funded by KfW (German Financial Cooperation), WABILED (USAID), with international organisations including the Mano River Union, the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, and Fauna and Flora International, as well as with local NGOs (NOFNA, YVEO). The project also works with the private sector, among which cooperative and trading companies in the cocoa sector (Beyond Beans) and industrial timber companies (STBC).



THE CHALLENGES

The TGKS Landscape spans five counties in south-eastern Liberia and three regions in south-western Côte d'Ivoire. The Ivorian side is quite densely populated and in full economic expansion based on cash crops; south-eastern Liberia, on the other hand, and despite being poorly served by road networks, is attracting increased human migration linked to new opportunities. This context brings several major challenges.

Challenge 1: Overexploitation of forest resources

The extraction of wildlife resources, often carried out illegally or unsustainably, affects the landscape's forests to varying degrees.

Poaching is very common in Liberia, particularly in the national parks, due to a high **demand for bushmeat** both here and in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire (CI). This demand cannot be met from the resources of the better protected Tai NP, nor from a rural area already devoid of wildlife. **Wood and non-wood products** can also not be sustainably exploited, either because of the inadequacy of the regulations in rural areas (CI) or because of shortcomings in the application of the law (CI and Liberia). The Ivorian and even Ghanaian markets are particularly attractive for timber products harvested in the forests near the Cavally River, including Grebo-Krahn NP, where the conservation service needs to be strengthened and equipped.

These practices all impoverish, fragment and weaken forest ecosystems, which is serious in the context of climate change.



Challenge 2: Expansion of cash crops

The so-called «forest regions» are conducive to the development of several **cash crops**: cocoa and coffee, rubber and oil palm. On the Ivorian side of the landscape, family farming facilitated by the presence of agro-industrial centres and strong **migratory pressure** from populations coming from savannah regions in the north and outside the country have led to **massive deforestation**. As a result, no more than 5% of natural forests remain in the rural domain or even in classified forests, with the exception of Cavally Classified Forest, of which around 60% is preserved. Tai NP is now **seriously cut off**, with no connectivity to Grebo-Krahn NP further west.

On the Liberian side, the development of cash crops was interrupted by multiple crises that shook the country from 1989 to 2003. It is now resuming both in terms of agro-industries (in the south of the landscape) and family farming. In Côte d'Ivoire, the availability of land has dried up considerably, and the flow of migrants, some of them «climate refugees», is now heading for the forests of Liberia. Although direct attacks on national parks have not yet occurred (or been very few in number), there is a very real risk of these. The risk is even greater in other forest areas (Proposed Protected Areas, State forests and Community forests), particularly in the FMC-F management unit, where the connectivity corridor between Sapo and Grebo-Krahn should be developed.



Challenge 3: Mining

Gold is mined throughout the PAPFor TGKS Landscape, using both traditional and modern methods. At first, mining consisted of classic illegal **gold panning** (digging shallow shafts and washing the extracted earth (Sapo NP, eastern edge of the Tai NP on the Hana River)). Then, artisanal permits were issued (some legally but some illegally, such as in the FMC-F) and, more recently, dredging developed in many rivers and their banks (Cavally, Dugbe, Hana). With the former, damage to the forest cover is particularly significant, as deforestation is accompanied by long-term land degradation. With the latter, the damage consists of pollution and diversion of waterways. On the Hana river, bank revegetation sites supported by the project for six years have been destroyed by such dredging. Indirect impacts include increased hunting pressure and health impacts on workers and local residents.



THE SOLUTIONS

Maintenance and restoration of forest cover in rural areas

In the face of forest cover degradation in rural areas, there is a need to identify **High Conservation Value (HCV)** forests and to support **participatory land use planning** initiatives (in the Glaro District of Liberia), such as community-based sustainable management of remaining forests (sacred forests, cemetery woods). Also, by encouraging the protection of certain riverbanks, such as the Hana in Côte d'Ivoire, revegetation can be undertaken, recreating a green network in the landscape.

Furthermore, in Côte d'Ivoire, with a view to restoring conditions for sustainable agriculture and diversifying producers' sources of income, good agricultural practices are being promoted, particularly in cocoa farming through agroforestry. This reintroduction of trees in agricultural areas contributes to a diffuse connectivity favourable to certain biodiversity.



Support to Protected Areas

After supporting the **gazettement** process of the Grebo-Krahn National Park in Liberia (including participatory demarcation of the proposed protected area boundaries), which was gazetted in 2017, the project supported the participatory development of its Management Plan. The plan was approved in December 2021. Further support will be provided by the project to the FDA, through the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, to improve the park's **monitoring** and law enforcement.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the project supports the implementation of the Taï NP Management Plan through support to several **neighbouring communities** (see above: sustainable management of residual forests and natural resources, promotion of agroforestry, etc.).

The project also supports **training in protected area management tools** such as IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool), as well as those for monitoring and evaluating management effectiveness (BNS (Basic Needs Survey), SAPA (Social Assessment of Protected Areas) and SAGE (Site Assessment for Governance and Equity)) and the perception of local populations.



Community-based participatory management and improvement of living conditions

An essential issue for protected area managers is to be able to encourage the continued commitment of communities to conservation by supporting their development and living conditions. Local Development Plans have been drawn up in six villages bordering Taï NP and support is provided to implement these (securing funding, technical supervision, etc.).

PAPFor supports the improvement of non-timber forest product **value chains** by introducing tree species into cropping systems; this promotes agroforestry initiatives, with the example in Taï of **Makoré butter**, extracted from the seeds of the Makore redwood tree and similar to shea butter which is already well known in the cosmetics industry. The **gender** approach in this activity's implementation is illustrated in the village of Zaïpobly where a women's group produces this product and also runs a large nursery of multi-purpose trees for agroforestry, the seedlings of which are sold in the Taï Department and beyond.



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