

REGIONAL NEWS



Comparative analysis of cross-border management approaches

A regional study has drawn up lessons and recommendations for establishing or improving cross-border collaboration.

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Regional support to the Niokolo-Koba – Badiar – Boé landscape

An assessment and analysis of the political, legal, institutional and administrative framework to support management of this landscape.

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Building a database of regional programmes

A directory of regional programmes in the West Africa landscapes provides an overview of related programmes and their funding in order to create synergies and multiply impacts.

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Les politiques environnementales et sociales aident à :



Introduction to social and environmental safeguards for mining activities

From our July webinar: how to protect people and the environment from potential harmful effects of mining activities in and around protected areas.

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Increasing the involvement of communities in biodiversity conservation in national parks in northern Benin

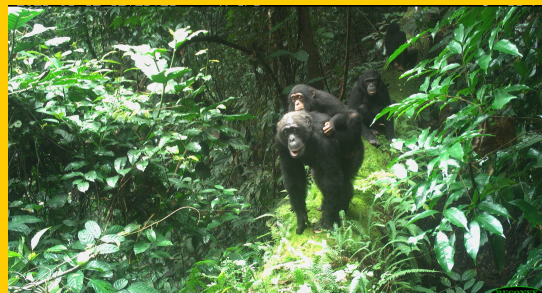
In order to successfully conserve Pendjari and W-Benin National Parks in the context of the security crisis in the southern Sahel, one of the objectives of the NGO African Parks is to increase community engagement in the conservation of these two important protected areas in northern Benin.



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In Nigeria, camera-trap images provide vital insights into the daily reality of endangered chimpanzees

A video captured by a camera trap in the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary nature reserve, in Cross River State, Nigeria, tells a poignant story of resilience and threat.



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Biomonitoring, training and water well construction in the Taï – Grebo Krahn – Sapo landscape

In Côte d'Ivoire, teams collected ecological data in Taï National Park and Cavally Natural Reserve. In Liberia, the project built accessible water pumps in villages, among other things.

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News in brief

A brief overview of recent progress towards launching projects and activities in other NaturAfrica West Africa landscapes.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Comparative analysis of cross-border management approaches

The NAAO regional coordination team commissioned a study to learn from the different approaches to cross-border management in NaturAfrica landscapes in West Africa.



The aim of the study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the different experiences of collaboration and transboundary management in the various NAAO landscapes and to draw lessons and recommendations for establishing or improving transboundary collaboration, or even transboundary management of protected areas, distinguishing between institutional aspects and aspects of effective collaboration in the field.

Of the 10 priority landscapes included in the NAAO programme, seven were selected (including six forest landscapes and one savannah landscape) for this study.

The main recommendations are as follows:

1. Provide political support to the various institutions in charge of protected areas in different countries to strengthen their formal framework for collaboration.
2. Focus support for landscapes on establishing the conditions for obtaining sustainable financing, such as trust funds.
3. Promote the concentric circles approach, in which support for peripheral areas should be provided if and only if the central/priority PAs are sufficiently resourced.
4. Promote sharing and emulation between landscapes and encourage the exchange of experiences between landscapes.
5. Encourage legal harmonisation between countries within the same landscape to promote cooperation and technical collaboration in the field.

The results of this study will be shared with field operators and national administrations and will be made available online to the general public. A webinar will also be organised in early December to share the results and enrich the discussion, and this study will be presented to the future steering committee of the NAAO programme.

Image: joint patrols in the Gola-Foya landscape and (in image in header) in the OKKPS landscape, where results included the seizure of timber from illegal logging.

Introduction to social and environmental safeguards for mining activities

On 3 July 2025, the Regional Coordination organised a webinar on social and environmental safeguards for mining activities in or adjacent to protected areas, with applications in West Africa.



Environmental and social safeguard policies ensure that people and the environment are protected from the potential adverse effects of investment projects in various sectors, including mining. Their application throughout the cycle of assessment, risks and impacts, and mitigation measures were presented by Agoro Sébabé, environmental safeguards specialist for the WACA project, IUCN/World Bank.

Stephen Teeuwen of the Dutch Environmental Assessment Council (CNEE) explored mining activities in protected areas in more detail from the perspective of Environmental Assessments and Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments. He presented some case studies from West Africa, where mining activities are taking place in or adjacent to protected areas, and how ESAs and SESAs have played a role in decision-making in collaboration with government and civil society actors.

Drawing on his company's experience, Geert Kampschöer (CEO of JM Mining Kenema Ltd) presented the work of the mine in which his group is involved in Sierra Leone and explained how he plans to build an environmentally friendly, carbon-neutral mine. His goal is also to develop a socially inclusive business and improve the living conditions of communities.

The application of social and environmental safeguards is crucial for mining in protected areas. They help to protect conservation areas from the worst impacts of mining, which are not always inevitable, as Geert Kampschöer demonstrated.

Regional support for Niokolo-Koba – Badiar – Boé landscape

One of the NaturAfrica programmes implemented in West Africa is located in the transboundary landscape shared by Senegal, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, around the protected areas of Niokolo-Koba, Badiar, Dulombi and Boé.



Unlike most other landscapes in the region, this programme [1], which implemented by IUCN and other partners, is not based on recent initiatives supported by the European Union, such as PAPBio and PAPFor, and does not benefit from a history of cross-border collaboration on which to build the programme.

The Regional Coordination therefore conducted a study to assess and analyse the political, legal, institutional and administrative framework for the management of national parks and this landscape.

The study, conducted by four consultants, took place from June to September 2025 and documented, in addition to the existing frameworks for protected area management, aspects

relating to cross-border collaboration, including those related to transhumance and spatial planning in the three countries.

The study provided an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the political, legal, institutional and administrative framework for the management of protected areas and the landscape in the three countries.

Numerous recommendations were made, including 16 at the protected area level, 9 at the landscape level and 8 concerning cooperation between the three countries.

In addition, the study collected and organised more than 200 reference documents (laws and other regulatory texts, studies, maps, plans, assessments, etc.) that will prove very useful for the implementation of the programme.

The study will be published on our capacity4dev page after presentation to partners in the field. Follow our social media channels to stay informed.

[1] Integrated Programme for Conservation, Economic Development and Cross-Border Resilience, or PICVERT.

Building a database of regional programmes in the West Africa landscapes



The NaturAfrica initiative includes several types of funding: European Union funding, both at national and regional level, but also programmes directly funded by EU Member States.

In order to build synergies and multiply impacts, it is therefore important that all stakeholders have access to a database of the various regional programmes active in West Africa.

To this end, a piece of work to create a list of regional programmes in West Africa has just been completed.

A total of 48 programmes have been identified, 30 of which are funded by the European Union. For each programme listed, key information has been provided, including the funding agency, the target country or landscape, the amounts and dates of implementation, the themes addressed, as well as links and contact persons for further information on each programme.

All of these programmes are organised in a spreadsheet offering various filters by country, landscape, theme, donor, etc.

The inventory focused mainly on land-based programmes with themes related to those of NaturAfrica and still active in August 2025. The largest number of programmes are located in savannah areas (Senegal, Guinea, and the region of the W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) transboundary complex), with agriculture, livestock and nutrition being the most frequently addressed themes.

This information will be shared with field operators, administrations and European Union Delegations and will be regularly updated as programmes evolve and new ones are launched.

Main topics of the programmes identified in NaturAfrica West Africa Key Landscapes for Conservation and Development (KLCD):

Landscape

Topics

Total

	Conservation, green economy, governance	Agriculture, livestock farming, nutrition	Security, migration, transhuman ce	
Niokolo Koba-Badiar-Bafing-Boé	12	12	7	31
Outamba-Kilimi-Kuru-Pinselli-Soyah-Kounoukan	8	9	3	20
Gola-Foya-Kpo Mountains	7	9	2	18
Wologizi-Wonegizi Ziama	8	9	3	20
Nimba-Diecke	8	10	4	22
Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo-SW Liberia Forests	6	11	3	20
PONASI-Comoe-Mole-Volta	8	17	7	33
W-Arly-Pendjari-Oti-Keran	10	17	7	34
Fazao-Malfakassa-Kyabobo	7	11	3	21
Gadabedji-Termit Tin Toumma-Kanem	6	12	3	21
Cross River-Korup-Takamanda-Cameroon montane	5	11	2	18

LANDSCAPE NEWS

Pendjari and W-Benin National Parks

Increasing local community involvement in biodiversity conservation

A number of key actions have been planned and are being implemented as part of an action plan to support community development in the localities bordering the two parks.

These include support for education, the promotion and development of income-generating activities, and the construction of community infrastructure. Within this framework, various activities were carried out in the second quarter of 2025 for the benefit of local populations. In Pendjari National Park, this included the donation of teaching materials, supplies and school furniture to 5 856 pupils in 27 primary and secondary schools in the five municipalities surrounding the park, namely Tanguiéta, Kouandé, Matéri, Kérou and Banikoara.

With regard to the promotion and development of income-generating activities, the park has supported the training of members of a dozen associations in the management of their cooperatives. Support has been provided to a cooperative of neem oil producers in the village of Koundri, where 13 members have received training in soap making.

Around 20 young agricultural entrepreneurs were selected from the W-Benin National Park and received two months of training at an agricultural enterprise in Parakou. They then started various production activities, including poultry farming (pictured), beekeeping and rabbit breeding.

Finally, the dam in Batran, one of the villages bordering the W-Benin National Park, was rehabilitated (as pictured) by the Park Authority, providing residents with water for market gardening and watering their livestock.



Cross River landscape, Nigeria

Camera trap footage yields vital information about daily reality of endangered chimpanzees



The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) continues to advance conservation efforts across the Cross River landscape, focusing on protecting Nigeria's last remaining rainforest strongholds and the critically endangered Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*).

Part of WCS conservation efforts supports ranger patrols and monitoring activities in Cross River National Park, Mbe Mountains, and the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. These patrols allow for the removal of snares, and account for a reduction in hunting pressure as well as illegal logging incidents. Camera trap images have also captured the presence in the landscape of endangered species such as chimpanzees. Among them is a recent video from Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary in Cross River State which tells a powerful story of resilience and threat.

In the clip, a female chimpanzee who appears to have lost one hand is carrying her young, while another individual with a limb injury, likely caused by wire snares, is following behind.

The footage highlights the ongoing dangers faced by chimpanzees in the wild, while also reflecting their incredible strength and adaptability.

With support from the European Union, WCS Nigeria in collaboration with the Cross River State Forestry Commission is working to protect the sanctuary's endangered chimpanzees through anti-poaching patrols, snare removal, community engagement and development, and deforestation-free commodities especially cocoa.

The discovery of the chimps injuries through this camera-trap footage is a stark reminder of the threats facing Nigeria's wildlife and the urgent need to strengthen protection for the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) — one of Africa's rarest great apes.

Source: WCS Nigeria

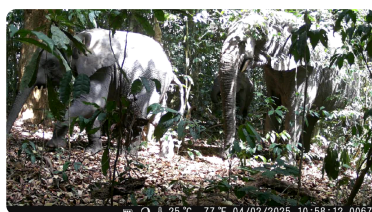
Tai – Grebo Krahn – Sapo landscape in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

Biomonitoring, agent training, and provision of drinking water supplies

Biomonitoring in Taï National Park

A total of 214 camera traps were installed in Taï National Park (TNP) in January 2025 by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and their project partners at the Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR). This biomonitoring method makes it possible to track changes in wild populations over time, including cryptic species such as the pygmy hippopotamus and the golden cat. In addition, 215 camera traps were recovered in the field during three missions carried out between March and June 2025. Analysis of the data collected revealed videos of 103 species, including 53 mammals, 48 birds and 2 reptiles. Among these species, 23 are threatened with extinction, including two that are critically endangered according to the IUCN Red List, namely the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) and the forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*).

The following photos were taken from videos filmed by camera traps installed in the TNP (forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*)).



Cavally Nature Reserve

From May to June, 90 agents, including 10 women, were trained and deployed to the Cavally Nature Reserve as part of the first official phase of ecological monitoring of this recently created and secured reserve. A total of 309 transect surveys, spread over three separate missions in the forest, were carried out during the period.

The teams were able to directly observe and record evidence of 55 species, including 33 mammals, 13 birds, 7 reptiles and 1 gastropod. These include iconic species such as the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), the pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*), the forest buffalo (*Syncerus caffer nanus*) and the leopard (*Panthera pardus*). This community-based forest monitoring and support for local law enforcement highlight some of the project's key activities that contribute to the 'Biodiversity Conservation' pillar.

Image: Training participants before entering the forest



Construction of four handpump waterwells

In Libéria, to improve access to safe drinking water in communities around our project landscapes, the NaturAfrica initiative supported the construction of four handpumps in four towns: Judu Town and New Town (pictured) in the Proposed Kwa National Park (PKNP) landscape, and Jardiah Town and Chewulu Town in the Sapo National Park (SNP) landscape.



The new facilities reduce the risk of waterborne diseases, as they provide a reliable source of clean water, and also save people from having to walk long distances to fetch water from streams for drinking, cooking and bathing.

Households are pleased to have easy access to clean water. “Before the handpump was constructed, we used to go to the creek to get drinking water. But with the handpump now, we have clean water for cooking, bathing and drinking,” said one resident.

Source: WCF

News in brief

PONASI

The Pô–Nazinga–Sissili ecological complex in Burkina Faso is a key component of the PoMoCo (Burkina Faso–Côte d’Ivoire–Ghana) conservation and development landscape. An evaluation of the past PONASI 1 & 2 projects implemented under PAPBio has been carried out, and the first steps in identifying PONASI 3 under the NaturAfrica regional programme are underway.

PONASI 3 is being formulated by the NGO Anges Gardiens de la Nature (AGN), the proposed operator for the implementation and administration of the complex. This new programme will



therefore be able to start its activities at the beginning of next year.

Niokolo-Koba – Badiar – Dulombi – Boé

IUCN, the implementing operator in this landscape, is preparing to organise the official launch of the Integrated Programme for Conservation, Economic Development and Cross-Border Resilience of the Niokolo-Badiar-Dulombi-Boé Landscape (PICVERT). The launch will be followed by two days of strategic planning with all the intervention partners and national administrations from the three countries, Senegal, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

Gadabedji Total Reserve

Covering an area of 76 000 ha, the Gadabedji Total Reserve was created on 25 April 1955 by the Republic of Niger. In June 2017, it acquired the international label of Biosphere Reserve from UNESCO's MAB Programme. The reserve receives EU funding under the NaturAfrica regional initiative. The implementing operator identified by the EU Delegation to Niger and the national administration is Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF). SCF is working hard on the design of the project, which is scheduled to commence in January 2026.



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