



DEVCO **Environment and Climate Week 2020**

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BIODIVERSITY- Group 4 - Natural resources related conflicts and human rights

Co-benefits of protected areas for local communities and wildlife, fighting wildlife and timber trafficking

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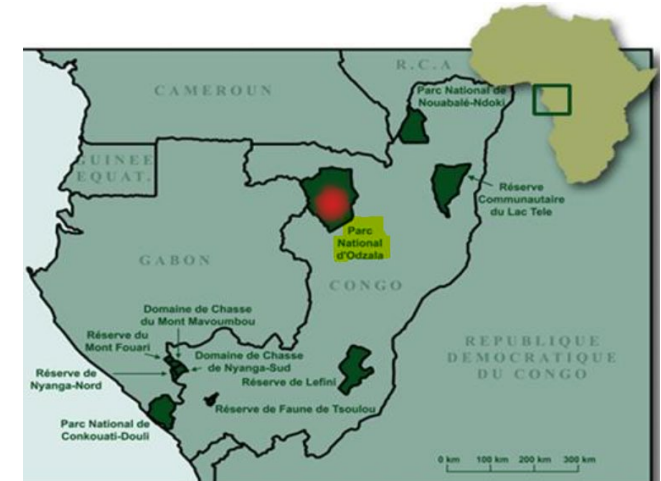
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1. The case of Odzala Kokoua National Park

1.1 Background

Institutional and legal framework

- Established in 1935, the Odzala Kokoua is the Congo's largest protected area, covering more than 1 million hectares
- In 2001, was created as a National Park (IUCN cat. II)
- In 2010, creation of the Odzala foundation, which is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between The NGO African Parks Network (APN) and the Government represented by the Ministry in charge
- Since 1992, the Park benefits from EU funds via the ECOFAC Program (regional program for conservation)

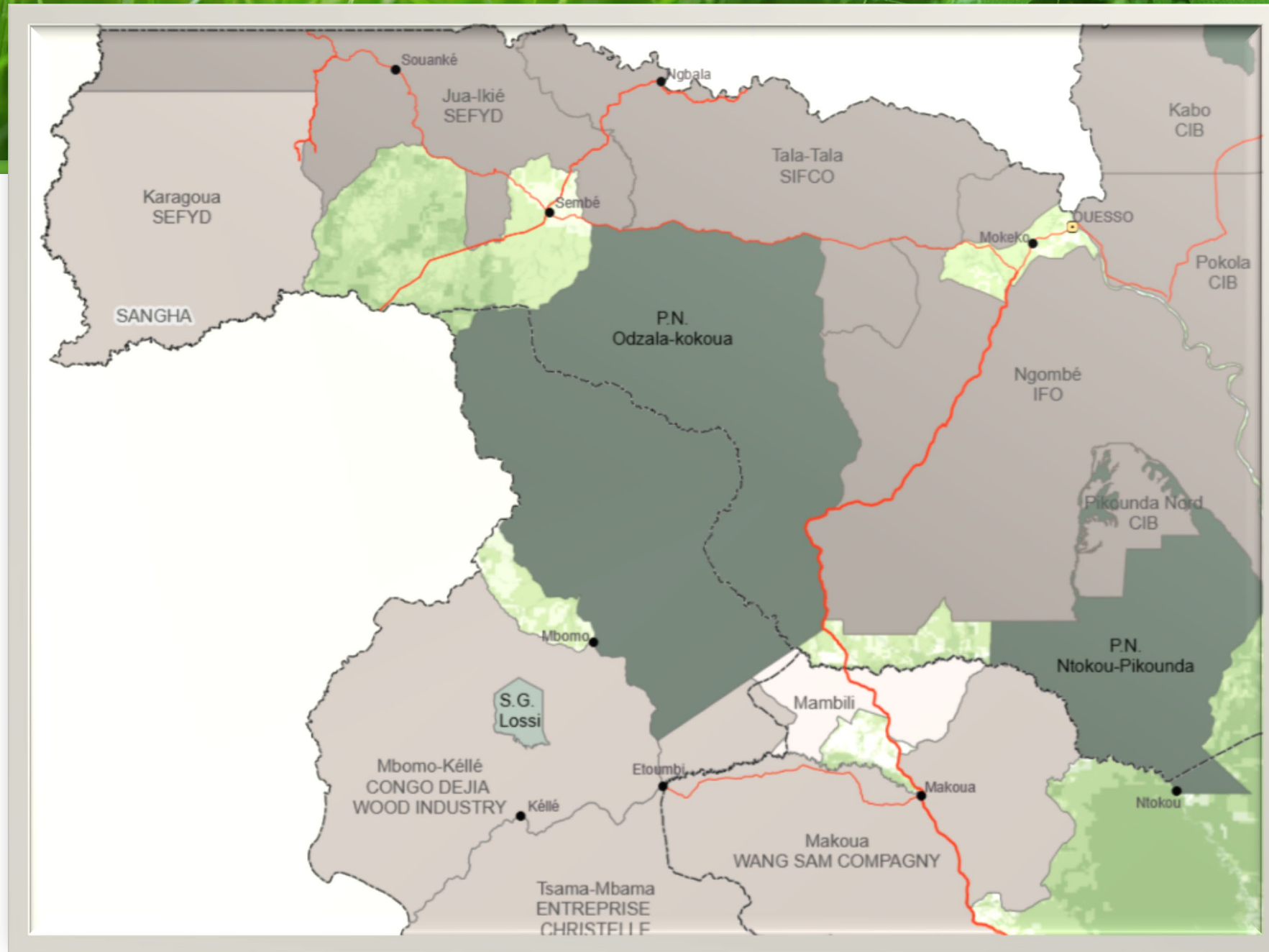


A very rich fauna and flora to conserve

- 400 bird species, 114 mammal species (including elephants, gorillas, buffaloes, hippo) and more than 4 400 varieties of plants
- forest-savanna mosaic and salt flats

Stakeholders to consider

- Local communities (Bantu) and indigenous peoples (Baka) comprising more than 10 000 people living around the park, in urban centers such as Mbomo, Etoumbi, Makoua, Ouessou
- Mining operators (iron and gold)
- Forest operators (Congo Deja wood industry, Wang Sam company, Entreprise Christelle, SIFCO, IFO which is the only one FSC certified)
- Oil Palm plantation (Atama)



Source: Atlas forestier, MEF et WRI, mai 2019

1.2 Effective approaches for conflict prevention

An analysis of the Odzala Kokoua Foundation pointed out that the Park Management Unit has to evacuate the HQ (Mbomo) because of regular conflicts with communities, on average every 16 months.

In 2015, a management plan was developed. A zoning scheme divided the park into three main activity areas:

- a core conservation area at the center
- a transition or buffer zone
- a resource use zone (also called “**ecodevelopment zone**”) which represents 223 000 hectares for the benefit of local communities

“Promoting development of rational natural resource use for the benefit of local populations” is one of the six main objective of the management plan of the Park.

Which means entail organizing an institutional framework for co-management of natural resources and the promotion of income generating activities.

- Two local community representatives are now members of the Board of the Odzala Kokoua Foundation
- To develop the strategy for the promotion of income generating activities (agriculture, ecotourism, etc) for the communities, with the communities, the NGO Nature + is associated

1.3 Lessons learnt

Community development, underconsidered in previous phases of ECOFAC Program, is now a result to achieve:

Result III “*populations are involved in the integrated management of natural resources and derive sustainable benefit from it*”

This **bottom-up approach** permits to define strategy with the communities

Examples:

- community-based anti-poaching
- independant monitoring on timber exploitation by communities

Consortium: conservation NGOs are not specialists in community development

Ownership: include local communities in the management of protected area. Not just for, but with them

Local development is a **long process**. To be successful, it must be participatory and inclusive, which take time

Avoid Man-Wildlife conflict is a **fragile balance** in a context of lack of rule of law, underrepresented State

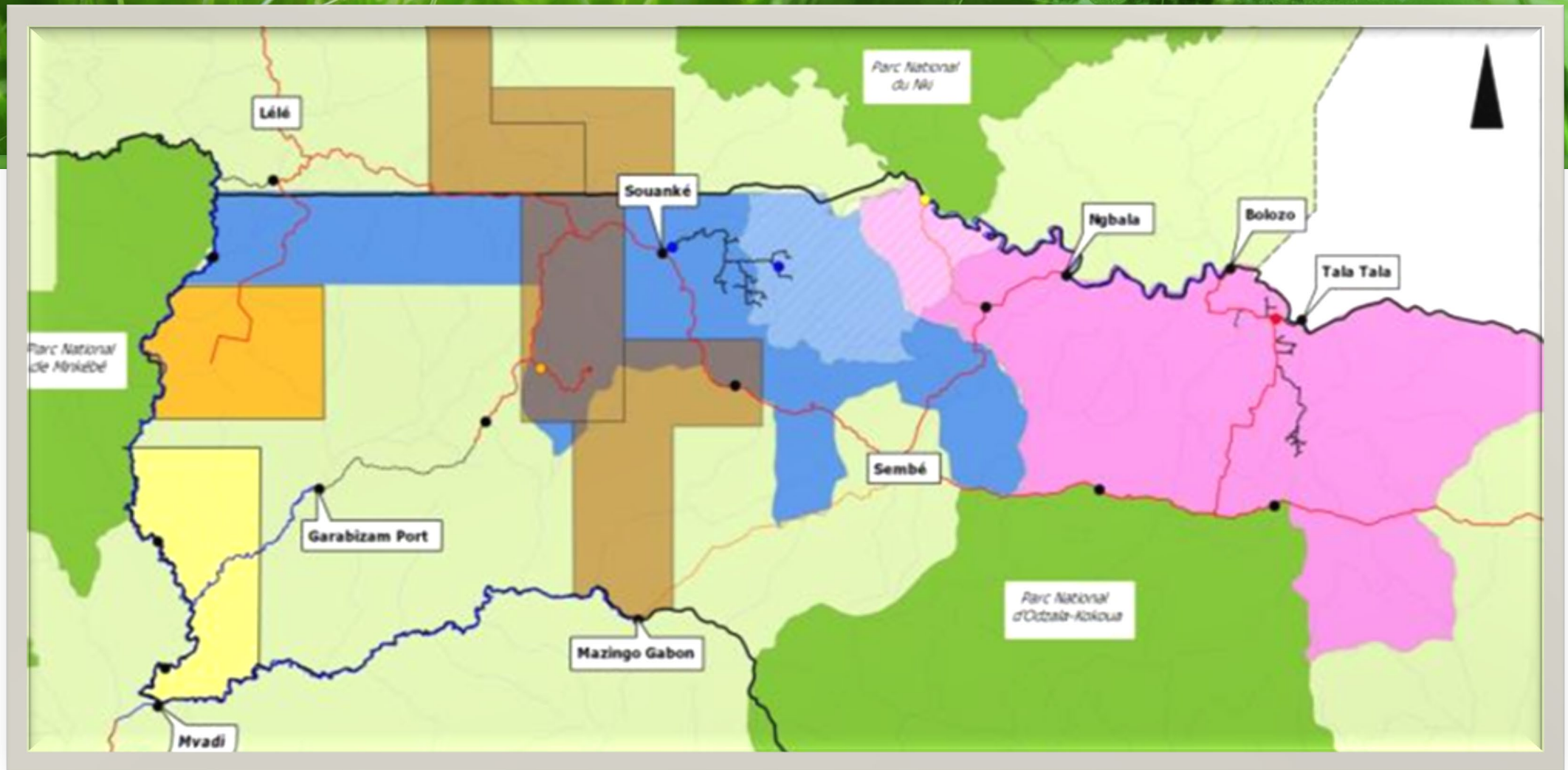
2. The case of the creation process of the protected area Messok Dja

2.1 Background

WWF works in the area called ETIC (Espace TRIDOM Interzone Congo) since 2005 with the Government. Interzone because it's an area between main National Parks in Cameroon (Nki), Congo (Odzala Kokoua) and Gabon (Minkébé)

Pressure on fauna and flora due to poaching, mining and forestry activities

The Government wants to define a new protected area in the ETIC zone, more precisely in the Messok Dja Forest



Légende

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| — Rivières / Fleuve | • Villes et villages principaux | ■ UFA Jua Ikié, SEFYD |
| — Routes carrossables | ■ Forêt de Messok Dja | ■ UFA Tala-Tala, SIFCO |
| — Routes "en construction" | ● Camp Cholet | ■ Permis minier Avima Fer |
| — Pistes forestières | ● Bases SEFYD | ■ Permis minier Equatorial Resources |
| — Pistes pédestres | ● Scierie SIFCO | ■ Permis miniers Cam et Congo Iron |
| | ● Base Congo Iron | |

Messok Dja Forest is in forestry concessions of SEFYD et SIFCO (chinese and libanese operators)

2.2 Instruments and approaches to promote the human rights – environment nexus

Before mid 2019, the Free prior informed consent (FPIC) approach for the creation of a protected area wasn't required in congolese law

The right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities means that they have the right to determine their own economic, social and cultural development, to participate in any democratic process of government, and to influence politically, socially and culturally their future.

In the context of the process of creation of a protected area in Messok Dja forest, WWF and the congolese agency of fauna and protected area (ACFAP) proposed a joint project to apply this process FPIC

In that context of unsustainable forest exploitation, mining activity, the will to create a protected area, applying a strategy of integrated management resources with the communities, co-benefits for them and wildlife may seem obvious, but yet the process of creation of the Messok Dja protected area is an example of the difficulties which can be encountered.

- slowdown of the activities after allegations of human rights abuses by ecoguards on population (most unproven so far), reported by international NGOs, and a media campaign
- conflicts with communities

2.3 Lessons learnt

A workshop with all the stakeholders (Administration, technical and financial partners, forestry and mining operators, Communities, etc) was organized

It appeared that some communities were not against the creation of the park, but it was a way to express themselves and to be listened by the Government on the lack of basic social commodities (access to electricity, water, education, health care)

One of the main recommendation of the workshop:

Continue the FPIC process, in accordance with recent national texts and international conventions duly ratified by the Government



Thank you!