Sangha Tri-National Protected Areas Complex

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Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo
Size: 25 000 km² + (7,542 km² TNS site, 17,880 km² buffer zone logged forest concessions)
Participants in coordinating the ongoing transboundary cooperation:

**National Government:**
- Ministries in charge of forests and protected areas in the three countries (Cameroon, CAR and Congo)

**Local Government:**
- Prefects of localities falling into TNS landscape

**Protected area administration:**
- National conservation services of the three parks
  - Lobéke in Cameroon
  - Dzanga Sangha in CAR
  - Nouabale Ndoki in Congo

**International NGOs:**
- WWF (Cameroun, CAR)
- WCS (Congo)

**Objectives:** Develop transboundary cooperation in order to jointly preserve and valorize TNS rich biodiversity.

**Values and importance:** The TNS is the first three-country transboundary area to be nominated as a world heritage Site by UNESCO since July 2012. This was a consequence of its natural values and features which include ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes in a mostly intact and pristine forest landscape at a very large scale. TNS is also a harbor for viable populations of complete faunal and floral communities, including top predators and rare and endangered species.

**Aspects of transboundary cooperation:** Cooperation includes Anti-poaching activities, ecotourism, scientific research and forest conservation.

**Stage in the process:** Heads-of-state agreement signed and land use management plan under implementation.

**Date Established:** December 7, 2000.

**Official Protected Area Designation:** UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 2012.

**The Catalyst:** After the Central Africa Summit held in Yaoundé (Cameroon) in 1999, Heads-of-States decided to join their effort to preserve their forest as a contribution to worldwide initiative to conserve biodiversity and tropical forest. Joined management of Transboundary protected areas was among the main strategies adopted at the end of the summit.

**History:** The main factor was the politic will of Heads-of -States after the Yaoundé Summit in Cameroon.
**Barriers, challenges, obstacles, or constraints:**
- Increase of poaching especially driven by the development of ivory market in Asia
- Mining and industrial projects
- Low financial resources

To face these challenges the Tri-national trust fund (FTNS) was created to support protected areas and cooperation activities. Also sensitization and dialog among different stakeholders are regularly encouraged.

**The Governance and Management Structures**

The TNS cooperation agreement created three governance structures:

- A Tri-national committee for supervision and arbitration (CTPE) which includes the three ministers in charge of protected areas from each TNS country. The committee is in charge of decision.

- A Tri-national committee for monitoring (CTS) which includes the three Divisional Officers from each TNS country with the role of monitoring.

- A Tri-national committee for planning and implementation (CTPE) which is constituted by parks managers and their partners. CTPE has the role of planning and implement joint actions such as: anti-poaching patrols, ecotourism and wildlife monitoring.

**Results**

- Creation of a Tri-national Brigade
- Nomination of TNS in the world heritage list
- Creation of a Trust Fund for sustainable financing of TNS activities

**Lessons Learned**

- The TNS cooperation is the first transboundary cooperation in the Congo Basin region. Its experience is inspiring and fostering many other conservation initiatives.

- Besides of the legal governance structure, the presence of a permanent body (i.e executive secretary) will help to better coordinate activities, improve communication between the different governance structures and impulse new ideas.

**For More Information**
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