

# **Proposal to CEPF: DRC-62610: Establishment and management of the Itombwe Massif and Misotshi-Kabogo as a new protected areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

## **Process Framework**

### **Project Background**

Since 2006, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been working with the local people in the Itombwe Massif and the Misotshi-Kabogo highlands to improve the conservation of both of these biologically important regions. The situation varies between the two sites as explained below.

**Itombwe Massif:** The Itombwe massif has been known to be biologically important since the 1950s when research by Prigogine and Laurent identified species that were endemic to this mountain region. Surveys conducted by WCS in 1995 showed that the region was still very important and plans were thus made to develop a protected area. Unfortunately the Congo wars in 1996,1998 and 2002 led to a halt of these plans. However ICCN and the Ministry for the Environment in DRC were made aware of the importance of this place by these surveys. Subsequent surveys in 2004 and 2006 of Itombwe highlighted that the area was still rich in species including Grauers gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*), elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) and Bongo (*Taurotragus euryceros*). In 2006 with the reports of these surveys and other sources, the Minister for the Environment unilaterally declared Itombwe to be a Natural Reserve and an arête was drawn up establishing the reserve. This was done with no consultation with the communities living in the reserve and the document did not include any boundary points, only a draft map that WCS had prepared in one of its reports. This naturally led to a lot of friction in the Itombwe region and local NGOs started to call for the annulment of the arête. Rainforest Foundation supported these local NGOs and started to move the case forward to degazette the reserve. WWF also had started a project to support Itombwe at around this time and was arguing that the reserve needed modifying but did not need to be degazetted and conducted some socioeconomic surveys across a large part of Itombwe to obtain information on use of the region by the people and their interest in conserving it. In 2008 WCS called a meeting of all the parties to try to find a compromise. At this meeting it was agreed that WWF, WCS, Rainforest Foundation and two local NGOs from Itombwe AfriCapacity, RACCOMI, would work together to consult the communities in the massif and identify possible compromise boundaries and develop a zoning plan for the reserve that would incorporate the needs to conserve the unique biodiversity of the area and the development needs of the local communities.

Since that time WCS, WWF and RACCOMI/AfriCapacity have been working together to visit all of the traditional chiefs and their councils and all of the villages in the massif to present information about why a reserve is important for Itombwe, to identify where to establish reserve boundaries if there is consent to the finalization of the existing reserve, and to start discussions on the zoning of the reserve once

gazetted. This process has been necessarily slow partly not to rush the communities, but also because of insecurity and the presence of both “mai mai” and FDLR (Forces de Liberation du Rwanda) rebel groups. To date we have completed all the consultations with villages and have boundaries roughly agreed for the whole reserve. There is a need to visit certain sites to obtain names of locations where the boundaries will pass in the field (such as hill top names, rivers etc) and this process is underway at the moment. Both indigenous (Pygmy - Mbutu) and other ethnic groups (Baoloolo, Bembe) have been consulted in each of the villages during this process and the villages are now pushing to speed-up and complete the process.

### ***Misotshi-Kabogo Massif***

Surveys conducted by WCS in the Misotshi-Kabogo massif in 2007 identified this area as being of conservation importance with the discovery of six new vertebrate species for the World. Subsequent socioeconomic surveys to all the major villages around the massif identified the extent to which the people living here rely on the forest for their annual incomes. The socioeconomic survey also asked households their interest in protecting the forest and if so how they would prefer it to be protected. About 90% stated that they thought a protected area was a good idea and 60% wanted a national park to be created. In 2009, WCS and ICCN held meetings with the traditional chiefs (Mwamis) of the villages in both Katanga and South Kivu (the provinces which overlap the massif) to present the findings of the biological and socioeconomic research and to discuss options for the conservation of the region's biodiversity. At both meetings the Mwamis voted to create a National park in the region to be called Ngamikka Park (after Nganja, Misotshi, Kabogo cultural sites in the massif). Since that time, WCS has been working with each of the village councils in 91 of the villages (most of them) surrounding the proposed Ngamikka Park (along the lake shore and also along the road between Kalemie and Fizi) to map where the boundaries of the park should be as well as buffer zones and village expansion areas for agriculture. Villages in the Lubondja groupement (unknown number) in the north east are the only villages that we have not been able to access as FDLR rebels have stationed themselves here and it is too insecure to visit. Despite this inability to visit these villages, the Chief of these villages has given his consent to the creation of the park. In addition, along the road between Kalemie and Fizi, 253 pygmies have been consulted within 91 Bantu villages.

The boundaries of the park for Katanga Province have been agreed and accepted by the local communities and we are working with the Provincial Ministry for the Environment to gazette the park at the provincial level (a current pre-requisite to establishing a park at the national level in DRC). In South Kivu, we are planning on training community members to map the boundaries with GPS units as we have been unable to access South Kivu to complete the boundary demarcation due to political instability. We will then submit a similar document to South Kivu province to gazette at Provincial level.

Throughout the process we have not applied pressure but have presented the information and asked the people what they would like to see. We had expected they would want a community reserve but they wanted a national park because they felt it would a) bring greater attention to their area and hence potential funding in future, and b) it would be a stronger mechanism for protecting their land against immigrants coming from the north in search of land.

## ***Project preparation***

The project we are presenting was prepared incorporating our knowledge of:

1. The local socioeconomic situation from the two socioeconomic surveys conducted in Ngamikka by WCS and in Itombwe by WWF
2. The recommendations from the various meetings conducted during joint planning and implementation of the participatory process to gazette the areas
3. The responses of village committees at participatory meetings regarding the overall boundaries of both sites
4. The responses of traditional chiefs during numerous consultations where they have been assembled together, as well as in their individual “Chefferies”
5. WCSs and partners knowledge of the terrain and feasibility of implementation given the insecurity in both sites
6. Meetings with our NGO partners (WWF, RACCOMI, AfriCapacity and Rainforest Foundation) at which various strategies to move the process forward were discussed.

Six project objectives are identified based on these consultations and can be grouped as follows:

- A. Supporting direct requests from the community: Obj 2 and Obj 5: developing an accepted zoning methodology with the community in Itombwe and supporting local NGOs with community members to work with these communities to identify zones.
- B. Putting in place mechanisms that will fulfill the communities desires: Obj 1: Creating the reserves legally with their support which will hopefully lead to additional funding for these areas and Obj 4: Undertaking REDD+ feasibility analyses for both sites which will lead to carbon financing for communities in the long term.
- C. Establishing management of the two protected areas: Obj 3: Establishing monitoring programs with the local communities and Obj 6: Putting in place preliminary management plans in collaboration with the local communities.

## **Participatory Implementation**

### ***Ngamikka Park***

In the case of Ngamikka Park WCS staff have consulted with every village/traditional chief whose jurisdiction borders the proposed park; both those along the lake shore (Lake Tanganyika) and those along the road linking Fizi to Kalemie. No additional villages occur within the proposed park. This consultation has resulted in the development of a zoning plan which delineates the location of each village settlement, a zone of agricultural expansion and sustainable harvesting of forest products for communities, and the zone of core protection (park boundary). Some discussion has been had about what activities are allowed in each zone but there is a need to formally agree these as part of the legal gazettment of the park. Two activities are likely to come up as potentially desirable in the core

protected area (which will become the park): bushmeat hunting, and travel routes across the mountain range for goods and artisanal mining. At present, much of the artisanal mining conducted in the proposed park is by people from outside the region (from Bukavu) as the amounts of gold being found are minimal. There is some local revenue made by supplying miners with food but not much more than this. Bushmeat hunting is widespread and there will be a need to work with communities to agree where hunting can occur sustainably, which species can be hunted and where it will be banned. Access is needed for people transporting crops from the road to the lake shore villages and fish back to the road villages and it will be necessary to agree which paths are maintained for this. Consultations will be made as part of the legal gazettment on these issues.

### ***Itombwe Massif***

Objective 2 is aimed specifically to start the zoning process for the Itombwe Massif now that the overall borders have been agreed and Objective 5 to support NGOs comprising members of the community to work on the zoning with their communities. Using previously collected survey and monitoring data we already know where critical sites for large mammals and amphibians occur. We will use this information together with the known locations of villages identified by WWF to design a draft zoning plan so that ICCN and its partners know what they want to protect and where (this has been partially done already). We will then meet with the traditional chiefs and discuss a) what different zones will be necessary (eg. core protection, sustainable use of NTFPs, timber harvesting, artisanal mining, development and settlement zones, cultural sites etc) in the reserve, b) what activities will be allowed in each zone and c) design a process to visit sites and obtain agreements on where boundaries of each zone will be established. This will be done at a village level and allow inputs from both women and men separately as was done for Ngamikka. As part of this process, we will identify existing locations and uses of the forest by the communities, cultural regulations defining what can be done in the areas around each village, the boundaries of the village and forest it can access, potential impacts on villages of stricter laws in core protection areas and sustainable use areas, the villages input on possible mitigation strategies, and strategies for the management of the zones by the communities.

### **Criteria for eligibility for affected persons**

In the case of Ngamikka Park the eligibility for affected persons would be those people found in all villages that border the park and use it in some way. As human population density in this area is very low because of a long history of insecurity in the area there are no other villages that have an impact on the park other than those along the road to the west and along the lake shore to the east. The main people likely to be affected are the hunters and artisanal miners although as stated above there are few local miners and most of the commerce is made by supplying food to these people. We have already employed 16 of the hunters as monitoring rangers for the area to provide them with an alternative way of earning an income and we would aim to target future positions where possible to these two groups. Funding from REDD+ financing would partly aim to target those people who suffer have had the greatest

negative impact from the creation of the park whilst at the same time, aiming to raise the standard of living for all people living along the lake and along the road.

In the case of Itombwe massif, the eligibility for affected persons would be all of the villages within or bordering the reserve. During the zoning process we will obtain a better estimate of how the zones might affect particular groups and ways in which these impacts could be minimized.

As pygmies tend to supply bushmeat to other ethnic groups we will be particularly careful to consult them separately and get their inputs into the zoning plans at both sites. Women will also be consulted separately as their needs and their use of the forests will differ from the men.

### **Measures to assist the affected persons**

The measures required to assist those families that will be most affected by the creation of the two protected areas will be discussed as part of the zoning process in Itombwe and as part of the legal gazettment in Ngamikka. We have given some ideas of how this might occur above.

### **Conflict Resolution and Complaint Mechanisms**

The main groups that are likely to have conflict in Itombwe include ICCN, its International NGO partners (WCS, WWF, Rainforest Foundation), the Traditional Chiefs and villages they represent and the local NGO partners (RACCOMI and AfriCapacity). It is also possible that different groups within the villages may have conflicts among themselves over the reserve and its zoning but many of these conflicts could be dealt with using traditional structures within the village. We would propose that bi-annual meetings are held at a minimum with the traditional chiefs and other stakeholders to discuss issues arising from the zoning of the reserve and once zoned from its management. Creating a forum where all parties can share their concerns can help diffuse friction and allow problems to be aired. While ICCN could host these fora it may sometimes be necessary for another party to do so as complaints may be leveled against ICCN at times.

In Ngamikka the main parties will be ICCN, the traditional chiefs and their villages and WCS, the only NGO operating in the region at present. Again we would suggest a bi-annual meeting with the traditional chiefs to examine issues arising from the management of the park.

In cases where issues cannot be resolved among the parties present at these bi-annual meetings we would then aim to involve the Local Government Administration to act as an arbitrator.

### **Implementation Arrangements**

The implementation arrangements are summarized in the following table which indicates how different stakeholders from both sites will participate in the six key components of the project:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Stakeholders involved</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
1. Legal gazettment documents for creation of Ngamikka Park and Itombwe Reserve finalized	ICCN	Lead process at national and provincial level
	International and local NGOs	Obtain and disseminate boundary data
	Legal group eg. Avocats sans Frontiers	Draft legal texts, obtain input and finalize
	Local Communities	Identify boundaries, zones and activities allowed in zones
	Ministry of Environment	Supporting creation at national level
	Ministry of Mines	Work with ICCN to re-allocate mining concessions in both sites
	Provincial Ministries of Environment	Establish CCPFs and discuss creation of Ngamikka
2. Accepted zoning methodology developed for Itombwe and being implemented	ICCN	Lead process at reserve
	International and local NGOs	Design draft zoning plan and present to communities as an option - then incorporate discussions and obtain data for boundaries of zones
	Local Communities	Work with ICCN and NGOs to identify possible zones, what is allowed in each zones and where boundaries of zones occur
3. Monitoring programs using MIST established in Ngamikka and Itombwe using local community or ICCN rangers to collect data	ICCN	Monitoring in Itombwe with ICCN rangers
	WCS	Support MIST establishment at both sites and provide technical support for its use and maintenance
	Monitoring Rangers	Local community provides monitoring rangers in Ngamikka until they can be employed by ICCN
	Local Community	Provide feedback to results of monitoring
4. REDD+ feasibility assessment made for Ngamikka and Itombwe	ICCN	Support process and push results at national level
	International and Local NGOs	Help measure carbon, forest loss and scenario analyses as well as drafting REDD+ documents
	Monitoring Rangers	Measure carbon in Ngamikka
	Local Communities	Engage in REDD+ assessment and understand the possibilities of funding for conservation of forest

5. Support Local NGO capacity development and implementation of zoning process and socioeconomic surveys	AfriCapacity and RACCOMI	Undertake zoning efforts in areas that are difficult to access by other groups
	WCS	Design Zoning process and work to mentor and oversee Local NGOs implementing this
	Local Communities	Work with local NGOs to identify zone boundaries
6. Preliminary management plans developed for both sites that give direction to the management while zoning/gazettment is taking place	ICCN	Lead process at both sites
	International and Local NGOs	Provide technical expertise in the design and preparation of the management plans
	Local Communities	Provide inputs from consultations to the management plans and support their implementation

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

Much of the monitoring of community consultation and involvement as well as agreements to any restrictions will come from the legal gazettment and zoning processes that will be undertaken under this project. The results of these will include “process verbale” (PV) accounts of every meeting with the community which will be signed by members present and with summaries of the main decisions made. Zoning maps will be presented to the communities for each of their village areas and members will participate in determining where different activities should take place. These will then be visited on the ground and GPS locations obtained for the boundaries once they have been agreed. PVs will be obtained for each boundary assessment also. Identification of potential community members likely to be affected most by the zoning process will be a target of community meetings and where possible we will aim to minimize negative impacts to people. Where this is not possible we will explore options for mitigation and these will be documented in the PVs.