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## USAID FUNDED COMMUNITY-BASED COUNTER WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING ACTIVITY

### OVERVIEW

The Community-Based Counter Wildlife Trafficking (CBCWT) Activity aims to enhance community resilience and wildlife conservation in the Mbomu-Uele border region between the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The objectives of the activity are to 1) contain the unrestrained growth of illegal extractive activities, 2) promote more sustainable, pro-conservation methods within contained footprints, 3) increase economic opportunities and benefits for local communities, and 4) address transhumance issues by establishing agreed-upon corridors and managed grazing zones to minimize land degradation and local conflict with sedentary communities who depend on those same resources.

### BACKGROUND

The Mbomou-Uele region experiences continuous low-intensity conflict that exacerbates – and is in turn fueled by – wide-spread poverty, weak institutional governance, displacement of people and the resulting trauma and insecurity of the population. The historic abundance of natural resources has been intrinsically linked with violent conflict in both CAR and DRC and the situation continues to attract an array of armed groups that prey upon residents and the natural resource base to finance their activities. Under unremitting pressure of ivory poaching, bushmeat hunting, illegal wildlife trade, unregulated mineral extraction, armed conflict, lack of governance and the subsistence needs of a growing population, the biodiversity of the region is depleting rapidly. As the holders of the mandates for the protected areas of Garamba National Park, Chinko Project Area and the Bili/Mbomou Core Conservation Area, African Parks (AP) and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) are working together to advance a regional approach to these landscape challenges.

Under the CBCWT, USAID is partnering with AP and AWF, to engage communities in the peripheries of these protected areas. The activity supports community structures and, working through them, promotes sustainable and pro-conservation livelihood strategies that meet basic needs while increasing income and resiliency. USAID's CBCWT interventions focus on communities that are particularly vulnerable and whose livelihood practices constitute threats to biodiversity.

Once implemented, the overall outcomes of the CBCWT activity will be:

- Improved economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and utilization in targeted pilot communities
- An enhanced level of responsible exploitation and protection of natural resources

### STRATEGY AND APPROACH

CBCWT's strategic approach emphasizes the mutually reinforcing nature of enhancing the rule of law, pro-conservation livelihoods, and social cohesion to increase community engagement and introduce pro-conservation techniques and mindsets. The application of enhanced livelihood approaches generates maximum benefit when it occurs within a formal structure in which customary and statutory laws are enforced. In addition, as communities, and especially women, benefit from increased income and community governance, their interest in sharing information with Park teams and other actors increases, which allows for a collaborative response to ensure their security and repel threats to biodiversity. With wildlife and landscapes benefitting from community protection, communities can continue to scale up sustainable livelihoods for the benefit of their families and their environments.

### BENEFICIARIES

- For artisanal and small mining (ASM) for example, the project estimates that between 16,000 and 20,000 people work in ASM around Garamba, in about 20 villages. If conservatively aim to target an average of 3 villages/communities per protected area, the project will have an impact on 2,400 to 3,000 miners in Garamba, scaling up to 12,000 – 15,000 if their dependents are included.
- The project expects to reach more than 12,000 people through direct engagement and support.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM FY 21

#### Garamba National Park

- Trained 3,781 members of Conservation Committees in sustainable farming, beekeeping, fish-farming, and poultry vaccination, including 1,118 women (30%).
- Fish farming activities led to the development of 32 fishponds, covering 8,500 square meters.
- Developed 19 radio programs that aired in outlying communities for a total of 1,208 broadcasts.

#### Chinko Conservation Area

- Installed two Early Warning Systems (EWS) with high-frequency radios in Banabongo and Madabazouma in partnership with Invisible Children.
- Reached 7,806 community members (including 4,955 men, 1,999 women, 333 girls and 519 boys) with sensitization and training sessions on sustainable fishing, hunting, environmental education, sustainable pastoralism, sustainable artisanal mining and participatory mapping for land use planning.

## Bili-Uere Hunting Domain

- Established four additional local development committees in Zambabu, Bamela, Ndolomo and Zeru following consultations with local communities, gathering together 161 people, including 43 women.
- Completed participatory mapping of four local communities (*groupements*) to help reduce conflict linked to land use and natural resource management in protected areas, involving 743 community members (and including 111 women).