

Conflict prevention and resolution in Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire



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Acronyms

CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CPP	Conflict Prevention Platform
CSRS	Centre Suisse de Recherche Scientifique
DG	Djouroutou-Grebo corridor
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FDA	Forestry Development Authority (Liberia)
FFI	Fauna & Flora International
GIZ	Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
GNF	Grebo National Forest
GRASP	Great Apes Survival Project
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KfW	KfW Entwicklungsbank (KfW Development Bank)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OIPR	L'Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves
ONUCI	Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SODEFOR	Société de développement des forêts
STEWART	Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Region
TG	Taï-Grebo corridor
TNP	Taï National Park
TSFC	Taï-Sapo Forest Complex
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCF	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Summary

In January 2013, the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) undertook a study to determine the conflict implications of the proposed establishment of two landscape corridors linking Taï National Park in Côte d'Ivoire to Grebo National Forest in neighbouring Liberia. The corridor initiative is part of a broader plan to establish a connected network of protected areas known as the Taï-Sapo Forest Complex.

This report specifically looks at the conflicts that currently affect the sites of the proposed corridors, conflicts that might arise in each location as a result of the establishment of the wildlife corridor, and the conflicts corridor managers are likely to face going forward. Extensive consultations with local and national stakeholders identified eight types of conflict affecting – or possibly affecting – the proposed landscape corridor sites: inter-community conflicts; human-wildlife conflicts; intra- and inter-institutional conflicts; benefit-sharing conflicts; resource access conflicts; transboundary conflicts; park-people conflicts; and armed conflicts.

With this analysis in place, the project team worked with stakeholders to identify solutions and peacebuilding opportunities that might arise from the project, and developed a roadmap for the creation of a conflict prevention platform that can be used to increase dialogue, promote community management, encourage transboundary collaboration, and help with the identification of shared conservation and development interests.

1. Introduction

In January 2013 the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)¹ undertook a study to determine the conflict implications of the proposed establishment of two landscape corridors linking Taï National Park in Côte d'Ivoire to Grebo National Forest in neighbouring Liberia.

The study came out of recommendations developed during a 2009 workshop convened by WCF and the UNEP Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) to examine – with a wide variety of stakeholders – the creation of a transboundary landscape corridor linking Taï National Park (TNP) with surrounding classified forests in Côte d'Ivoire as well as with Grebo National Forest (GNF) and Sapo National Park in Liberia. Working groups at the workshop focused on five key topics:

1. The structure and mechanisms of transboundary collaboration;
2. Analysis of transboundary legislation and law enforcement;
3. Analysis of the viability of payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes across the site;
4. Land-use planning for the establishment of the transboundary corridor; and
5. Transboundary conflict prevention and resolution.

Stakeholders agreed that research gaps existed in these five key areas, and that further work was needed on each topic before proceeding with the proposal at a political level. This report addresses the fifth topic, transboundary conflict prevention and resolution.

Landscape corridors are proposed throughout the ecosystem to ensure “the ecological sustainability and integrity of the Taï-Sapo complex, focusing on key species, unique habitats and critical ecosystem functions.”² The corridors will help to ensure gene diversity and the survival of the ecosystem’s fauna. Some corridors already exist, while some will need to be established.

This study looks at the conflict issues surrounding the proposed establishment and operation of two transboundary corridors needed to link Taï National Park with Grebo National Forest³. The first proposed corridor follows two parallel rivers from TNP to the border, a distance of just

¹ IISD is a Canadian environmental policy think tank: www.iisd.org.

² Refisch et al (2009) *Final Report on the Workshop for a Transboundary Initiative to Create a Landscape Corridor between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the Taï-Sapo Complex*, WCF, UNEP and GRASP, Abidjan.

³ A significant portion of Grebo National Forest (97,140ha) is proposed to become a national park (see below); the rest of the forest is proposed to become part of a large forestry concession.

3.5km. The village of Taï lies between the two rivers. The second corridor follows the Hana River from TNP through the town of Djouroutou to the Liberian border 16km away. The width of the proposed corridors is the subject of an ongoing study, but bands of protected space along each riverbank will be managed with full community involvement. Currently neither corridor has protected status, but nevertheless a recent WCF study shows that animals are present in the corridors, despite high human and agricultural pressures: there are plantations right up to the riverbanks in some areas.⁴

This report specifically looks at the conflicts that currently affect the sites of the proposed corridors, conflicts that might arise in each location as a result of the establishment of the wildlife corridor, and the conflicts corridor managers are likely to face going forward. The report also tries to identify solutions and peacebuilding opportunities that might arise from the project, and proposes the creation of a conflict prevention platform that can be used to increase dialogue, promote community management, encourage transboundary collaboration, and help with the identification of shared conservation and development interests. Conservationists at the very least want to ensure that the project does no harm: that it does not create new or exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts. Instead, they should be identifying how the project might create opportunities for peacebuilding.⁵ The focus is not simply on violent conflicts, but rather on any situation where two or more parties have, or perceive to have, incompatible goals and interests, and act upon these differences.⁶

The two main objectives of the report are:

1. To provide an in-depth study on the historical, current and future environmental conflict issues present in the proposed wildlife corridors linking Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire, to Grebo National Forest, Liberia; and
2. To develop a road map for the implementation of a conflict prevention platform associated with the corridors.

Field research for the report focused on extensive community and stakeholder consultations in Abidjan, Guiglo, Duekoue, the villages of Taï and Djouroutou, and other affected communities in January 2013 (January 10-18). Due to a closed border, it was unfortunately not possible to consult with stakeholders on the Liberian side of the border. Consultations were held with: communities, local authorities (including village chiefs and land chiefs), conservationists, government ministries, forestry authorities, development agencies, the parks authority, donor

⁴ WCF (2011) *Inventory of the proposed landscape corridors between Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire and Grebo National Forest, Liberia*, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Abidjan

⁵ Hammill et al (2009) *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation: Practitioners' Manual*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Winnipeg

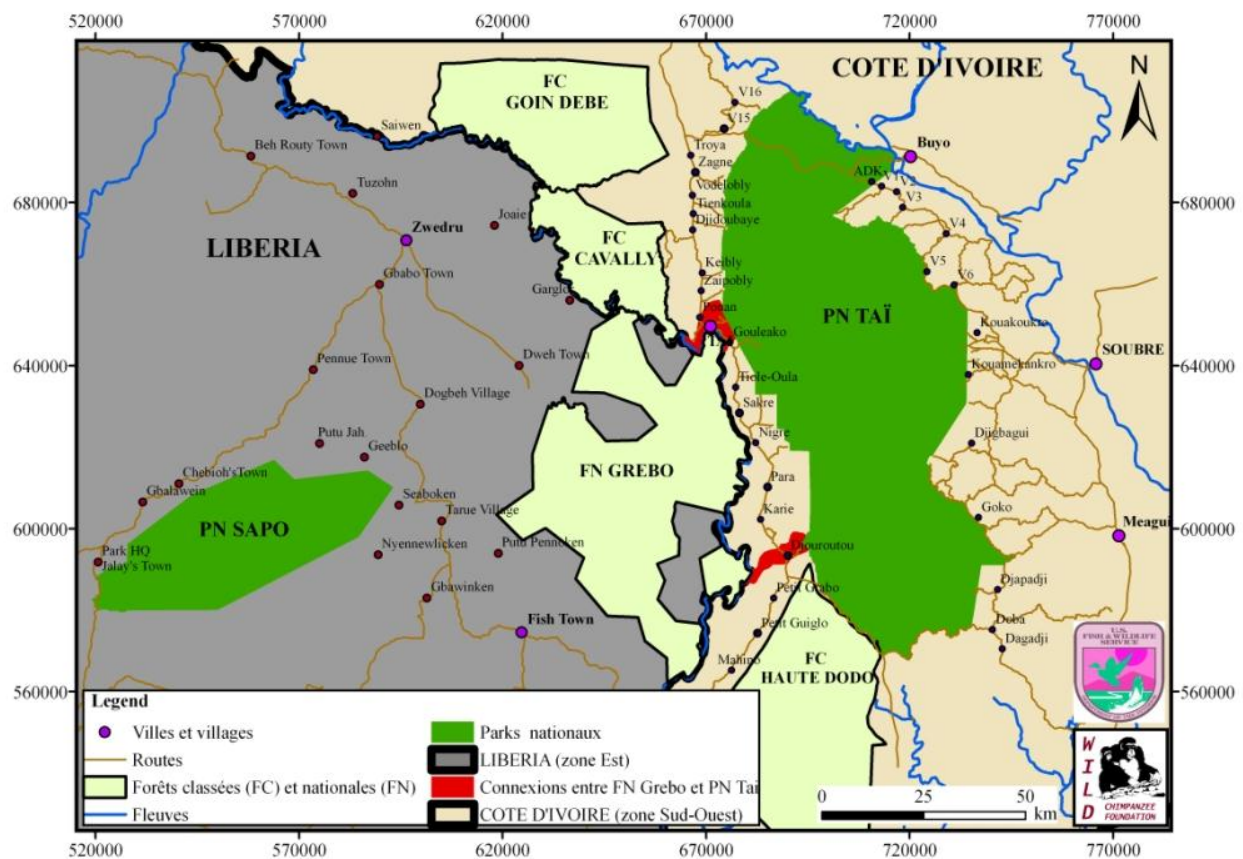
⁶ Hammill et al (2009)

agencies, humanitarian agencies, the United Nation's peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI), and other relevant parties.

2. The proposed corridors

Eleven wildlife corridors have been proposed, which if established will create an integrated landscape between Sapo National Park and Taï National Park, protecting more than 13,000km² of connected habitat. This study focuses on the two proposed transboundary corridors that will connect TNP to neighbouring Grebo National Forest (GNF) in Liberia: the Taï-Grebo (TG) corridor on the northwest side of the park and the Djouroutou-Grebo (DG) corridor at the park's southwest edge (see Map 1).

Map 1: Proposed wildlife corridors linking TNP and GNF (in red)





The Saro River, site of the proposed Tai-Grebo landscape corridor

Tai-Grebo corridor: The proposed northern corridor, passing by the village of Tai, will follow the N'Ze and Saro Rivers along a narrow stretch of land (approximately 3.5km) between the park and the Cavally River. Tai village, located between the two rivers, is estimated to have a population of between 6,000 and 8,000 inhabitants, and when counted with surrounding villages near the site, local population densities are high. There is a lot of cultivation in and around the corridor, focused on cocoa and rubber. There is less evidence of poaching in the north, but this could simply be a reflection of lower wildlife populations near the TG corridor. Electrification in the region is sporadic, but an improved connection to the national grid is envisaged by the end of 2013.



The Hana River, site of the proposed Djouroutou-Grebo landscape corridor

Djouroutou-Grebo corridor: The proposed southern corridor passes through the village of Djouroutou along the Hana River. It is significantly longer than the TG corridor: a stretch of approximately 16km of land will need to be protected. Population densities around this corridor are lower than with the TG corridor, as there is more land between the park and the Liberian border. Cocoa and palm are the dominant crops, and most cultivation is done by the immigrant community. Accessing this part of the country can be difficult due to poor road connections, particularly during the rainy season, making it difficult for farmers to access markets with their goods. The region is not connected to the national electricity grid, and must rely on generators for power.

3. Historical and current context for the proposed corridor sites

3.1 Conservation context

Taï National Park: First protected as a forest reserve in 1926, Taï forest was declared a national park in 1972; ten years later, it was inscribed onto the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites for

its outstanding natural values.⁷ It lies within the Upper Guinea Forest Region, one of the world's most important and biodiverse ecosystems.

The park is primarily made up of lowland tropical rainforest, and is home to more than a quarter of Africa's mammals, including twelve species of primate, pygmy hippopotamus, olive colobus, leopards, forest elephants, Jentink's duikers, and a significant population of Western chimpanzees. The park remains largely intact, despite more than a decade of intermittent instability and conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. Together with classified Ivorian forests and Sapo National Park and Grebo National Forest in neighbouring Liberia (see below), it forms the largest remaining block of contiguous, primary tropical rainforest in West Africa. A recent study by WCF confirmed - mostly through indirect observations - that bovids, primates, large mammals (elephants, leopards, pygmy hippos) and birds are currently using the proposed corridors linking these habitats, despite high levels of human pressure.⁸ To protect park habitats, TNP is surrounded by a 5km buffer zone called the *Taï Zone de Protection*, however in practice this buffer zone has simply been integrated into the park boundary.

The park is managed by OIPR (*L'Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves*), under the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Conservation activities in the park are focused on protection and monitoring, scientific research, education, and the design and implementation of micro-projects supporting the local population.

Conservation challenges for TNP include poaching, logging, mining, agricultural encroachment, and limited funding and capacity for the national parks authority. Charcoal, though widely used as a local energy source in the absence of reliable, continuous electrification, is produced using community forests and as such is not a threat to TNP. The construction of a road around the park, meant in part to improve protection, has also made the park more vulnerable to the challenges listed above by improving accessibility to both the forest and the markets for forest products (such as bushmeat). The east side of the park - the opposite side from the proposed wildlife corridors - is more exposed to these threats, as it is more accessible and local population densities are higher there than to the west of the park. Nevertheless, population densities are increasing on the park's western edge.

There are three classified forests in Côte d'Ivoire near TNP which are included in the larger Taï-Sapo Forest Complex (TSFC): Goin-Débé, Cavally and Haute Dodo. These classified forests fall under the management of SODEFOR (*Société de développement des forêts*). Unfortunately, Goin-Débé and Haute Dodo are today largely lost to agricultural encroachment, primarily cocoa,

⁷ In 2006 N'Zo Forest Reserve, found to the north of TNP, was incorporated into the national park boundary, increasing its size.

⁸ WCF (2011) *Inventory of the proposed landscape corridors between Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire and Grebo National Forest, Liberia*, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Abidjan

rubber and palm plantations. Following the 2010 post-election crisis and until February 2013, Cavally was at least partially under the control of armed individuals. These armed individuals were selling access to forest lands to local and immigrant farmers, increasing agricultural encroachment and threatening Cavally's wildlife and ecosystem. SODEFOR regained control of the forest in February 2013.

The park lies within a Conservation Hotspot (as designated by Conservation International), a WWF Global 200 Eco-region, a WWF/IUCN Centre of Plant Diversity, and is one of the world's Endemic Bird Areas. Despite this, recent instability and accessibility challenges mean that there is little tourism in the park, though improved security in the area has renewed efforts to increase the number of visitors through improved infrastructure and marketing. But with little in the way of tourism and no scheme in place to compensate communities for protecting ecosystem services, the local population do not see themselves as deriving many benefits from the park. These communities do, however, have an increased understanding of the valuable ecosystem services that Taï provides, including: climate regulation, watershed protection, nutrient cycling and rich biodiversity.⁹

Grebo National Forest: Grebo National Forest is a forest reserve found on Liberia's eastern border with Côte d'Ivoire, across the Cavally River from Taï National Park. The forest remains reasonably intact to date, but a lack of effective protection does not bode well for its future. Poaching pressures are high, and a recent wildlife survey by WCF found fewer animals than expected within the forest. Much of the bushmeat sold in western Côte d'Ivoire is rumoured to come from Grebo, and there are signs of that Ivoirian populations have crossed the river into Grebo in search of cultivable land and have settled inside the forest. Encouragingly, a significant portion of GNF (97,140ha) is proposed to become a national park; the rest of the forest will be integrated into a forestry concession for future logging.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the proposed park border overlaps with an existing mining concession granted by the government; a lack of action from the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to suspend this concession threatens both the reserve and the ecosystem.

⁹ Refisch et al (2009) 'Final Report on the Workshop for a Transboundary Initiative to Create a Landscape Corridor between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the Taï-Sapo Complex', WCF, UNEP and GRASP, Abidjan.

¹⁰ Logging has yet to begin in the proposed concession, and it is unclear which private sector actor will have rights to exploit the concession.

Sapo National Park: Founded in 1983, Sapo National Park (SNP) is Liberia's only national park and is the largest protected rainforest in the country. Located to the west of GNF, it is proposed to be connected to Tai and Grebo protected areas by a series of wildlife corridors. Conservation activities in the park effectively stopped during the civil conflicts of the 1990s and early 2000s, but have since slowly restarted; the park is now under the management of the government's Forestry Development Authority (FDA), which operates with the support of a number of international NGOs, including Fauna and Flora International (FFI).



Grebo National Forest and the Cavally River

3.2 Demographic context

Sparsely populated upon the establishment of TNP, the proposed corridor site has seen population densities increase through a combination of natural population growth among indigenous groups and significant immigration into the area from other parts of Côte d'Ivoire and abroad. Up to 72 villages now surround the park.¹¹ The exact population in the villages of Tai and Djouroutou is uncertain as there has not been a recent census, but one administrator estimated that there were 150,000 inhabitants in the area between Tai and the town of Guiglo to the north. On the park's western edge, the border has been largely respected, even during

¹¹ UNEP-WCMC, World Heritage Sites: Tai National Park, Cote d'Ivoire

the conflict; settlements within the park boundary are largely limited to the eastern side of TNP.

Ethnic differences are significant in the region – particularly in the wake of the recent crisis – and land shortages often generate inter-community tensions. Guéré, Oubi, Kroumen and Bakoué groups are indigenous to the corridor sites. These populations, particularly Guéré, make up the majority of the refugee and internally displaced populations forced to flee during the 2010 post-election violence.¹² It is unclear how many Ivorian refugees remain in Liberia – estimates taken from humanitarian organizations during the consultations ranged from 22,000 to 75,000 – but while many have returned, still others are hesitant to come back to the region for fear of reprisals from forces loyal to the current administration.¹³

Populations of Baoulé (from the centre of the country) and Burkinabé (from Burkina Faso) are the two most prominent immigrant groups on the park's western edge. The decision to migrate into the area is driven by prospective farming revenues, and these economic motivations make Burkinabé and Baoulé populations less likely to be concerned with the park and the conservation of the local ecosystem. These immigrant populations are responsible for much of the regional expansion of commercial crops like cocoa and rubber; state policies initially encouraged immigration to meet agricultural labour shortages as Côte d'Ivoire sought to establish itself as a world leader in cocoa cultivation.¹⁴

3.3 Livelihood context

Livelihoods in the proposed corridor region are overwhelmingly agrarian, focused on the cultivation of perennial cash crops cocoa and rubber around the TG corridor and cocoa and palm around the DG corridor. To a lesser extent, communities also farm food crops, including rice, yam and cassava. Perennial crops are cultivated on about half of the land in both proposed corridors, with food crops taking up less space: 14 percent for TG, 9 percent for DG.¹⁵ All mentioned crops are planted in the proposed corridor sites.

Agricultural expansion is responsible for much of the region's deforestation, and the economic incentives of commercial agriculture continue to attract migrants to the region. World cocoa prices doubled between late 2008 and early 2011, spurring investments in plantations.¹⁶ The

¹² IRIN News (2012) "Cote d'Ivoire-Liberia: There is no way I could go back", 19 July 2012, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95901/COTE-D-IVOIRE-LIBERIA-There-is-no-way-I-could-go-back>

¹³ IRIN News (2012) "Cote d'Ivoire-Liberia: There is no way I could go back", 19 July 2012, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95901/COTE-D-IVOIRE-LIBERIA-There-is-no-way-I-could-go-back>

¹⁴ Kugelman, M. and S. Levenstein (2012) *The Global Farms Race: Land grabs, agricultural investment, and the struggle for food security*, Island Press, Washington DC.

¹⁵ WCF (2011) *Inventory of the proposed landscape corridors between Tai National Park, Côte d'Ivoire and Grebo National Forest, Liberia*, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Abidjan

¹⁶ Prices have since dropped, but remain 25 percent higher than they were in 2008. For cocoa prices, please see: <http://www.indexmundi.com/commodities/?commodity=cocoa-beans&months=60> (accessed in February 2013).

returns from such investments are rapid and relatively high; with good weather and soil, the investment can start to pay back within just 1.5 years. While cocoa remains the region's dominant crop, economic incentives are shifting cultivation towards rubber, especially near the TG corridor site. Rubber trees take longer to start to pay back (about 7 years), but unlike cocoa, which is harvested twice a year, rubber is harvested year-round for higher returns and a steadier income stream. Rubber prices increased nearly fivefold between early 2009 and early 2011, increasing investments in the commodity.¹⁷ As an added incentive, wildlife will not destroy the crop, as they are liable to do with cocoa plants, further strengthening local livelihood security.

For the southern DG corridor site, investments in palm have increased and are similarly exacerbating land shortages; as with the other two commodities, palm oil prices are increasing, having nearly tripled between late 2008 and early 2011.¹⁸ Investments in commercial crops are



Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest producer of cocoa

¹⁷ For rubber prices, please see: <http://www.indexmundi.com/commodities/?commodity=rubber&months=60> (accessed in February 2013).

¹⁸ For palm prices, please see: <http://www.indexmundi.com/commodities/?commodity=palm-oil&months=60> (accessed in February 2013).

from a mix of individuals and private sector companies, and represent both legal and illegal investments. In a context of high commodity prices and high regional poverty rates¹⁹, it is difficult for communities to prioritize conservation over agricultural land uses.

Poaching remains common in and around the park, despite a national ban on hunting. Efforts have been made – with some success – to reduce the local trade in bushmeat and move local dietary preferences away from park animals towards livestock (beef, chicken), but active bushmeat markets remain in Guiglo, Zagne, Taï and Djouroutou. There is more evidence of poaching in the southern corridor, though this may be a function of there being more animals in that part of the park. While there is some artisanal mining in the east of the park, it is not widespread in the west. There are also small fisheries in the tributaries of the Cavally, including the Hana River, which could impact the movement of animals through the DG corridor. Communities rely on the forest for some non-timber forest products (traditional medicines, fruit), but accelerated land clearances for agricultural expansion threaten this livelihood choice.

3.4 Institutional and legal context

OIPR manages TNP, and its mandate covers management policy, wardening, research, education and communication for all national parks. It operates with the financial and technical support of many partners, including KfW Development Bank, WCF, WWF, GIZ and the Centre Suisse de Recherche Scientifique (CSRS). The proposed corridors, though they technically fall outside of the park boundary, will remain under the primary management of OIPR, as the office retains control over a 10km band of lands surrounding all national parks.

Local governance is divided between village chiefs and land chiefs: village chiefs handle local administration, while land chiefs are tasked with the community's land decisions. Larger towns like Taï and Djouroutou also have mayors, and districts containing a number of villages are administered by prefects. Decisions on the proposed corridor sites will have to engage with all levels of local governance, as well as regional leaders: the northern corridor falls under the jurisdiction of the region of Moyen-Cavally, while the southern DG corridor lies within Bas-Sassandra.

Côte d'Ivoire is a signatory to all major multilateral environmental agreements: the Convention of Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Since 1974 there has been a national ban on hunting, which is widely understood; there is not,

¹⁹ Côte d'Ivoire places 170 out of 187 countries on the 2011 UN Human Development Index. Neighbouring Liberia placed 182 on the same list, with the lowest per capita gross national income of any country in the world. Available here: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Tables.pdf (accessed in February 2013).

however, complementing legislation banning the consumption of bushmeat. As such, poachers must be caught in the act to be prosecuted.

There is also a national law restricting the development of agriculture and other activities in riverine areas: lands cannot be exploited directly up to the edge of rivers and lakes in the country, but must start outside of a given buffer zone between the water and the plantation. The mayor of Taï has indicated a desire to expand this riverine buffer zone, but it remains to be seen whether this will be politically feasible in practice. Enforcing conservation legislation remains a challenge, both in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, as does prosecuting environmental crimes, due to a weak and overburdened judiciary. WCF will commission a further study on the legislative context for conservation in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the coming year.

Côte d'Ivoire does not have a system of statutory land titles in place, and a lack of clear ownership laws and the absence of standardized records, titles and documentation mean that land rights and tenure are key sources of tensions in the region. Sellers, usually from the indigenous population, sell the right of usage, but typically believe that they retain 'title' to the land through their customary rights. Land buyers, often from the immigrant population, purchase the right to use the land, but often believe they have purchased the land outright. As the people giving the land economic value, buyers justifiably believe they can lay claim to the land. Burkinabé populations may not own land in the region, and have no voting rights, but their position as generators of economic value does give them considerable local power. Nevertheless, they fully acknowledge that decisions on land use – including the corridors – must be made with consent of indigenous leaders.

The unstructured, vague and unclear nature of land sales in the region paves the way for conflicts: sales can be revoked without warning; plots can be simultaneously sold to multiple, unknowing buyers; and disputes commonly arise over inheritance, to name a few. With land shortages throughout the region and an increasing population, such conflicts are likely to increase. To address these conflicts, there are traditional conflict resolution mechanisms established in each community, which use rules that are fairly standardized across the area's villages.

The Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture is working towards a centralized, standardized service for land titling. But given that the land question has been a central part of the civil conflicts that have wracked the country over the past two decades, it remains very politically sensitive, and the national government is wary of tackling the issue in a context of fragile peace. As such, it is unlikely that a statutory system of land titles will be established in the near future.

3.5 Conflict context

The post-election crisis in 2010 led to widespread displacement, violence and death in western Côte d'Ivoire. At least 3,000 died during the violence.²⁰ Both sides of the conflict are accused of human rights violations, and an estimated 160,000 Ivoirians who ostensibly supported former President Laurent Gbagbo were forced to flee to neighbouring Liberia.²¹ Attacks by both sides of the conflict on civilians and the murder of people not taking an active part in the hostilities constitute crimes against humanity under the International Criminal Court, according to Human Rights Watch, and continued impunity for Alassane Ouattara's forces is damaging to national reconciliation.²²

With the capture of Gbagbo in April 2011, a measure of stability returned to the region, though sporadic violence continues: in June 2012 seven UN peacekeepers and a dozen civilians were killed in an attack near Taï. The attack happened between the two corridors, and displaced a number of locals who fled towards both proposed corridors sites. It is still unclear who carried out the attacks (the blame has been put on Liberian mercenaries, Ivoirians loyal to Gbagbo and the Ivoirian armed forces), but the violence and displacement that followed highlight the fragility of the current peace and underscore the concerns of those refugees still displaced in Liberia – many of them from the indigenous populations of the region.

The west of the country has a complex history of conflict, oftentimes surrounding land ownership. These conflicts have pitted indigenous communities like the Guéré against rival migrant groups over time.²³ Fighting over prime cocoa-growing lands was common during the crisis, and there are widespread reports that the land of many of the displaced has been sold in their absence and without their knowledge. Pro-government militias that cleared Cavally classified forest of pro-Gbagbo fighters left the forest to armed individuals, who then took over the forest and were now selling immigrant and indigenous farmers the right to clear trees and cultivate within the habitat. SODEFOR cleared the forest of these armed individuals in an operation in February 2013.

The direct impacts of the most recent crisis on TNP were significant, as the park was not patrolled by the authorities and poaching activities subsequently increased substantially before

²⁰ Human Rights Watch (2011) "They Killed Them Like It Was Nothing: The Need for Justice in Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Crimes", Human Rights Watch, New York

²¹ Human Rights Watch (2011) "They Killed Them Like It Was Nothing: The Need for Justice in Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Crimes", Human Rights Watch, New York and IRIN News (2012) 'COTE D'IVOIRE: Everyone is looking for safety', June 13 2012, available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95635/COTE-D-IVOIRE-Everyone-is-looking-for-safety>

²² Human Rights Watch (2011) "They Killed Them Like It Was Nothing: The Need for Justice in Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Crimes", Human Rights Watch, New York

²³ IRIN News (2012) "Cote d'Ivoire-Liberia: There is no way I could go back", 19 July 2012, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95901/COTE-D-IVOIRE-LIBERIA-There-is-no-way-I-could-go-back>

OIPR was able to return. The breakdown of law and order also compromised the protection of the region's classified forests. The violence has had a large impact on funding, as well: many large donors, including USAID, have pulled support until full political stability returns, and international advisories against travelling in the region have limited tourism.

3.6 Transboundary context

Progress remains slow on establishing transboundary collaboration between the two governments, in part due to the crisis, which delayed a number of conservation initiatives. Forestry and mining concessions in Liberia, granted in areas overlapping with the proposed transboundary ecosystem, pose a threat to the ecosystem, though forestry concessions are currently on hold while the Johnson Sirleaf administration continues to review the agreements and clean up corruption. Research is planned on how to bring Liberian and Ivorian conservation legislation more in line with each other to ease coordination on monitoring, research and stopping illegal activities (including the bushmeat trade); existing legislation is close, though a significant amount of capacity-building will be required on the Liberian side of the border. Liberia promised more collaboration and cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in wake of the violence of the summer of 2012. It is hoped that cross-border collaboration can be used as a means of building confidence and peace between the two countries.



ONUCI maintains a base outside of the village of Tai

4. Conflict analysis

4.1 Conflict identification

Participants at the 2009 transboundary workshop identified nine key conflicts encountered in their work in the TSFC²⁴:

1. Human settlements inside of protected areas
2. Private sector development vs. local population needs
3. Lack of access to forest-derived benefits
4. Resource control and access
5. Inter-institutional conflicts
6. Unclear land tenure and ownership
7. Land fraud
8. Forced eviction from protected areas
9. Inter-generation conflicts

Based on the impacts of the identified conflicts on both local communities and the Tai-Sapo ecosystem, participants prioritized two conflicts for further analysis and action: lack of access to forest-derived benefits; and inter-institutional conflicts. For the first conflict, recommended response actions were: a) a stakeholder forum to discuss the establishment of the corridor; b) regular meetings to update stakeholders on corridor-related developments; c) awareness-raising campaigns on the establishment of the corridor; and d) employment-generating projects around the corridor. For inter-institutional conflicts, stakeholders recommend two response strategies: a) periodic meetings between government ministries and departments within each country; and b) periodic meetings between the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. These response strategies remain relevant to the corridors in 2013.

Stakeholder and community consultations conducted for this report indicate that each of the conflicts identified in 2009 has affected the proposed corridor sites, or could affect the sites upon the establishment of the corridors. Broadly, conflicts identified in 2013 for both the TG and DG corridors can be classified as follows:

1. Inter-community conflicts
2. Human-wildlife conflicts
3. Intra- and inter-institutional conflicts
4. Benefit-sharing conflicts
5. Resource access conflicts
6. Transboundary conflicts

²⁴ Refisch et al (2009) 'Final Report on the Workshop for a Transboundary Initiative to Create a Landscape Corridor between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the Tai-Sapo Complex', WCF, UNEP and GRASP, Abidjan.

7. Park-people conflicts
8. Armed conflicts

Each identified conflict is described in more detail in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Conflicts identified for TG and DG corridors

Conflict type	Conflict description	
	Taï-Grebo corridor ²⁵	Djouroutou-Grebo corridor ²⁶
Inter-community conflicts	<p>Ethnic tensions are prevalent between indigenous and migrant communities, particularly over land. Tensions between communities have increased in the region with the most recent crisis. In particular, Burkinabe communities are seen by the indigenous population as foreigners who only come to the region to cut and plant, with little respect for the forest or conservation.</p> <p>The absence of a statutory land tenure system and therefore documentation on who owns which plots of land in the region will complicate the process of identifying landowners in the proposed corridor sites and compensating them accordingly. The land fraud responsible for overlapping claims on the same plot will only make this process more difficult, and together could significantly contribute to a rise in inter-community tensions.</p> <p>These tensions could be exacerbated by the return of refugees currently in Liberia, some of whom will return to find that their land has been sold in their absence.</p> <p>Inter-community tensions will complicate the process of gaining community consensus on the corridor proposal; stakeholder agreement and</p>	<p>As in the Taï region, ethnic tensions are prevalent between indigenous and migrant communities, with land a central point of contention. All communities outwardly and initially support the establishment of the DG corridor. That said, it is likely that land sellers and buyers – often from the indigenous and migrant populations, respectively – will take very different positions on the corridors once the boundaries become clear; those buyers putting riverine lands to economic use are less likely to support the proposal without offers of suitable compensation.</p> <p>The project team will face the same land tenure challenges here that they will face in TG: identifying rightful land owners, involving them in decision-making and management, and compensating them as required. All are made more complicated by the absence of a statutory land titling system, and could contribute to inter-community tensions.</p> <p>As in the TG corridor, inter-community tensions could be exacerbated by refugees currently in Liberia, some of whom will face competing land claims upon their return.</p> <p>The loss of land within the corridor sites could exacerbate inter-generational conflicts. Already limited lands are now being divided among expanding</p>

²⁵ Community consultations for the TG corridor were held in the villages of Tai, Kouadiokro, Gouleako 1, Daobly and the Burkinabe camp.

²⁶ Community consultations for the DG corridor were held in the Djouroutou with representatives from the Krou, Baoule and Burkinabe communities.

	community buy-in are deemed a necessary starting point for the project, but communities are often at odds with each other over land issues. ²⁷	generations, and competing matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance customs could complicate land tenure disputes.
Human-wildlife conflicts	The destruction of cocoa crops by park animals (particularly primates), the transmission of disease between wildlife and livestock, and human injury from altercations with park animals were all cited as common concerns. This threatens livelihood security, and there is no compensation mechanism in place for the losses incurred.	As with TG, the destruction of cocoa crops by park animals (particularly primates), the transmission of disease between wildlife and livestock, and human injury were all cited as common concerns. Communities worry that encouraging animal migrations via the Hana will bring them through Djouroutou and potentially increase human-wildlife conflicts. Communities question how the project can guarantee both community and animal safety.
Intra- and inter-institutional conflicts	<p>There is a lack of coordination between SODEFOR, the Ministry of Agriculture and OIPR, three government institutions that are central to the success of the project.</p> <p>Very little collaboration exists among the humanitarian, development and conservation sectors.</p> <p>Police are seen as doing little to stop the poaching threat – environmental crimes are typically not a priority for them.</p> <p>There is a lack of effective coordination on conservation with the FDA in Liberia.</p>	Institutional conflicts for the DG corridor are similar to those faced by the TG corridor.
Benefit-sharing conflicts	One Daobly community member stated: “We do nothing to harm the park, but get no benefit from it.” Communities want to see benefits from TNP	As in the TG corridor, the fair and equitable distribution of compensation for lands lost to the corridors will be a key issue: the common question

²⁷ The support of the indigenous population (the Oubi) is particularly important as the TG corridor lands fall on Oubi territory (in terms of customary rights).

	<p>like tourism revenues and conservation jobs; some believe that these benefits are flowing to other communities and not them. This demand was particularly the case among the indigenous Oubi community, which wanted conservation jobs for their youth.</p> <p>The fair and equitable distribution of compensation for lands lost to the corridors will be a key issue: a common refrain from community stakeholders was, “What will we gain from this corridor?”</p>	<p>from community stakeholders was, “What will we gain from this corridor?” Identifying the right stakeholders for compensation, and distributing those benefits in a fair and equitable way, will be a challenge in a context of unclear land titling and land fraud.</p>
Resource access conflicts	<p>There is general conflict between communities at both sites and the protected areas authorities over the former’s inability to access and exploit forest resources, including bushmeat.</p> <p>Poaching remains a problem. Despite efforts to curb the sale of bushmeat, markets remain in Taï and in Zagne and Guiglo to the north. Cultural preferences for bushmeat persist despite the increased availability of substitute sources of protein (beef, poultry, fish). National bans on hunting are not complemented by national bans on bushmeat consumption, though as a signatory to CITES, trade in much of the bushmeat is technically illegal in Côte d’Ivoire. This legislation has little impact on the ground, and park staff are restricted to prosecuting only those poachers caught in the act; once the animal is dead and at market, there is no way to prove it was killed inside the park.</p>	<p>General tensions exist over the lack of available, arable land. Djouroutou communities see themselves as being boxed in by the Cavally River, TNP, SODEFOR concessions and rubber and palm plantations; there is no more land to which to move. Barring farmer access to riverine lands for the corridors could have serious livelihood impacts for some. With a growing local population, there is already less and less land; setting aside more land for conservation may not be realistic.</p> <p>Poaching remains high in the DG corridor area, which could be a reflection of higher animal populations in the south of the park. The indigenous population blames the migrant population for poaching and the bushmeat trade, underscoring inter-community tensions.</p> <p>There is a small fishery on the Hana River. If fishers are barred from accessing the river due to the corridor, it could lead to a loss of livelihoods and protein sources, which may be substituted with bushmeat.</p>

Transboundary conflicts	<p>Attacks on UN forces and civilians in the summer of 2012 were blamed by some on Liberian mercenaries; these attacks displaced a number of households towards both corridor sites, led to a closing of the border, and delayed refugee returns.</p>	<p>Poaching is high across the border, with Grebo being a major source of bushmeat. Communities question whether it is a good idea to encourage TNP wildlife to move into an ecosystem with less protection and elevated poaching threats.</p>
Park-people conflicts	<p>Due to the lack of benefits flowing to communities from the park and a lack of community inclusion in park-related decision-making, some communities feel that they have been forgotten by OIPR.</p> <p>Resentments and fear remain in relation to the way the government handled a 1978 resettlement of local populations away from park lands. Communities fear this negative experience could be repeated with the corridor project.</p>	<p>SODEFOR tactics for the resettlement of populations encroaching upon the classified forests nearby have been widely criticized in the communities, and have soured relationships between the two. SODEFOR's participation in the establishment of the corridor could be problematic. While relations between the communities and OIPR are ostensibly stronger, it can at times be difficult to distinguish between the two government agencies in the field.</p> <p>The park in general is seen as a barrier between communities and the rest of the country, particularly given the poor state of the local road infrastructure near Djouroutou. This perception will not change with the corridors, but they could deepen resentment against the park.</p>
Armed conflicts	<p>The eviction and displacement of farmers and armed individuals operating illegally in nearby Cavally classified forest could increase population densities close to the TG corridor.</p> <p>Conflicts could arise with the return of refugees from Liberia and overlapping claims to land plots.</p>	<p>The post-election crisis of 2010 compromised conservation activities at both sites and further deepened inter-community tensions.</p>

4.2 Root causes of conflict

Identifying the root causes of the conflicts listed above can help stakeholders recognize where entry points might exist for appropriate, conflict-sensitive response strategies. Discussions with stakeholders for this report identified a number of root causes responsible for the current or potential corridor conflicts identified above; many can also be drawn from the context analysis presented above.

Population pressures are a key root cause for both inter-community tensions and human-wildlife conflicts: the local population has grown rapidly as a result of both natural growth and migration into the region, and settlements are increasingly pushing up against the park and in the proposed corridor sites. Population growth has exacerbated **land shortages**, as limited land is further divided between more and more people. **Unclear land tenure laws** and a **lack of land titles and documentation** further complicate the picture and often lead to disputes between and within communities. **Land fraud**, including the double-selling of land plots and the sale of **refugee-owned** lands in their absence, is a significant cause of inter-community conflicts and is facilitated by the absence of a strong statutory land tenure system and a **weak judiciary**. Differences in **inheritance customs** across ethnic groups, including competing matrilineal and patrilineal traditions, can create confusion and tensions within communities. **Government policies** first encouraging immigration into the region, and then promoting *Ivoirité* and underscoring community differences for political gain have helped to increase ethnic tensions over the past two decades.

Persistent **poverty**, a **lack of alternative, non-agricultural livelihoods** and dramatic recent **increases in commodity prices** means that local land conflicts among and between communities (and potentially the private sector) are likely to persist. **Agricultural inefficiencies** mean that crop yields are lower than they could otherwise be, necessitating more land; the need to build local capacities to do “more with less” was a common refrain among those consulted. The **choice of crop** planted near the park, particularly cocoa, results in human-wildlife conflicts, as animals – particularly primates – are drawn to the crop as a source of food.

Incompatible and competing mandates among government ministries and agencies working in the transboundary ecosystem (OIPR, SODEFOR, FDA, Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture) reduce inefficiencies and can discourage coordination; **insufficient funding and capacities** similarly undercut efforts at effective protection. As Côte d’Ivoire rebuilds following the post-election crisis, conservation is perhaps understandably **not a priority** for the new administration, and the central role that land has played in past conflicts discourages the government from addressing tenure issues within a context of **fragile peace**.

The **exclusion of communities in most conservation decision-making** generates park-people conflicts, as does the **perceived lack of benefits** (mostly financial) flowing from the park to the

surrounding communities. A **lack of understanding of and compliance with conservation laws** and an **inability to effectively enforce** those laws is also a cause of tensions, particularly with regards to poaching and riverine settlements. Law enforcement is made more difficult with a **porous border** with Liberia. **Cultural preferences** for bushmeat and a **lack of reliable electrification** (and therefore refrigeration) mean that local demand for poached wildlife will remain high. Patrolling capacities are limited in areas due to **accessibility challenges**, especially around the DG corridor.

4.3 Key impacts of conflict

The identified conflicts have or could have a number of impacts on both the communities surrounding the corridors and on the park and the larger Tai-Sapo ecosystem. Identifying these impacts could help conservationists and other affected stakeholders design response strategies that try to minimize negative impacts and enhance positive ones.

Human Impacts: The identified conflicts will – and in some cases already do – impact local livelihoods and natural resource use. Land conflicts resulting from unclear tenure rights, a lack of documentation, land fraud, competing inheritance laws and so on could result in the **loss of property and income**. The same is true of farmers forced to resettle away from the corridor site without adequate compensation. This could result in an increase in household **poverty** levels; some stakeholders worry that this would lead to an increase in local **crime** rates. These land conflicts, often tied up in ethnic differences between indigenous and migrant communities, also result in a **lack of inter-community collaboration**, complicating efforts to establish community co-management at the corridor sites. Human-wildlife conflicts can result in **injury, disease transmission** and **crop- and livestock-loss** for community members.

Conservation Impacts: Conflicts will also have a significant impact on the Tai-Sapo ecosystem, habitats and species. **Biodiversity loss** is of great concern, particularly as a result of human-wildlife conflicts and continued poaching threats. Conflicts over land in the proposed corridors could result in the further **fragmenting of the TSFC ecosystem**, should plantation expansion continue unabated along the Hana, Saro and N’Ze rivers to meet the local demand for arable land. This would also further increase **deforestation** and **pollution** from farming (from herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers runoff), while increasing the risk of **disease transmission** from livestock and people to park wildlife. Intra- and inter-institutional conflicts result in the **lack of coordinated enforcement**, the **loss of potential synergies and efficiency gains**, and generally **poorer conservation management** than would be the case with institutional cooperation within and across the two countries.

5. Conflict prevention platform

The second objective of this project was to take the conflict identification and analysis exercise above, and use it to design a platform for preventing current and potential environmental conflicts at the corridor sites. The main goal of this conflict prevention platform (CPP) will be to improve biodiversity conservation in the TSFC by minimizing conflict risks and maximizing peacebuilding opportunities.

Conservationists must be cognizant of both the conflict risks associated with the act of establishing the landscape corridors, as well as those conflicts which currently affect the sites or could in the near future. Throughout the consultations, it was stressed that in order to minimize the risk that the establishment of the corridors causes new or exacerbates existing tensions, the initiative should be as inclusive as possible, and should be carefully planned and implemented. At the very least, the establishment of the corridors should 'do no harm'. It is hoped that the CPP can also move beyond focusing on conflict prevention by identifying opportunities for peacebuilding among communities and between the two countries.

This section of the report recommends a structure for the CPP, outlines its geographic focus, identifies the key stakeholders involved, presents a roadmap for its establishment, and lists possible response strategies which emerged from the consultations for addressing the conflicts identified above.

5.1 Structure of the CPP

The CPP should have a two-part structure: a Technical Committee to coordinate regional conflict prevention activities, and two Corridor Sub-Committees working specifically at the Tai and Djouroutou sites. The Technical Committee would be established first, and would then work towards forming the two Corridor Sub-Committees. Each committee would have a champion, or leader, to guide and coordinate efforts. This champion should have some formal background and experience in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

Together the three committees will work with stakeholders to identify current and potential conflict threats and peacebuilding opportunities, develop and implement response strategies, and engage with communities on conservation education and awareness-raising. Dialogue and cooperation will be a central part of the CPP's work; by promoting collaboration and understanding across communities, government ministries, departments and countries, it is hoped that the CPP can use ecosystem conservation as a less politically-sensitive issue with which to build local and regional trust and peace between at-times divergent stakeholders. Collaboration would also lead to more efficient resource use, while strengthening

communications linkages to better respond to humanitarian and conservation threats.²⁸ Open communication would be established across committee members by phone, in person and – to a limited extent – by email; unfortunately connectivity challenges at both corridor sites mean that a web-based platform is not yet possible.

CPP Technical Committee

The CPP Technical Committee would work to coordinate the activities of the Corridor Sub-Committees, would monitor regional environmental conflicts not specifically associated with the corridor sites, would fundraise for initiatives focused on conflict-prevention, and would work with the three technical committees proposed at the 2009 workshop (payments for ecosystem services; landscape management planning; and legislation) to integrate conflict-sensitivity into all corridor-related conservation work. It would also work to coordinate periodic meetings on corridor management across Ivoirian government departments and ministries, as well as between relevant Ivoirian and Liberian government stakeholders. OIPR and WCF should take the lead in establishing the Technical Committee.

The Technical Committee will be made up of six to eight representatives from each relevant stakeholder group to ensure inclusivity: members from OIPR, SODEFOR, WCF, the donor community and from each of the corridor sites (which could include village chiefs, land chiefs and community conservation managers). One committee member should be selected as lead, or champion, for the group's work. The selection of community-based committee members must be done in a fair and equitable way; perceptions already exist within communities that some groups are more favoured by the park than others.

The Technical Committee would coordinate the activities of the two corridor sub-committees: it would establish the Corridor Sub-Committees, representatives would participate in sub-committee meetings, and it would act as a bridge between the TG and DG corridors by facilitating the sharing of information, experiences and proposed response strategies across the two sites. The Technical Committee would also monitor regional conflict risks outside of the two corridor sites and transmit pertinent information back to the Corridor Sub-Committees should these regional developments have an impact on either site. The Committee could also act as a bridge between the more local corridor sub-committees and higher levels of decision-making, as needed, linking communities to regional and national governments, international organizations and the donor community.

Members of the Technical Committee would also be responsible for securing funding for initiatives in conflict-sensitive conservation, including money for the continued operation of the

²⁸ Refisch et al (2009) 'Final Report on the Workshop for a Transboundary Initiative to Create a Landscape Corridor between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the Taï-Sapo Complex', WCF, UNEP and GRASP, Abidjan.

Technical Committee and the Corridor Sub-Committees, and for the implementation of proposed response strategies. Funding would have to be distributed in an equitable way between the two corridor sites and across affected communities. Committee members should also select a representative for engaging with the other three technical committees established on the recommendations of the 2009 workshop. This representative would work with these committees to integrate conflict sensitivity into the design, planning and implementation of initiatives on payments for ecosystem services, landscape planning, and legislation. This would help to prevent conflicts in all three areas, streamline responses and build trust and dialogue across stakeholder groups.

Corridor Sub-Committees

A Corridor Sub-Committee should be established for each of the two corridor sites. Sub-committees would be responsible for most site-specific conflict prevention work.

Participants in the consultations at each of the corridor sites stressed that an inclusive, participatory approach was required for effective conflict prevention. As such, sub-committee members should be selected from a variety of stakeholder groups and areas of expertise, and would ideally include: local authorities (including village chiefs, land chiefs, district chiefs and (if possible) mayors); community members tasked with the co-management of the wildlife corridor; representatives from government agencies and ministries, including OIPR, SODEFOR and the Ministry of Agriculture; technical specialists from local and international NGOs, including WCF; and representatives from the donor community such as GIZ. Members should elect a champion to guide the sub-committee's work.

Members would represent their constituent groups to ensure that response strategies reflect – to the best degree possible – the interests and needs of all stakeholder groups. It should be well communicated to each community that the corridor sub-committee exists and who their representatives are on the committee, and that stakeholder forums are established so that community-members can bring their conflict-related concerns to the group. The sub-committees would be somewhat larger than the Technical Committee, as they would require more local-level participation.

Sub-committees would meet periodically on site to discuss new and emerging conflicts, reflect on the successes or failures of past response strategies, identify potential threats, and look at any opportunities for peacebuilding. The identification and analysis of conflicts will be a key task of the sub-committees, and conflict screening should be done regularly. This may require some training for committee members in conflict analysis, so that they can properly identify the causes, impacts, actors and dynamics of conflict. Ad hoc meetings may also be required to address quickly emerging conflict threats or peacebuilding opportunities.

The sub-committees would support the generation and implementation of community-approved response strategies; enhance communications and knowledge-sharing among conservation stakeholders and communities by continually reporting back to their constituents and to the Technical Committee; participate in the development and implementation of corridor-conflict specific education and awareness-raising campaigns; and support traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Taï, Djouroutou and surrounding villages. The sub-committees should consider the lessons learned from past micro-projects implemented in the region when designing conflict-prevention projects; broadly, projects must meet the needs of the local population while dis-incentivizing illegal activities and promoting conservation. In the absence of web-based platform, communications could be difficult, but the committee must work to communicate the economic and ecological values and benefits of the corridors to the relevant stakeholders.

The varied membership of the sub-committees will help each group effectively monitor conflicts at both sites; committee meetings will include status updates on previously identified conflicts and on the effectiveness of response strategies (should they have been implemented). To measure the effectiveness of interventions, the sub-committees should also come up with a set of peace and conflict indicators – which can be qualitative or quantitative, matched to conflict causes, effects and relationships – when developing each response strategy. These indicators can then be measured over time to evaluate whether the intervention has had a positive or negative impact on the conflict context. Open communications between committee members and continuous conflict monitoring could also lead to the establishment of a quick response mechanism, where the sub-committee reacts rapidly to conflict threats before they escalate and their human and conservation impacts are felt.

In addition, both Corridor Sub-Committees should identify possible obstacles to achieving their goals, and develop contingency plans should those obstacles emerge. Obstacles can include: funding challenges, language barriers, competing administrative structures, physical distances, site accessibility challenges, regional insecurity, logistical problems and internal politics.

5.2 Geographic focus

Upon its establishment, CPP activities would initially be piloted in the two transboundary corridor regions studied above: Taï-Grebo and Djouroutou-Grebo. Once operational and if effective, the CPP team could look into expanding the platform to cover more of the ecosystem (for example, sub-committees for all of the proposed corridors, or for the protected forests on the Ivoirian side of the border), with the eventual goal of expanding the platform to the entire TSFC landscape.

5.3 Key stakeholders

Stakeholders involved in the CPP can be divided into two groups: primary and secondary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders will be central to the efforts of the CPP, as technical committee members and sub-committee members. These stakeholders will be involved in the management of the corridor sites, the identification and analysis of current and potential conflicts, the design and implementation of response strategies, awareness-raising campaigns, fundraising and so on. Given their broad remit, it is important that the steering committee and the corridor sub-committees are made up of stakeholders drawn from a number of areas of expertise.

Selected **primary stakeholders** include: OIPR, local communities (including corridor co-managers), local authorities (village chiefs, land chiefs, mayors, prefects), district and regional governments, SODEFOR, the Ministry of Agriculture (Service du Foncier Rural et du Cadastre Rural), the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, FDA, WCF, UNEP GRASP, FFI, GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Germany) and relevant private sector actors.

OIPR, as the conservation lead in Côte d'Ivoire, should act as the lead organization for both Corridor Sub-Committees, working closely with the local communities, local authorities and SODEFOR, and with the technical and financial support of WCF and GIZ. The project team could look into engaging existing community conservation and development associations at each of the sites (acknowledging that capacity-building would likely be required here, as these associations have not been effective in the past).

Secondary stakeholders will not initially be actively involved in the management of the corridors or the committees, but they should continue to be included in conflict prevention activities, as they will undoubtedly be involved in the response strategies. Secondary stakeholders could include: police, military, WWF, Rainforest Alliance, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children, Search for Common Ground, ODAFEM (a local NGO), ONUCI, UNESCO, USAID, STEWARD, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the European Union, Agence Française du Développement and the private sector. The project team should explore opportunities for increased collaboration across the humanitarian, development and conservation sectors, as well as with the UN and the private sector.

5.4 Roadmap for establishing the CPP

The 2010 post-election crisis delayed efforts at establishing a transboundary landscape corridor between Taï and Sapo National Parks. However, the return of a measure of stability to the region has re-started efforts to connect the TSFC ecosystems.

WCF and partners are in the process of closing the research gaps identified at the 2009 workshop in advance of bringing the corridor proposal forward at a political level. Reports on land tenure, payments for ecosystem services, conservation legislation, and transboundary management are forthcoming, and once finalized, organizing stakeholders will be closer to advancing the landscape corridor proposal at a political level.

To ensure that conflicts do not arise from the establishment of the site, a key first step according to the consultations is to identify land ownership and resource use in the proposed corridor sites; before proceeding, it is imperative to know who owns and uses what. This includes knowledge of the extent to which the private sector is using the sites for commercial agriculture. Once this land survey is complete, awareness-raising campaigns among the affected population can commence, introducing these farmers, fishers and other resource users to the proposed corridors and outlining for them the benefits of an integrated and connected TSFC ecosystem.

Working with land and resource users, and using the findings of the forthcoming reports – particularly the report on landscape planning – WCF and partners can then begin to develop: an ideal structure for the corridors (e.g. strictly protected land expanding the park, reforested riverbanks open to community exploitation for non-timber forest products, agro-forestry plantations, etc.); a management structure and plan for the corridors in which communities are full partners; and compensation options and (equitable) distribution plans for those community-members potentially losing access to land and resources in the corridor sites. Consultations with affected resource users must be carried out to identify their needs, interests, priorities and capacities (which may differ across villages and ethnic groups), and integrate these into corridor plans; participants in the consultations cited a failure to do so as central reason that previous micro-projects in the region have not succeeded.

WCF and partners should include the establishment of CPP Technical and Corridor Sub-Committees in the corridor proposal they submit to the Ivorian government. If approved, the project team (WCF and OIPR) can move ahead with identifying key stakeholders suitable for the CPP Technical Committee, and outlining the committee's structures, responsibilities and terms of reference. It must then develop a budget, and identify and secure appropriate (and hopefully sustainable) funding for the Committee. Once in place, it can proceed with establishing the CPP Technical Committee and Corridor Sub-Committees.

Human resources required: The CPP will require some time commitment from members of the Technical and Corridor Sub-Committees, as well as general administrative and logistical support from WCF and OIPR. Committee members may require training in conflict-sensitive conservation techniques such as conflict analysis, and Corridor Sub-Committee members may be involved in the implementation of projects designed to respond to conflict threats.

Financial resources: The CPP, in its pilot form, should not require a lot of financial resources for operations. Budget would be needed to cover the cost of periodic meetings of the sub-committees in Taï and Djouroutou, time costs for the participating stakeholders, and travel costs associated with bringing committee members to the meetings (with many of the stakeholders found in or near the corridor sites, transportation and accommodation costs should be minimal). Nevertheless, a sustainable and predictable funding source should be secured to ensure that CPP activities are not sporadic and that communities see a long-term commitment to the corridors and conflict resolution. Increased funding would be required for coordination meetings across government ministries and between the two countries.

Project-based funding would be required for implementing response strategies addressing conflict threats. Including possible funders on the CPP committees would be a good way of engaging the donor community early. In the long-term, the committee could look into the prospect of financial support coming from payments for ecosystem services funds such as REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, a climate change mitigation mechanism increasingly interested in Côte d'Ivoire), or through collaboration with the private sector.

Physical resources: Beyond the logistical resources required to implement and operate the CPP (transport, cell phones), the Technical Committee should identify safe, non-threatening meeting spaces in both Taï and Djouroutou in which stakeholders will feel comfortable to express their opinions and those of their constituents.

5.5 Timeline

During consultations for this report, a number of stakeholders echoed the opinion that the establishment of the corridors should be done carefully, with full community consultation, and should not be rushed. That said, the proposal team should take advantage of the current political stability to try to advance the proposal on both sides of the border (while also taking advantage of the momentum in Liberia to make Grebo a national park).

5.6 Recommended conflict response strategies

During the consultations for this report, stakeholders recommended a number of response strategies that the corridor project team (and the eventual CPP committees) should consider when addressing existing or potential conflict threats impacting the corridor sites. Recommendations were broadly in line with those suggested at the 2009 workshop for addressing inter-institutional conflicts and resource access conflicts, which were:

- Periodic meetings between the relevant government ministries and departments within each country;
- Periodic meetings between the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia;

- A stakeholder forum to discuss the establishment of the corridor;
- Regular meetings to update stakeholders on corridor-related developments;
- Awareness-raising campaigns on the establishment of the corridor; and
- Employment-generating projects around the corridor.

Response strategies should each try to address some of the causes and impacts of the conflicts identified above while meeting stakeholder interests, needs and priorities. Projects should also try to support and implement the recommendations made by WCF in their 2011 inventory of the two landscape corridors, namely to: restore the gallery forest ecosystems along streams; support reforestation in the corridors; promote sustainable agricultural practices such as agroforestry; develop the production of non-timber forest products; sensitize the local population; and increase official communications between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.²⁹

When considering whether to further explore a given strategy, the corridor sub-committees should ensure that the strategy has the approval of the impacted communities, and assess the feasibility of implementing the response by examining: whether it falls into the mandate of the implementing organization(s); whether it has the right level of institutional support; who will be the lead implementing organization; what partnerships might be required; whether the required resources (human, financial and physical) are available; and – importantly – whether it will put staff at personal risk.³⁰

Response strategies recommended during the 2013 consultations are listed below, and have been divided into two categories: policy responses and field responses. The list should not be taken as exhaustive, but reflects those strategies which came up during the consultations.

Policy responses:

- Clarify ownership of the lands in the proposed corridors with a detailed land survey and through community consultations. Include private sector use of the land for commercial agriculture.
- Work with the other three technical committees established at the 2009 workshop (committees on landscape planning, transboundary assessment, and payments for ecosystem services) to integrate conflict considerations into their analyses and work.
- Work to strengthen collaboration among conservationists, the judiciary and the police force to tackle the perceived impunity for environmental crimes, in the hopes of further reducing poaching pressures. This could include lobbying to institute a more progressive fine system whereby the poaching of more threatened species results in higher fines, or

²⁹ WCF (2011) *Inventory of the proposed landscape corridors between Taï National Park, Côte d'Ivoire and Grebo National Forest, Liberia*, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Abidjan

³⁰ Hammill et al (2009)

examining the feasibility of a national law against the trade of certain kinds of bushmeat (as an extension of CITES).

- Improve Ivoirian government and civil society capacity and knowledge on the economic value and potential of TNP, the classified forests and the corridors. This includes an increased understanding of payments for ecosystem services (PES), as well as a scoping report on the feasibility of implementing REDD programmes in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2011, WCF commissioned a report on the economic potential of the corridors; the organization should build on this knowledge and future knowledge on PES to generate external funding and interest from within the national government.
- Continue to work on transboundary conservation policies, including policies on coordinated patrolling and enforcement to reduce poaching threats.
- Work with communities to develop a policy on sharing the economic benefits of ecotourism.

Field responses:

- Work with corridor communities to find practical and sustainable alternatives to resettlement that meet both community and wildlife needs. Resettlement is a source of considerable unease and tension among the local population; CPP members should engage communities to find a solution that works for both the local population and biodiversity. Solutions can try to create or expand local markets in an effort to make the preservation of the forest more beneficial to the local community than its destruction. Suggested alternatives to perennial and food crops include employing local community members to reforest corridor plantations and farmland using indigenous tree species which provide marketable, non-timber forest products, such as traditional herbs, medicines or fruit, while also being conducive to the migration of animals from Taï to Grebo. Community members recommended one particular tree species whose fruit is a popular part of indigenous cuisine but which has been largely removed from the local ecosystem due to agricultural pressures. Replanting the trees on farmland inside the proposed corridors could provide a market-friendly solution for those farmers who stand to lose their plots. Planting and protecting these trees could also help to ease inter-community tensions, as the indigenous community blames the immigrant community for the loss of this resource.
- Participants in the consultations often asked what they will gain from the proposed corridors, particularly if they are faced with lost lands and crops. Transparent negotiations should therefore be undertaken with corridor users and owners on the question of compensation. While compensating lost farmland with new land seems unlikely given local land shortages, compensation could take a number of other forms, including cash, work, food, seed, capacity-building, development projects, alternative

livelihoods or agricultural extension services. Any compensation will have to be distributed in a fair, equitable and transparent way.

- Continue education and awareness-raising campaigns to explain the placement and ecosystem benefits of the wildlife corridors to the local population. Campaigns for reducing the bushmeat trade should also continue, building on early successes to help reduce park-people conflicts relating to poaching. Campaigns must be ongoing in order to target the more transient immigrant population. One possible partner in this could be a Daloa-based NGO called Search for Common Ground, who work on radio transmissions focusing on conflict resolution.
- Continue research into the feasibility of implementing a cocoa certification scheme in the region that promotes both fair trade and environmentally-friendly cultivation as a means in incentivizing protection of the park, classified forests and corridors.³¹
- Support should be given to the formation or strengthening of local farmer cooperatives to improve the market power of local producers (through increased pricing knowledge, opportunities to aggregate product) so that they can increase profits. Similarly, the CPP committees should look into opportunities for providing agricultural extension services to corridor communities as a means of improving yields and productivity, as a way of addressing land shortages. Both strategies will promote doing more with less land.



Suggested strategies include cocoa certification, agricultural extension services and farmer cooperatives

³¹ Work to date on certification has been carried out with the Rainforest Alliance.

- Continue to explore options for implementing micro-projects aimed at alleviating local poverty, which many stakeholders believed was a key cause of conflict in the region. The design and implementation of micro-projects should build lessons learned from past failures and successes, many of which are documented in WCF's 2011 report on the corridor's economic potential.³²
- Ensure that once established, the demarcation of the corridor's boundary is clear, well communicated and understood by the local population, as in the past they have respected the national park boundary – even through civil conflicts.
- Commission a study to examine natural, ecosystem-friendly buffer crops possible for planting at the edge of the corridor site to reduce contact and conflicts between the local population and park wildlife. Communities stressed that a barrier between the corridor and the surrounding farms would be good, but the barrier should also have some economic value if possible. Ideas include rubber, tea or teak plantations.
- Regular bio-monitoring should be carried out to assess the ecological health of the corridors.
- With improving stability, greater investments should be made in eco-tourism infrastructure and marketing in order to attract visitors to the region. An increase in tourism would show both the local communities and the central government that the park can generate economic revenues.
- A small impact assessment should be carried out for the fishery on the Hana River to understand its impact on wildlife migrations through the DG corridor, whether the fishery will have to be moved upon the corridor's establishment, and what impact this will have on local livelihoods and food security.
- Efforts to improve rural electrification are likely outside of the mandate of CPP members, but if lobbied for, rural electrification and the introduction of refrigeration and frozen meats could further discourage the bushmeat trade and reduce poaching threats.

³² Coulibaly, B. (2011) *Analyse des potentialités économiques durables dans le cadre de la mise en place du corridor du Parc National de Taï et de la forêt classée de Grebo (Programme STEWARD II)*, WCF and STEWARD, Abidjan.