

# AFRICA'S PROTECTED NATURAL ASSETS

The importance of  
conservation areas for  
prosperous and resilient  
societies in Africa

Case study 2  
**LOMAMI NATIONAL PARK,  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF THE CONGO**



## GREEN VALUE

NATURAL CAPITAL IN AFRICA



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The Green Value Initiative is the umbrella program of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on the value of nature in Africa. In providing multiple benefits such as clean air and water, productive soils, extreme weather and erosion protection, health benefits, and solutions to climate change, Africa's natural wealth is an important asset that contributes significantly to the continent's welfare and achievement of societal development goals. The Green Value Initiative supports its African partner countries and development institutions to integrate the value of these assets in decision-making. Its objective is to mainstream natural capital into policies and planning, financial markets and development finance, as well as measures of economic progress and national accounts (natural capital accounting). With that, the Green Value Initiative contributes to one of the key building blocks for transformative change towards nature-positive economies and development in Africa.

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## LOMAMI NATIONAL PARK, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Developing the profile of the relatively new park as a source of local livelihoods and other benefits

Status: National park



**STATUS:** National park

**SIZE:** Core protection zone of 887,400 ha and a buffer zone of 2,101,700 ha

**ECOSYSTEMS:** Tropical rainforest

**KEY ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:** Provision of food and forest products and including traditional medicines, carbon storage

**NEARBY POPULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** Villages and rural communities along rudimentary road network with limited accessibility

**LAND-USE:** Only certain traditional land-uses allowed, sustainable bushmeat hunting and fishing allowed in buffer zone

**CHALLENGES:** Prospective overuse of natural resources by local population and lack awareness for conservation and funding

The Lomami National Park is situated at the eastern edge of the Congo Basin in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Lomami National Park was created in July 2016 by decree N°16/024 after several consultations with local communities to delineate the boundaries of the Park. These communities, which traditionally use a wide variety of forest products, accepted the use restrictions in the hope of gaining development opportunities. The Park covers 887,400 ha and extends more than 150 km from North to South along the Lomami River. The Lomami National Park is one of the only parks in DRC to have an officially declared buffer zone. Lomami is located in a region that is still partially troubled by militias and the effects of the conflict in the eastern part of DRC. Administratively, the Park is under the auspices of the national protected area agency (ICCN).

### APPROACH OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment looked at Lomami National Park's ecosystem services and natural capital stocks in order to gather information useful for enhancing the Park's visibility and gaining political backing. It highlighted the Park's wider benefits to society and its contributions toward regional development. More speci-



cally, it looked at societal demands upon and the socio-economic importance of the Park's ecosystem services as well as their contribution to national and regional strategies and policy objectives. It also proposed a number of specific management recommendations. The study focused on the territory of Kailo, specifically the two districts (secteurs) of Balanga and Balangele.

#### SOME KEY FINDINGS

The assessment confirmed the strong traditional links of local communities with the forest and its resources. People benefit from the Park's reservoir function, because it safeguards species that can be legally hunted and collected in the Park's buffer zone. The local communities rely in many ways on the Park's natural resources and forest products for their own consumption as well as for commerce. Bushmeat and fish are the prime sources of protein for the local population and are therefore a crucial part of their diet. In addition, bushmeat is the region's main commercial product, and the single most important source of cash income for about 3700 households (70% of people in the two districts surveyed). The total revenue from bushmeat in the two districts per year was estimated to amount to US\$ 4 million.

The assessment revealed that natural resources, specifically game and fish, have been declining in recent years – indicating overconsumption. However, yields are higher closer to the Park's borders which highlights its role as a reservoir.

From a development perspective two natural capital stocks and ecosystem services appeared to be promising for the Lomami region: 1) the potential for smaller scale hydropower installations and 2) community forestry development based on a Congolese legal framework and linked to the national level REDD+ scheme and the global carbon market. Both are mentioned explicitly in national level development plans. Hydropower potential as well as community forest development could be pursued to make better use of the Park's natural capital and raise awareness about the services it provides.

Source: Authors' analysis

Lomami National Park is a relatively remote tropical rainforest. The local communities rely in many ways on its natural resources.