

ITTO AND TOTALLY PROTECTED AREAS

In the early 1990s, ITTO worked with the World Conservation Union to develop the *ITTO Guidelines for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Tropical Production Forests*. These set out the reasons for making biodiversity conservation a goal of national forest policy and show how to establish a permanent forest estate integrating conservation areas with natural and planted production forests.

The guidelines provide advice on planning at the landscape level, such as linking reserves with corridors of natural forest to allow wildlife to move between reserves. At the field level, they present principles and actions to maximize biodiversity conservation during management activities.

The need for totally protected areas

ITTO is working with its partners on a wide range of on-the-ground activities across the tropics to implement these guidelines. But it recognizes that in addition to well-managed production forests, a network of totally protected areas – land dedicated exclusively to conservation – is also needed. The ITTO biodiversity guidelines stress that the contribution of production forests to biodiversity conservation can only be fully realized within an integrated national land use strategy that includes such a network.

Accordingly, the Organization is funding a growing suite of projects aimed at creating and maintaining totally protected areas (see table below). Making use of its ability to bring neighbouring countries and donors together on a regular basis, ITTO has established a substantial program of ‘transboundary’ reserves straddling the borders of two or more tropical countries. As well as conserving wildlife, transboundary conservation projects seek to improve the livelihoods of forest communities, promote cooperation between neighbouring countries, and control illegal logging and wildlife smuggling.

The first of the reserves financed by ITTO was the Lanjak-Entimau/Betung Kerihun Transboundary Conservation Reserve on the island of Borneo, an undertaking that began in 1994 and continues today. To the northeast, ITTO is funding another project in collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature (Indonesia), for the management of the Kayan Mentarang National Park.

ITTO-funded transboundary and other conservation reserve initiatives *March 2002*

Initiative	Partners	Funding countries	Area of influence*
Condor Range (Peru and Ecuador)	Ecuador Ministry for Tourism and the Environment; NATURA Foundation; Peruvian National Institute for Natural Resources (INRENA); Conservation International; local organizations	Japan, Switzerland, USA, Korea	2.42 million ha
Tambopata-Madidi (Peru and Bolivia)	INRENA; Bolivian National Service for Protected Areas (SERNAP); Conservation International; local organizations	Japan, USA	2.85 million ha
Phatam Protected Forests Complex (Thailand)	Thai Royal Forest Department	Japan, Switzerland, USA, France	130,000 ha
Buffer zone of Kaeng Krachan National Park	Thai Royal Forest Department	Japan, Netherlands	348,000 ha
Lanjak-Entimau/Betung Kerihun Transboundary Conservation Reserve (Malaysia and Indonesia)	The Sarawak Forest Department; Park Management Unit of the Betung Kerihun National Park;	Japan, Switzerland	980,000 ha

	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (Indonesia)		
Kayan Mentarang National Park (Indonesia)	Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation; WWF (Indonesia)	Switzerland, Japan, USA	1.4 million ha
Buffer zone of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (Congo)	Wildlife Conservation Society; Government of Congo		1.69 million ha (national park + buffer zone)
Mengamé Gorilla Sanctuary (Cameroon)	Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas, Cameroon Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Switzerland, Japan, USA	137,000 ha
Cahuinari National Park (Colombia)	Colombian National Institute for Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment; Puerto Rastrojo Foundation; Bora-Miraña Indigenous Peoples	Austria, USA, Denmark, Norway	600,000 ha
Iwokrama Forest	Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development; Indigenous communities	Japan, Switzerland, USA, Korea	371,000 ha
Total			10.9 million ha

**Note: Area of influence includes, in some cases, buffer-zone management areas.*

In South America, ITTO projects are being implemented to establish a 2.9 million-hectare reserve in the Tambopata-Madidi region on the border between Peru and Bolivia, and a 2.4 million-hectare reserve in the Condor Mountain Range on the border between Peru and Ecuador. In both instances, the non-governmental organization Conservation International is implementing the ITTO-financed activities in collaboration with governments and local stakeholders.

In Africa, an ITTO project led to the demarcation of a 500,000-hectare wildlife reserve in the Minkebe Forest in Gabon and also supported a pilot sustainable management program in about 80,000 hectares of the reserve's buffer zone. Another ITTO transboundary initiative launched recently is establishing a wildlife sanctuary on the border between Cameroon and Gabon in an area that is particularly rich in elephants, lowland gorillas and at least eight other primate species, as well as a vast array of lesser-known but equally important plants, animals and fungi.

Buffer zones

One way of reducing the damaging effects of human activities on totally protected areas is to practice biodiversity conservation in a buffer zone around the reserve. For example, the Wildlife Conservation Society is working with the Government of Congo to implement an ITTO project to protect the immensely important Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in northern Congo. This park covers 390,000 hectares and is rich in wildlife, including such animals as western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees and forest elephants. The project is managing nearly 1.3 million hectares of forest adjacent to the park – the buffer zone – using a landscape-scale ecosystem management approach that balances biodiversity conservation with timber production and other income-generating activities.

The key to success in this project – and in most tropical forest management endeavours – is engaging the local communities and assisting them in their efforts to improve their economic, social and political status. In the buffer zone outside the park, the project partners are working with local people to prevent the commercial trade in bushmeat – which poses a serious threat to several species, including the lowland gorilla and forest elephant – and to establish community-managed hunting zones that help ensure a sustainable supply of meat to fulfil local needs. Several communities in the area are already seeing the benefits of this management system and have adopted it enthusiastically.

The project is also employing ‘forest guards’ recruited from local villages to control wildlife poaching; employment opportunities such as this provide local communities with an additional incentive for wildlife conservation. The logging company working in the area –a partner in the ITTO project – is committed to minimizing the damage caused by the logging process and is training its workforce in reduced impact logging, with ITTO assistance.

Another ITTO project is establishing a working model for effective buffer zone management at Kaeng Krachan National Park in Thailand’s Petchburi Province. This project is working with the local community to find ways of increasing income for villagers without compromising the integrity of the park, and to raise awareness of the benefits of conservation. In the ‘sustainable use’ zone adjacent to a newly created 187,000-hectare totally protected area in Guyana’s Iwokrama Forest, the local indigenous communities are developing and implementing a sustainable management strategy with ITTO-funded assistance.