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Implemented by:



Biodiversity – Côte d'Ivoire

Preserving the Taï National Park

The West African country of Côte d'Ivoire is rich in bioresources. The Taï National Park is one of the last single tracts of rainforest in the region, which means it has global importance for nature conservation and climate protection. But the area is under threat: KfW is helping local authorities to protect the park from poachers, gold miners and illegal settlers and improve the region's infrastructure

infrastructure at the edge of the park.

For the park and its unique species diversity are under enormous pressure. Forests have been cleared in the direct vicinity of the Taï National Park as the population in the region grows and seeks economic activity. Huge forested areas that used to surround and protect the Taï National Park have gradually been turned into farmed cropland and cocoa, coffee and palm plantations. The rainforest, which used to cover huge swathes of the country, has been pushed back by these activities over the last few decades, leaving only a few small islands of rainforest. Today, the Taï National Park is the most important of these rainforest islands.

But its insularity is not the only challenge facing the "Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves", the park author-

Context

The Taï National Park and the adjacent N'Zo nature reserve cover 5,500 km² and are home to a paradise of flora and fauna: the forest elephant and the chimpanzee are among the 145 species of mammal found in the park, some of which (such as the pygmy hippopotamus) only occur here. There are also more than 230 species of birds, a vast number of insects and spiders as well as 1,200 plant species. While endangered species often become extinct elsewhere, new species are constantly being discovered here. The Taï National Park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982 owing to its importance for species diversity and its many endemic species.

Biomonitoring teams that patrol the Taï National Park are continuously broadening the knowledge about the ecology of the rainforest: they have discovered, for example, that the chimpanzees living in the Taï use natural tools to crack nuts. The teams are part of the park management whose equipment was funded by German development cooperation, through KfW Development Bank (KfW) and the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and nature conservation organisations. On behalf of the federal government, KfW also funds small-scale projects that improve the region's

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Country/Region	Côte d'Ivoire.
Lead executing agency	Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves





Taï National Park. Source: Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (OIPR).

ity responsible for maintaining the protected areas: Following around ten years of political instability in the Côte d'Ivoire, poachers and gold miners in particular are threatening the unique flora and fauna of the Taï National Park.

Project approach

The programme aims to support the regional management of the "Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves" to ensure efficient management of the protected areas in the Taï National Park, which includes effective monitoring of the park to prevent poaching and overexploitation. Other elements include biomonitoring, setting up sustainable tourism structures and developing the regions bordering the park. The project aims to improve the living conditions of the village residents living next to the national park so that they view the park as an opportunity to earn income. Of the 700,000 people who live around the Taï National Park, many today can only get by because a family member works as a game-keeper, tourist guide or in biomonitoring - or because funded projects have helped boost the productivity of regional agriculture. These success stories are intended to raise awareness among local residents about environmental concerns and, at the same time, reduce the pressure on the protected area caused by human use. Community participation in park management and educational campaigns pursues the same goal.

Impact

Today, the Taï National Park is one of the largest protected rainforests in West Africa. At the same time, it is considered the best protected national park in the country, not least of all due to the long-standing work of German Development Cooperation. Satellite images show that the park's vegetation has remained largely stable since 2000. The results of the biomonitoring pro-

gramme confirm that the populations of endangered species, e.g. forest elephants and chimpanzees, have been able to stabilise again after the crisis. To ensure that this continues to be the case in the long run, KfW also works with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to support the Ivorian Partners in setting up the "Fondation des Parcs et Réserves en Côte d'Ivoire", an Ivorian environmental foundation that aims to safeguard the continued existence of the Taï National Park and other protected areas. Under this programme, debt is converted to foundation assets which generate income that covers a considerable portion of the ongoing costs of park maintenance over the long term.



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