

# Expedition Proposal: Kahuzi Biega National Park

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## Summary

The protected areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are being destroyed by illegal mining, hunting, logging, and the exploitation of other natural resources. Coltan, the ore containing the mineral tantalum widely used in many industries, particularly electronics and telecommunications, should be an economic and social asset to the DRC, however it has been used to fuel the war and its extraction has resulted in human and environmental disaster.

An initiative is under development by the Centre d'Evaluation, d'Expertise et de Certification (CEEC), the certification authority for precious minerals, along with the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), the protected areas authority, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and other partners in many sectors, to develop an integrated plan for a regulated coltan mining and processing industry that will answer a range of economic, social, environmental and political priorities.

CEEC is currently in negotiation with the Congolese government and international donors to gain the mandate and resources to carry out a major Feasibility Study with its stakeholders. In order to secure this opportunity, it is essential to undertake a mission to eastern DRC to gather factual, anecdotal and visual material to reinforce the CEEC's proposal.

It is of critical importance to undertake an expedition to Eastern DRC that will include investigations and negotiations in Bukavu, centre of the coltan trade. Thereafter, the team will travel to Kahuzi Biega National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been profoundly affected by illegal mining. The aim will be to gather new information and verify existing reports, identify and gather information on mining activity, initiate the CEEC-ICCN collaboration at ground level. The information gathered will be widely disseminated to a range of audiences.

The first, post-war survey of the highlands area was carried out in January 2005 by a team from WCS. That expedition reported that some species have been wiped out locally while most others have been severely impacted. The status of wildlife in the much larger lowland area is simply unknown. This will be the first, major, international mission into the lowlands of the Kahuzi Biega National Park since the war.

## Background to the coltan crisis

The people and environment of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have suffered unbelievable damage during the horrific war, which has claimed the lives of an estimated 4 million people in the past 7 years. The war was based, in part, on the pursuit of natural resources by different military and political factions. One mineral, tantalum (contained in an ore known locally as *coltan*), has been at the heart of the struggle over land in the eastern part of the country.

Tantalum is a rare, valuable, element, which is twice as dense as steel and highly resistant to heat and corrosion. It is used in the manufacture of metal working equipment, car engine management systems, surgical equipment, turbine blades for jet engines and for lining chemical reactors. One of tantalum's most important characteristics is its capacity to store and release an electrical charge, a property highly useful in the design and manufacture of portable electronic equipment including computers and personal organisers, games, cameras and mobile phones.

There is no central market for tantalum and, other than the major mine-processor contracts, prices are determined on an individual transaction basis. Short-term fluctuations in demand for tantalum are met through the 'spot market' where ore from a variety of sources may be amalgamated by traders making the provenance of shipments is impossible to determine.

In 2000, predictions of increased demand for new electronic products caused a tantalum supply shortfall and precipitated a rush of panic buying and a massive price increase. In eastern DRC, coltan can be easily surface-mined with shovels and sieves therefore this rapid-response source acted as a buffer for the international market. The 2000 tantalum shortage led to tens of thousands of miners entering the protected areas where wildlife was decimated to feed the mining camps. Congolese men, women and children were forced, both directly by militia and indirectly through poverty and desperation, to undertake extensive mining in dangerous conditions that were profoundly abusive of their human rights.



The demand for coltan on the spot market dropped after 2001 due to the fact that large inventories had been built up during the 'panic buying' phase. The reported decline of the tantalum market has been mistakenly attributed to public concern, boycotts, reduced demand for tantalum, etc, but, just as the boom was only seen in DRC, so the 'collapse' was also localized. Demand for tantalum grows annually, illegal mining continues, and the need to transform this profoundly exploitative situation to a regulated and beneficial industry is overwhelming.

## Seeking a solution

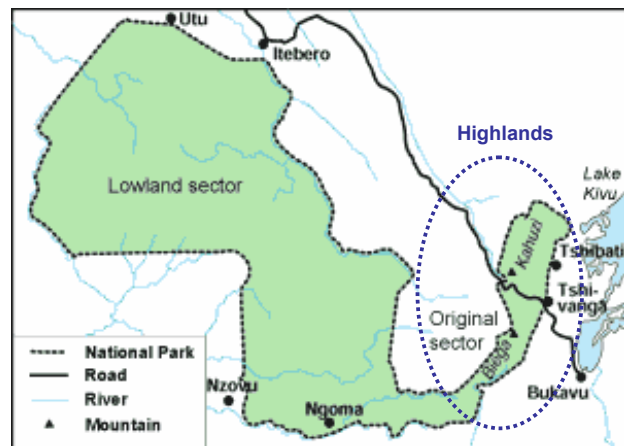
Based on meetings and collaboration with FFI in 2004, and stimulated by the coltan report funded by the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), the CEEC, has identified that a large scale feasibility study must be undertaken to support the regulation and formalisation of a commercially viable, socially beneficial, coltan mining and processing industry in RDC. In order to deliver the Feasibility Study, the CEEC will co-ordinate an inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral process of research, consultation and collaborative planning.

The Feasibility Study will produce a plan for the sustainable development of a formalised coltan industry linked to social and economic stability – prerequisites for the effective and long term conservation of the extraordinary and invaluable landscapes and ecosystems of the DRC.

## Kahuzi Biega National Park

Created in 1970 to protect the habitat of Grauer's gorilla (the Eastern lowland gorilla), Kahuzi Biega National Park was the site of the first gorilla tourism project in the world. Under the cover of war, the park has been devastated by illegal coltan mines, has been used as a military base and its wildlife has been decimated by hunting.

In January 2005 a team of researchers led by Innocent Liengola, of WCS, finished a new census of the highland sector. They counted 168 gorillas – an increase from the 130 counted in 2000. The fact that any animals at all remain is due to the courage and determination of the ICCN rangers who continue their work despite the dangerous and difficult conditions.



The status of fauna and flora in the lowland sector is unknown.

## Expedition objectives

The expedition has three main objectives:

1. To initiate the process of the recovery of Kahuzi Biega National Park
2. To launch a monitoring programme for illegal mining in DRC's protected areas
3. To gather current information to present to national and international decision makers and funders in support of the CEEC's proposal for a comprehensive, integrated Feasibility Study for a regulated coltan mining and processing industry in DRC



It is planned that the expedition will have three main components – (I) Bukavu to investigate trade; (II) the KBNP highlands to consolidate progress made in January; and (III) the KBNP lowlands to gather ground-breaking data and mark the return of conservation efforts to the main section of the park.

### I: Bukavu

- a. To meet the Durban Process Comité de Suivi (stakeholder group concerned with the coltan trade around Kahuzi Biega National Park)
- b. To initiate field level collaboration between ICCN and CEEC in Bukavu & KBNP
- c. To make a general assessment of the current level of coltan trade in Bukavu
- d. To meet various players involved in the trade (miners, negociants, comptoirs, etc), to gather text and visual materials to support the presentation and discussion of the CEEC's coltan initiative
- e. To verify or correct existing information on prices, players, trade levels, etc.
- f. To meet local authorities to initiate dialogue on the CEEC's initiative

### II: Kahuzi Biega Highlands

- g. To meet local communities to discuss and assess issues relating to coltan, conservation and development
- h. To visit surviving gorilla groups to gather data and images
- i. To consolidate and build on the first post-conflict survey data gathered by WCS/ICCN in early 2005

### III: Kahuzi Biega Lowlands – *this component of the expedition is security-dependent and, if conditions are considered dangerous, may be postponed at short notice.*

- j. To provide the first ground-level, international support to ICCN in this area since the war.
- k. To identify and report on current needs, priorities, security status, risks
- l. To visit active and abandoned coltan mines, gather data and images
- m. To meet and discuss current conditions with local communities in relation to abundance of wildlife, scale of mining, insecurity, etc.
- n. To initiate the development of guidelines and reporting protocols to monitor illegal mining in DRC's national parks. To initiate training in relevant data collection using digital cameras, GPS, communications equipment, etc.



<b>Expedition Team</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Role in Expedition</b>
<b>Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)</b> 1. Bernard Iyomi Iyatshi, Conservateur Principal Chef du PNKB 2. Other 3. Other	ICCN was founded in 1934 and has responsibility for managing the DRC's protected areas, as well as encouraging scientific research and tourism that support conservation. All of the conservation NGOs working in DRC are in partnership with ICCN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority to grant access to the Park, licences, etc.</li> <li>• Field leadership, team guidance</li> <li>• Expedition logistics, preparation</li> <li>• Input into development of new mining monitoring system</li> <li>• Security – including final decisions on current conditions and embarkation</li> </ul>
<b>Centre d'Evaluation, d'Expertise et de Certification (CEEC)</b> 4. Kabila Kakule, Chargé de la Documentation, Études et Informatique 5. Aubert Mwilambwe, Chargé de Certification et Statistiques 6. Bukavu office representative 7. Security	The CEEC has the responsibility for developing and implementing evaluation and certification systems for DRC's precious and semi-precious minerals. The CEEC is implementing the Kimberley Process for diamond control in the DRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead for meetings and negotiations in Bukavu</li> <li>• Trade data collection and verification</li> <li>• Input into development of new mining monitoring system</li> <li>• Input into evaluation criteria for the large scale initiative</li> <li>• First hand experience of conditions in park and impact of illegal mining</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)</b> 8. John Hart, Director WCS-DRC 9. Therese Hart, Director WCS-DRC 10. Innocent Liengola, WCS-DRC 11. WCS DRC Communications	The WCS saves wildlife and wild lands through careful science, international conservation and education. For over 20 years, WCS has worked with ICCN, UNESCO and other NGOs to conserve the parks of the DRC. WCS is developing the capacity ICCN to monitor its parks and to keep resulting information available through a central data management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead for ecological research</li> <li>• Lead for development of new mining monitoring system; provision of initial training in equipment use</li> <li>• Input into evaluation criteria for the large scale initiative</li> <li>• Support to ICCN in team guidance</li> <li>• Expedition logistics, preparation</li> <li>• Co-ordination of local reportage</li> </ul>
<b>Fauna &amp; Flora International (FFI) / Hicks&amp;Hayes (H&amp;H)</b> 12. Arthur Mugisha, FFI 13. Karen Hayes, H&H 14. Simon Hicks, H&H	FFI is the world's longest established international conservation body, founded over 100 years ago. FFI acts to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, are based on sound science and take account of human needs. FFI is a founder member of the transboundary International Gorilla Conservation Programme has supported the CEEC on development of its coltan initiative.  Hicks&Hayes is an independent consultancy which develops opportunities for conservation. H&H has particular expertise in the international tantalum trade and the development of integrated, cross sectoral plans for sustainable development. H&H is a partner of FFI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of information, anecdotes, images, etc, to support the case for a Feasibility Study</li> <li>• Verification of existing data</li> <li>• Overview of the perspectives, requirements, constraints of each organisation in team for participation in the Feasibility Study</li> <li>• Initiation of evaluation criteria for the large scale initiative</li> <li>• First hand experience of conditions in park and impact of illegal mining</li> <li>• Securing funds and resources for the expedition; report to sponsors</li> <li>• Expedition write-up for range of audiences</li> </ul>
<b>Expedition support:</b> 15 team members		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers &amp; mechanics</li> <li>• Porters</li> </ul>

## Expedition logistics

The expedition will take place during the month of **August, 2005**, under the Field Leadership of ICCN and WCS. Both of these organisations are vastly experienced in preparation and execution of field operations.

Transport will include air, boat, vehicle, motorcycle and foot. A local team will provide logistical and practical support.



## Security

Eastern DRC continues to suffer from the effects of the war and remains unstable and prone to upsurges of violence. Kahuzi Biega National Park is located in South Kivu, one of the most badly affected provinces.

In advance of the expedition a mixed patrol of ICCN and Congolese military will survey the area as part of their security activities. A full situation report will be considered by the team at the time to determine if it is possible for the expedition to enter the lowlands of the park. Final decision making for security rests with ICCN whose knowledge and experience of the area are of paramount importance.

The team's itinerary and schedule will be known to local authorities and to MONUC. A communications protocol will be established with ICCN's offices and emergency action plans will be developed for implementation by the team if required. The team will carry solar/generator powered satellite phones. All team members will have basic survival kit and will be trained in security measures in relation to a wide range of potential dangers including wildlife, etc.

The team will be accompanied by armed and trained Park guards.

	Days	People	Rate	\$ Total	£ Total
<b>Activities</b>					
Expedition development, consultancy				7,280	4,000
Preparatory arrangements by ICCN/WCS				2,000	1,099
Expedition reporting, publication				1,820	1,000
<b>Travel</b>					
International travel (UK-RDC, Kenya-RDC)		3	1,000	3,000	1,648
Travel Kinshasa-Bukavu return (flight, boat, etc)		7	850	5,950	3,269
<b>Living expenses</b>					
Per diems: FFI/H&H	33	3	40	3,960	2,176
Per diems: WCS	24	4	40	3,840	2,110
Per diems: CEEC	24	4	40	3,840	2,110
Per diems: ICCN	24	4	40	3,840	2,110
Per diems: support staff	24	15	10	3,600	1,978
<b>Equipment</b>					
Vehicle rental, fuel, expenses		2	800	1,600	879
Tents, sleeping bags, nets		30	150	4,500	2,473
Backpacks		30	130	3,900	2,143
Raingear		30	40	1,200	659
Rafting bags, other storage		6	80	480	264
Pelican cases for electronic equipment		5	80	400	220
Digital cameras, cases, extra memory		5	600	3,000	1,648
Shipping costs for equipment				1,000	549
Security contingencies				1,000	549
Medical supplies				1000	549
<b>Field contingencies</b>				<b>1,000</b>	<b>549</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>				<b>58,210</b>	<b>31,984</b>
Taxes, overheads @ 10%				5,821	3,198
<b>Total</b>				<b>64,031</b>	<b>35,182</b>

