

The Sangha River Network

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The Sangha River Network (SRN) is a professional organization for collaboration among researchers of different nationalities and institutional affiliations. The network manages information and facilitates communication between natural and social scientists, and between academics, technical experts, and local communities active in equatorial African forests. The SRN, based at Yale University, works in partnership with the IRD forest studies program at University of Orléans in France. We seek to redefine otherwise distinct communities of information circulation, catalyzing dialogue among actors who would otherwise not engage one another directly. Such discussion may then shape strategies for information management, and for evaluation of policy and practice regarding the Sangha River watershed where the borders of Cameroon, Central African Republic and Congo (Brazzaville) meet. Through this volume, a bilingual website, and a fundraising effort to support scholarly exchange, education, and field research, the SRN works to:

- Make natural and social science research readily accessible to local communities, policy makers, environmental managers and industry, coordinating scientific information for use in a transboundary conservation initiative that involves multiple countries and international entities;
- Translate scientific and technical information about equatorial Africa into different languages for use by both French and English speaking actors and institutions;
- Utilize the Sangha trilateral conservation zone as a case study of connected field sites for capacity-building and communication among international researchers both in and beyond Africa;
- Facilitate basic independent research, pan-African applied research, and cutting-edge critical analysis of conservation and development processes, developing innovative theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical approaches.

Long-term network goals include a permanent collection of maps, primary sources, technical reports, and scholarly publications about the Sangha region; a program of interdisciplinary study for natural, social, and policy science scholars (emphasizing opportunities for Africans); and a model for community- and capacity-building among international, national, and local researchers in regions where resource management is a contested matter.

Material and institutional support for this network has been secured through the Regional Council of Central France, the Washington, D.C.-based Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment, and Yale University. The SRN's incorporation at Yale into the Center for International and Area Studies "Rethinking Environment and Development" group of the Ford Foundation initiative for revitalizing area studies has provided a framework for links to these other research institutes in (or working on) French-speaking Africa:

- Center for Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Senegal
- Center for Local Knowledge, Mali
- Institute for Mathematics and Physical Sciences, Benin

■ FOR MORE INFORMATION please contact us at sangha@yale.edu