

involved in various projects aimed at combating wildlife trafficking, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. However, INBC currently does not have the resource to effectively manage the Angola network of Protected Areas. Borders of most parks are not recognised, marked, or respected, and National Parks are seldom patrolled or monitored. Many parks have inhabitants living within their boundaries, often in large villages, who illegitimately harvest natural resources, including timber, charcoal, and wildlife. Commercial farms and recreational facilities have also been established within some parks. Infrastructure is often in disrepair, staff are poorly managed and motivated, and conservation efforts are generally ineffective. As a result, large mammals and other wildlife are present more by chance than due to conservation efforts.

Landscape Management and Conservation

A landscape approach in the conservation sector is a comprehensive strategy that aims to integrate conservation efforts with sustainable land use practices across large geographic areas. This approach recognises that biodiversity and ecosystem services extend beyond the boundaries of protected areas and that human activities and natural habitats are interconnected. Angola's landscape management and conservation efforts face numerous challenges. Infrastructure within National Parks is often in disrepair, and the staff is inadequately managed and motivated. In 2023, conservation areas had 323 staff and a staffing expenditure of USD 921 665 per year compared to estimated needs of 3 342 staff and budget of USD 18 790 069¹⁵. The presence of large mammals and other wildlife is often a result of providence rather than effective conservation strategies, some with a real risk of extinction¹⁶. Protected areas are frequently encroached upon by commercial farms and recreational facilities, together with cases of human-wildlife conflicts¹⁷, further complicating conservation efforts. To address these issues, Angola needs to implement more effective and inclusive management and conservation strategies ensuring that protected areas are genuinely safeguarded and well-maintained. Central Government Responsibility (International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) type A¹⁸) has been the main management model used for protected areas in the last 50 years. Yet, it has not produced the expected results and other governance models, including through the sharing of responsibilities with private entities and/or by local, are being increasingly envisaged¹⁹. Recent success stories of partnerships with institutions responsible for biodiversity research and conservation (e.g., African National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project, The Nature Conservancy²⁰, Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC)²¹, Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources at the University of Porto) are being considered for future replication. The recent National Tourism Development Plan translates a political willingness to promote a nature-based sustainable economic development²². Bringing gender equality into the workforce has the potential to improve conservation, relationships with communities, park management, and wildlife management. Female rangers contribute a distinctive and additional dimension to the work of rangers in National Parks. At the same time, it also improves the effectiveness of projects by incorporating gender-informed analysis of the actors and drivers of illegal wildlife trade²³.

Livelihoods

Rural livelihoods in Angola have shifted from subsistence and barter to a focus on income security through among others transport, communication, medicine, clothing, and social status. This shift presents a challenge for many rural Angolans (mostly, women, children and youth), who have little to sell, face remote markets, and receive meagre social grants and remittances²⁴. Dystrophic soils limit the availability of marketable commodities, leaving charcoal, timber, and dried bush meat and fish as the best options. However, these activities often occur in protected areas, potentially counteracting conservation efforts. To reduce the harvesting of natural resources, alternative income sources must be developed. Secure and accessible markets for farm products are needed, but these are often limited to food types rarely consumed by rural residents or unsuitable for long-term storage. Dryland cropping strategies on poor soils with variable rainfall focus on prudence and risk avoidance rather than income maximisation²⁵. Conservation agriculture

¹⁵ Keystone Standard Assessment on Angola's conservation areas, 2024.

¹⁶ Including the black-faced impala, black rhino, giant sable antelope, and wild dogs - www.iucnredlist.org.

¹⁷ Angola Protected Area Network - Assessment, USAID 2022.

¹⁸ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-020.pdf>

¹⁹ See: "Overview of the current situation in conservation areas in Angola and needs", INBC 2023; Angola Vision 2050; and NDP 2023-2027. Signs of positive change include the promulgation of supportive Presidential Decrees on environmental matters and the appointment of an international NGO (African Parks) to co-manage Iona National Park.

²⁰ [The Nature Conservancy: A World Where People & Nature Thrive](#)

²¹ [TRAFFIC | Trade in Wild Species](#).

²² URSA (Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Challenges & Opportunities)

²³ World Bank blogs

²⁴ Calunga et al., 2015.

²⁵ Sadras et al., 2003; Calviño & Monzon, 2009; Calunga et al., 2015; Duong et al., 2019