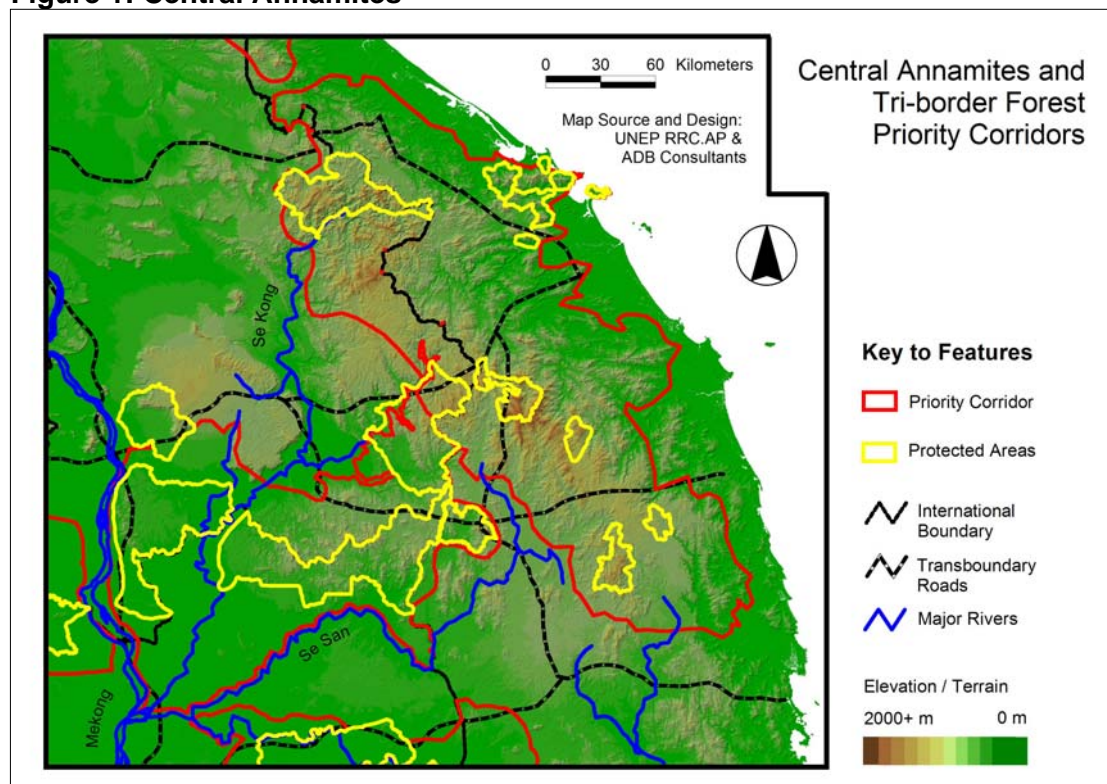


ANNEX 3.7 Central Annamites (Vietnam, Laos) Priority GMS Biodiversity Conservation Corridor

Figure 1: Central Annamites



Central Annamites

Countries: Vietnam and Laos

Provinces/Districts: Quang Tri, Thua Thien-Hue, Da Nang, Quang Nam, Kon Tum, Quang Ngai, and Gia Lai (Vietnam); Salavan and Xekong (Laos)

Most of this GMSBCC is within the Southern Annamites Montane Rain Forests ecoregion, but the eastern boundary fringes along the Southern Vietnam Lowland Dry Forests ecoregion.

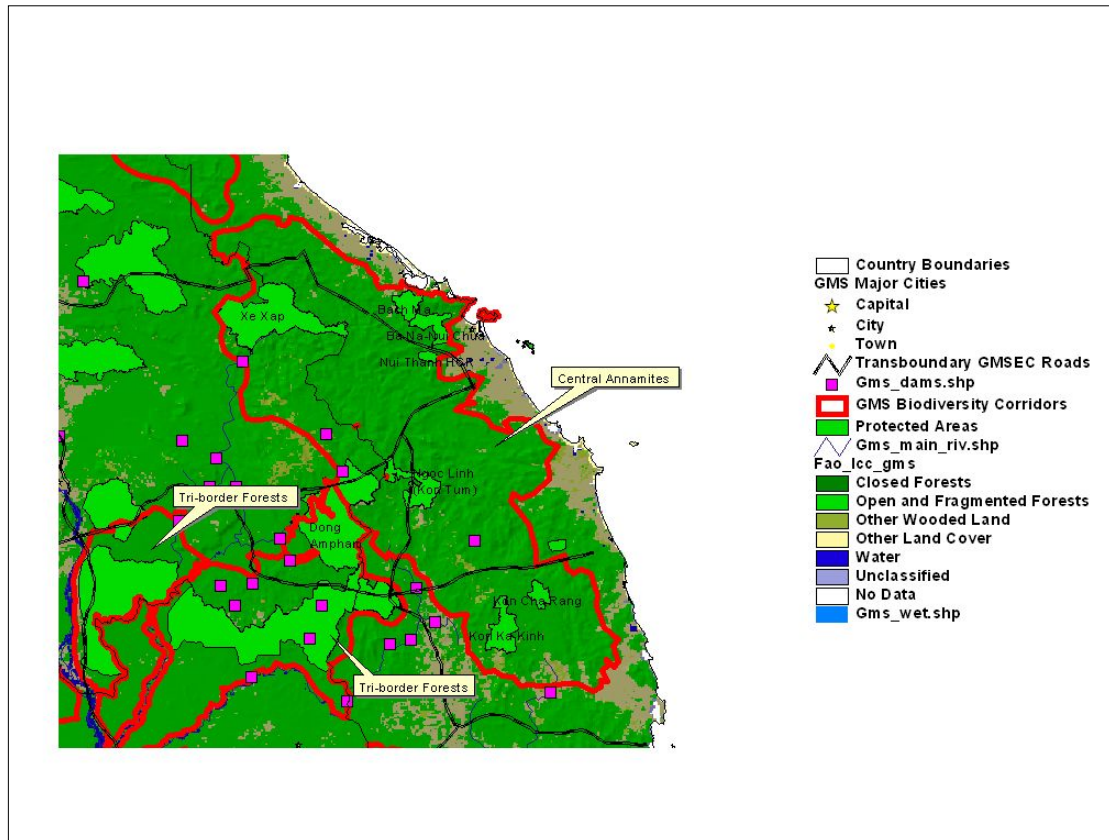
The vegetation is wet evergreen rainforests with montane cloud forests and conifers in the higher elevations. Geologically the region is diverse; the exposed granitic basement rock in the Kontum Massif extends for 250 km from north to south, whereas the southern section of the Annamite Range is a complex mosaic of volcanic basalts, granites, and sedimentary substrates. The headwater catchment of the Xe Kong river, a major source of the Mekong River flows, is within this corridor.

The forests are more fragmented in this part of the mountain range, compared to the Northern Annamites, especially in the lowland, below 400 m. But there is still relatively good continuity within the high altitude forests.

The important protected areas in the landscape includes Bach Ma, Kon Cha Rang, Ngoc Linh, Kon Ka Kinh, Ba Na-Nui Chua, Nui Thanh in Vietnam and Xe Xap and Dong Ampham in Laos (Figure 2). Ngoc Linh is the highest point along the central and southern Annamites, and is contiguous, albeit with tenuous links, with Dong Ampham in Laos. Bach Ma and Ba Na-Nui Cha are also contiguous and this complex

is close to Nui Thanh. The larger Xe Xap NBCA in Laos is isolated, although there seem to be intact forests between the protected areas indicating potential for connectivity. This has to be verified through ground surveys.

Figure 2: The Central Annamites GMSBCC, showing the protected areas, major transnational roads, dams, and remaining forest cover



Much of the Northern Annamite fauna is also thought to occur in the Central Annamites (Baltzer et al. 2001), although the region is biologically under-explored. Among the species of conservation significance are the Grey-shanked Douc langur, gibbon, and several Annamite endemics, such as the Black-crowned Barwing, Golden-winged Laughingthrush, White-cheeked Laughingthrush, and Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush.

Key Conservation Issues And Threats To Biodiversity

Although the mountains, especially in Vietnam, were inhabited by ethnic minority groups such as Gia Rai, Bana, and Sedang, there has been an increased immigration of the majority Kinh (SEF 2002¹). As a result, there has been extensive habitat fragmentation from conversion to agriculture.

According to the WWF analysis (Baltzer et al. 2001), relatively little is known of the biodiversity of the area. Thus surveys are needed in the remaining forest fragments and potential habitat linkages before a conservation landscape and its component core areas and habitat linkages are defined. At present, the conservation emphasis should be the wet evergreen montane forests that likely harbor a characteristic Annamite fauna.

¹ SEF 2002. Vol III

Impact Of The GMSEC

The northern part of the GMSBCC lies within the east-west GMSEC, and the extreme southern tip is within the South2 GMSEC (Figure 2). Three major east-west transnational roads cut through the GMSBCC, while another runs about 25 km to the south of the GMSBCC. The zones of influence of these roads cover about 90% of the GMSBCC.

Five dams have been mooted within the GMSBCC, while two more are within 10 km of the GMSBCC boundary. All these will likely affect the watershed of the corridor and the flows of the Mekong River.