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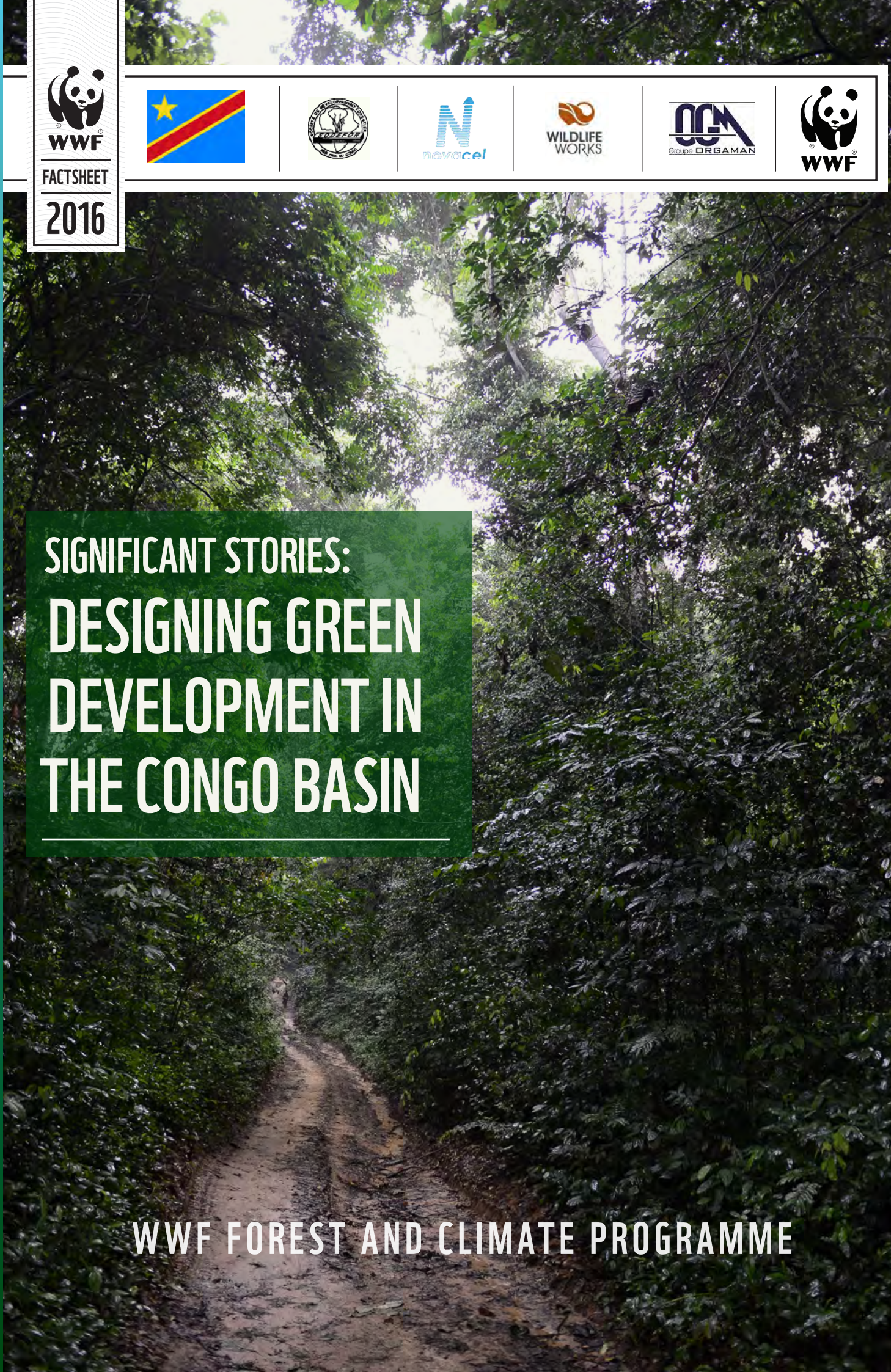
FACTSHEET

2016

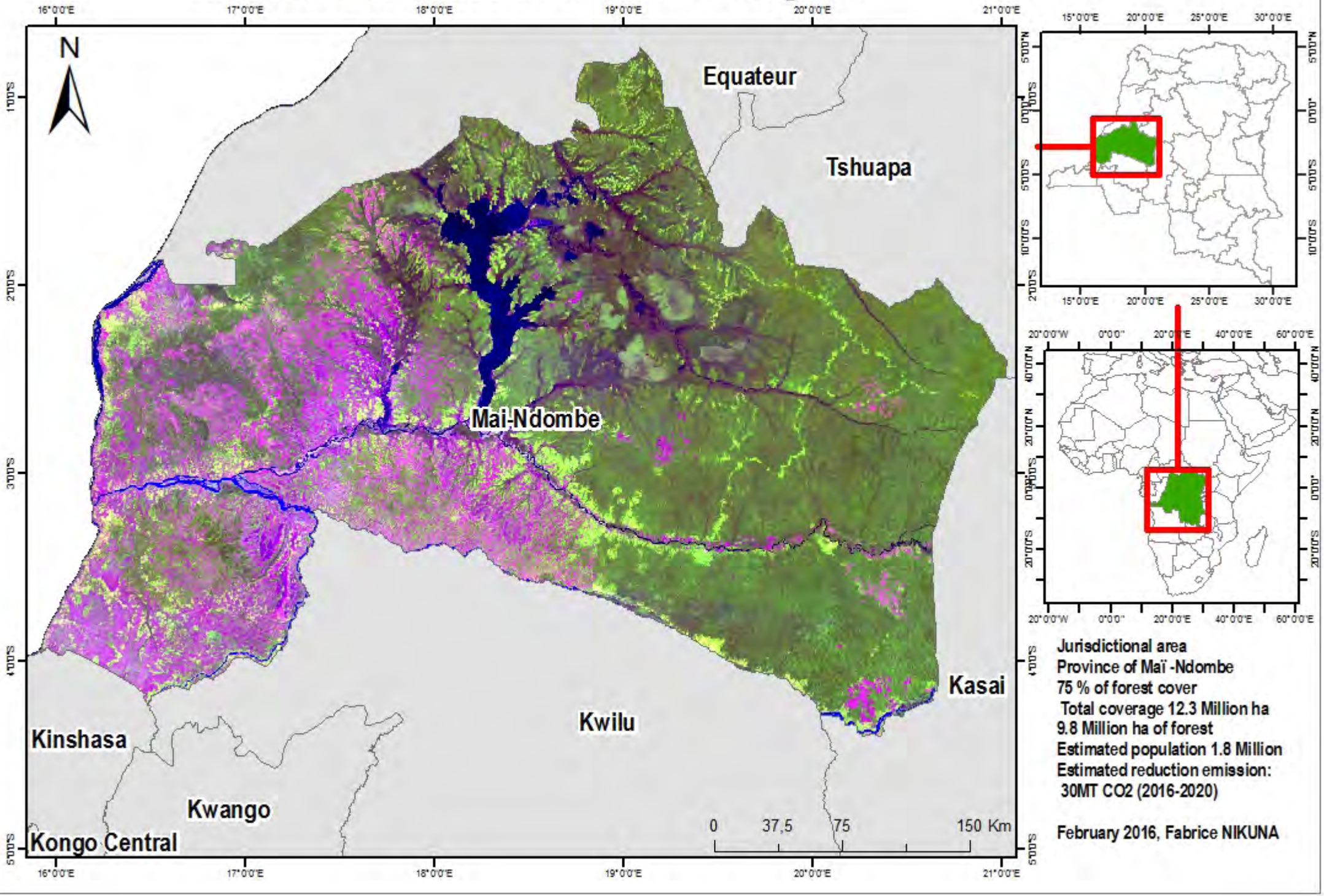


SIGNIFICANT STORIES:

DESIGNING GREEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONGO BASIN

WWF FOREST AND CLIMATE PROGRAMME

Maï -Ndombe Emission Reduction Program



Jurisdictional area
Province of Maï -Ndombe
75 % of forest cover
Total coverage 12.3 Million ha
9.8 Million ha of forest
Estimated population 1.8 Million
Estimated reduction emission:
30MT CO2 (2016-2020)

February 2016, Fabrice NIKUNA

SNAPSHOT

What

This is the first REDD+ and green development pilot program at scale in Africa, and one of the first in the world.

» Diverse stakeholders set out to achieve a detailed roadmap for the first jurisdictional green development program aiming to protect the forests of the Congo while supporting sustainable forest use, empowering communities, strengthening governance, and improving local livelihoods on a landscape scale.

» These stakeholders were able to successfully work together to create a participatory program design, which covers more than 12 million hectares, reaches 300,000 families and sustainably reduces deforestation and forest degradation by half. The end product is the draft Emissions Reductions Program Document (ERPD)—which has helped secure $176 million in committed and potential funding to implement the design.

» Key lessons emerged from the process that highlight the value of bringing together the private sector, local and national leadership, NGOs, community members and other stakeholders in a landscape-level, jurisdictional approach.

» Innovations that grew from this process include the development of new milestones and measures of performance; the first payment-for-performance plans directly involving local communities; the formation of partnerships between local communities and the private sector; the financing of carbon concessions in place of logging concessions; savanna restoration efforts; sustainable charcoal production and agroforestry; and community-based forest management and land use planning as a tool and basis for strengthened land rights.

WWF contact

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Direct stakeholders

Involved in project design, make decisions, and receive benefits

» Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MENCT)
» REDD National Coordination (CN-REDD)
» Other governmental entities (MEDD, CTR)
» Customary authorities and local community representatives
» Private sector partners (Wildlife Works Carbon, NOVACEL, FIB, CONAPAC, SOGENAC, SOCALCO)

Strategic stakeholders

Provide material, human, and other resources

» World Bank
» Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation (NORAD)
» Forest Investment Programme (FIP)
» Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)
» Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF)
» UN-REDD Programme
» USAID-CARPE
» World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Indirect stakeholders

Influence practice without being directly involved

» National and local civil society organizations

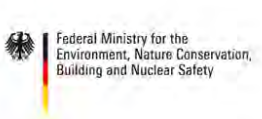
Where

Mai Ndombe Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

When

2010-ongoing

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



COVER PHOTO: © JULIE PUDLOWSKI / WWF-US

SUMMARY

This Forest and Climate Significant Story details the participatory design of a model—an Emissions Reductions Program Document, or ERPD—for green development in the Mai Ndombe Province of the DRC. The ERPD represents a critical first step for the implementation of a national REDD+ strategy in the DRC, and a key test of climate action on the African continent.

It aims to provide alternatives to deforestation and rewards for performance in order to reduce emissions, ease poverty, and support sustainable development on a jurisdictional scale—one that covers more than 12 million hectares, reaching 300,000 families and sustainably reducing deforestation and forest degradation by half.

The design process brought together government officials, community members, civil society organizations, and the private sector to create a document outlining their vision. The resulting document proposes a detailed set of activities that address the direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and are both economically viable and beneficial to the environment and local communities.

Together, these activities establish the first jurisdictional emissions reductions program in Africa, and one of the first in the world.

INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS

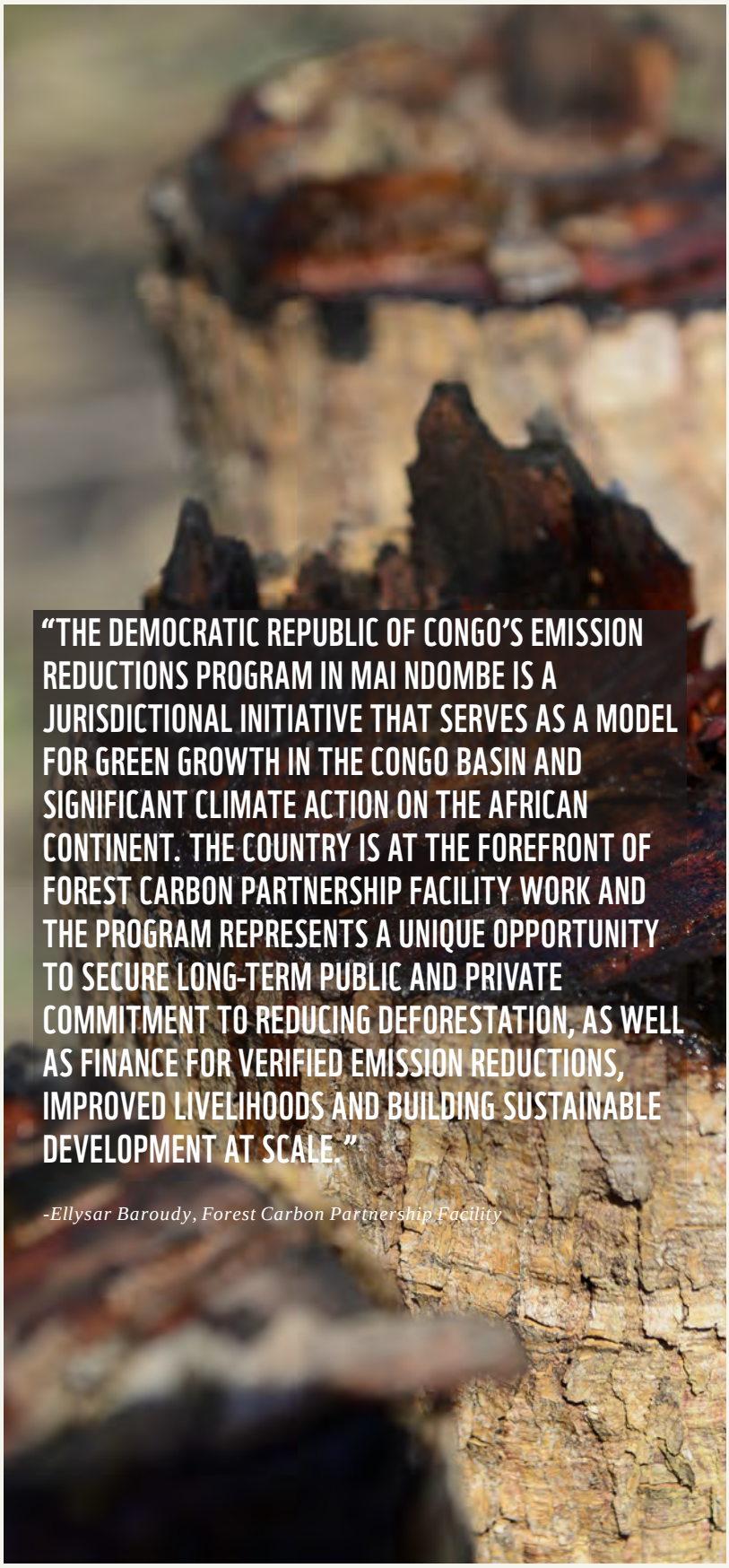
When emissions reduction work began in Mai Ndombe Province, it was as part of the first large-scale REDD+ project in Africa. REDD+ is defined as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by providing developing countries with economic incentives to protect their forests that make trees worth more standing than cut down. When done right, in a way that safeguards the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, REDD+ can not only benefit the climate, but also biodiversity and local livelihoods.

With time, however, it became clear to the stakeholders involved in this process that REDD+ is only one tool within the larger framework required to address the complex multitude of issues that drive deforestation and forest degradation. These issues reach well beyond forests into the economic, political, legal, social, and cultural elements of a society. The stakeholders set out to encompass this wider set of issues with a vision for green development—a path for economic and social growth that safeguards the natural environment while improving people's livelihoods and wellbeing.

This process envisaged green development with a jurisdictional or landscape approach, one that works on a meaningful yet subnational scale. This approach implements activities that integrate top-down planning with bottom-up, participatory processes across large areas with distinct ecological, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics. It has proven to be the most effective approach yet for spurring national climate action and securing international support and investment.

CONTEXT

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) lies in the Congo Basin, home to the second-largest tropical rainforest in the world and to some of the most important areas of biodiversity on earth. Here, in what is known as the Green Heart of Africa, vast



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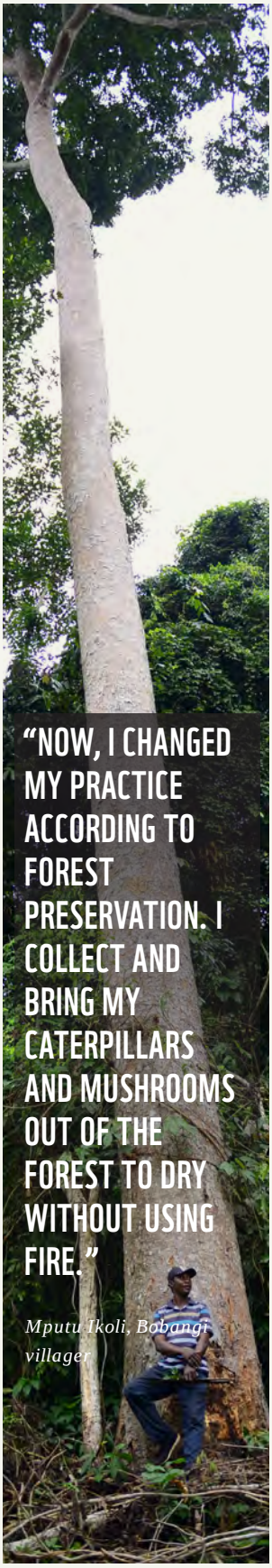


expanses of primary forest still stand. The DRC alone contains 155 million hectares of that forest cover—approximately 10 percent of the planet's tropical forest, and about half of all African forest.

Spanning 12.3 million hectares northeast of the DRC's capital of Kinshasa, the newly created province of Mai Ndombe holds 9.8 million hectares of vital forest. Mai Ndombe Province was formed by the passage of a 2015 law redefining the nation's administrative divisions, and its governance is still being established. But it holds an ancient and unique landscape encompassing diverse ecosystems, including tropical moist forests interspersed with savannas and peat-rich "swamp" forests. A large proportion of the region's 1.8 million residents practice traditional lifestyles based on hunting, fishing, and collecting forest products. These forests are also home to the endangered bonobo (Pan Paniscus), one of the four great ape species found wild nowhere else on Earth.

APPROACH

The multi-faceted pressures forests face in Mai Ndombe require a multi-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach. The participatory design process and resulting ERPD aimed to address both direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation through a comprehensive set of activities across multiple intersecting and mutually reinforcing levels.

Proposed emission-reducing activities that address the direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation include partnerships between government, the private sector, and local and indigenous peoples who rely on the forests, to enforce and encourage reduced-impact logging and sustainable land use through incentives that include direct payments for emissions reduction; improving agroforestry practices and employing low-impact agroforestry; expanding the cultivation of perennial or alternative crops, such as coffee and cacao; afforestation, reforestation, and savanna restoration; and establishing conservation concessions and community forests.

The program also employs enabling activities that address the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and provide significant social benefits. These emphasize capacity building for communities and local authorities to improve governance and secure land tenure; strengthening of decentralized government services so they can better enforce safeguards that protect forests and the communities that rely on them; investing in activities of collective and strategic interest; and the introduction of family planning education and resources. The activities also include strengthening the downstream value chains of perennial/alternative crops; formalizing the wood energy sector and its compliance; and supporting community-based forestry and management of protected areas.

Together, these activities create an integrated and inclusive top-down and bottom-up approach to address all drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Mai Ndombe.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

2009: The DRC formally engages in REDD+ with a presidential decree establishing its framework.

March 2010: The DRC begins the process towards an ER-PIN by developing its REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), a framework document that sets out a clear plan, budget, and schedule for a country to achieve REDD+ readiness. It becomes the first African country to receive approval of its R-PP from the FCPF.

October 2010: Twenty-five stakeholder groups gather in the village of Bolobo to craft a more specific vision for integrated green development in Mai Ndombe. Over 100 consultations and meetings follow over the next 5 years to ensure all stakeholders contribute to, buy into, and believe in this vision.

2011: Community-level engagement and capacity-building begin. National FPIC guidelines completed and approved by CN-REDD. Microzoning of 15 pilot communities in the Bolobo territory achieved—more than 750 men and women participate in the process.

2013: In June, the first official version of DRC's ER-PIN is submitted for review and consideration.

April 2014: The DRC's ER-PIN is accepted in a Brussels meeting of the Carbon Fund. Stakeholders then begin the work of designing a more detailed model for their emission reduction program, the Emission Reduction Program Document (ERPD).

February to June 2015: During a high-level meeting in mid-February, more than 25 key stakeholders sign a memorandum of understanding to confirm the partnership that would oversee the design process and run the full program once under way. Over several meetings and workshops, the stakeholders agree to the key principles of their model. Training and capacity-building of provincial authorities and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities continue throughout the process. Engagement and knowledge-building related to the design process grow as more communities take part in FPIC workshops and technical trainings, and as press coverage and other outreach efforts spread the word.

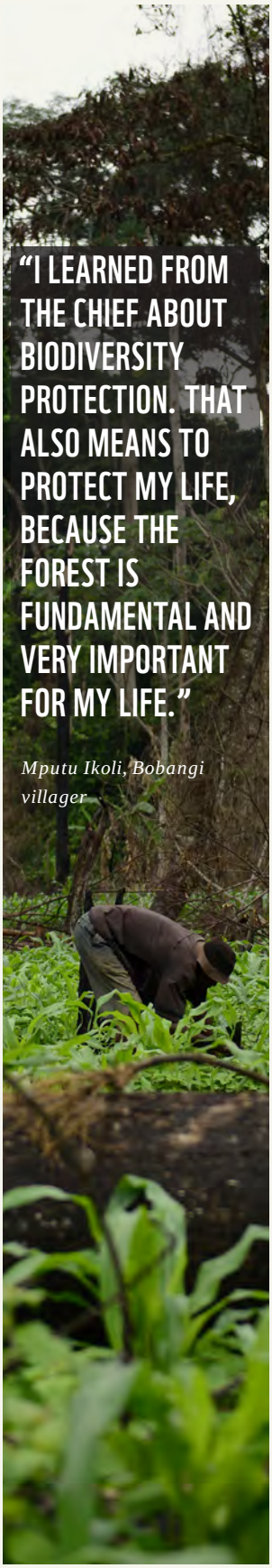
September 2015: A draft of the ERPD detailing the model for green development in Mai Ndombe is completed and shared with all stakeholders for validation and feedback.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Move beyond the preliminary roadmap presented in the ER-PIN to craft a detailed, comprehensive, jurisdictional-scale emissions reduction and green development program that supports payment-for-performance incentives in Mai Ndombe.
- Build on the achievements of the ER-PIN development process and earlier work to establish or strengthen partnerships between government authorities, private sector partners, NGO actors and community members.
- Continue to build capacities and awareness so that all stakeholders can have a voice in the participatory process of designing and implementing green development.
- Secure multilateral funding in support of green development in Mai Ndombe.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Diverse stakeholders—including government officials, community members, civil society organizations, NGO actors, and representatives from the private sector—crafted a comprehensive program (detailed in the ERPD) for green development in the Congo Basin on an unprecedented scale. The ERPD puts a national policy framework for green development in place, and poises the DRC to secure $176 million in committed and potential funding to establish the first jurisdictional emissions reductions program in Africa.
- The stakeholders involved came together in more than 100 meetings and consultations that were truly participatory, and in many cases gave voice to historically marginalized and unheard groups.
- This process has established and tested an innovative model for direct payment for performance at the local community level that communities can share and manage themselves to improve their own livelihoods and to combat the poverty and lack of economic opportunity that help drive deforestation and forest degradation.
- The partnerships formed between local and provincial governments, private-sector companies, and local and indigenous communities during the design process are giving rise to more sustainable practices, including reforestation, savanna protection,



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and financing of carbon concessions in place of logging concessions.

- Community capacities and engagement with REDD+ and green development continue to grow. Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) was developed in the communities of Mopulenge, Tshuma, Lebo, Embeyu, and Enkiu, reaching more than 289 people, including 60 women. Presentations and trainings conducted with stakeholders, high school and college students, and at international meetings and experience exchanges, as well as press coverage via print, TV, and radio stories have all contributed to widespread capacity- and connection-building as well.

- Participatory community land use mapping and planning have served to strengthen the rights and land tenure of local and indigenous peoples, and the resulting maps have been shared and recognized at the provincial and national level. They were published in an atlas of localization of indigenous peoples, a second edition of which is currently in preparation.

- Community members continue to build technical capacities too, and these empower them to take an active role in designing and implementing green development. Sixteen community fire units are now organized to manage bushfires. Four communities have engaged in the community forest designation process, and 25 communities have taken part in participatory mapping of their lands. More than 66 hectares of trees have been planted in community forests and study fields, and 4 contracts have been signed to secure payments for the ecosystem services those trees provide.

- Detailed carbon models and maps have been completed, and Mai Ndombe's subnational Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system is being integrated into the national MRV system with the National System of Forest Monitoring action plan. The landscape-level MRV team fully participated in the design of the national plan.

CHALLENGES

- The diversity of the stakeholders involved introduces complexity and conflict to the process, which slows progress. Different stakeholders have different needs, values, expectations, levels of understanding, and views of land use management. Bridging the differences takes time.

- Communities in Mai Ndombe face profound poverty, insecure land tenure, and lack of economic opportunity, all of which encourages the rapid exploitation of resources and discourages sustainable land use practices. Weak governance and law enforcement compound this challenge.

- Political inactivity and ambiguity over the province's boundaries have bred confusion and delayed the legal establishment of Mai Ndombe Province. Ongoing political unrest and conflict could disrupt design, planning, and implementation.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The diverse set of experiences, ideas, and skills the stakeholders brought to the design process offered a chance to learn from each other and to find more creative solutions. It presents the possibility for innovation in developing tools and intervention strategies, and a chance at inspiring more confidence in all the stakeholders involved when they see that everyone’s voice will be supported and heard.

- If approved, the model for green development detailed in the ERPD would lead to the signing of an emission reduction purchase agreement (ERPA) with the Carbon Fund-FCPF that would provide financial support for full implementation of green development activities in Mai Ndombe.

- The lessons learned throughout this process can help guide other REDD+ and green development jurisdictional programs elsewhere in Africa and the world.

LESSONS LEARNED

- A jurisdictional or landscape approach can be complicated, but it facilitates scaling up. Integrating several independent green development or emissions-reducing efforts into a jurisdictional green development program can create conflicts, as pre-existing projects can feel their rights (for example, to stick to the procedures they have developed) are jeopardized by the scaling-up process. But if these difficulties can be overcome, the subnational yet large scale of a jurisdictional or landscape-level approach offers a chance to develop and test new tools and methodologies on the ground, and learn enough to spur reform on the national level. It encompasses enough complexity to adequately challenge a tool or methodology, while still retaining enough simplicity to easily reveal what isn’t working.

- Working with diverse stakeholders presents opportunities. Although the divergent priorities and viewpoints of the stakeholders involved in this design process created conflict at times, they also offered a learning opportunity. Working through the conflicts to build consensus deepened the understanding between them and brought greater insight, breadth, and creativity to the model they were designing. Bringing together NGO and private sector actors, for example, can strengthen the overall model by incorporating and reconciling community concerns and needs with business experience and practices.

- Gaining support and buy-in from communities takes time. During participatory mapping efforts, some community members were reluctant to take part at first; however, this began to change once they recognized the potential benefits of the process. Some communities are now using the maps to prepare joint management activities with their neighbors where demarcation conflicts have been addressed, to defend their rights to the land, and to plan for community forestry projects. Seeing firsthand how these benefits develop over time is often the most effective way for local communities to start to trust the process.

- It is important to build trust and create incentives for collaboration. In partnering with the private forestry sector, for example, it became clear that the relationship and cooperation between forest companies, government, and civil society is challenging due to a lack of confidence and trust, weak implementation and monitoring of legal requirements, and problems with illegal logging. But some of these difficulties could be overcome by educating the whole stakeholder

group about the financial benefits that sustainable forest management can bring, and ensuring sufficient support of forest administration in order to apply the law and reduce illegal logging.

- Strengthening local governments and communities leads to more effective engagement. In Malebo (an area in the Mai Ndombe landscape region), WWF provided young men and women serving as community representatives with computers and training on how to use them. They used the computers to monitor changes in forest cover using online tools and in turn could make more informed decisions about their lands. This training empowered them to more effectively engage in the REDD+ process at the local and district levels. Now they are involved in designing national-level green development policies and forest monitoring systems.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INNOVATIONS

- This is the first REDD+ and green development pilot program of this scale in Africa, and one of the first in the world.

- The vision for green development produced by this process calls for Africa's first payment-for-performance scheme that directly compensates communities for managing and maintaining their forests at a landscape scale.

- This design process has forged innovative partnerships between communities, government authorities, and the private sector that are changing industrial forest management practices, incentivizing reforestation, savanna protection, forest certification, and financing of carbon concessions in place of logging concessions to protect forests and economic opportunities at the same time.

- Designing and implementing this green development program requires detailed and accurate assessments of carbon stocks, emissions and land use patterns, achieved through a novel combination of field data (often incorporating the deep forest knowledge of local and indigenous peoples, including community members trained in MRV techniques), airborne laser (Light Detection and Ranging, or LiDAR) technology, and satellite imagery.

- Through unprecedented community engagement—in the forms of participatory mapping and microzoning, capacity-building, and consultation—the ERPD design process and earlier work have strengthened the land tenure and rights of local and indigenous peoples in Mai Ndombe.

- Since its start, REDD+ and green development work in Mai Ndombe has sought to empower historically marginalized groups. Its focus on community-level capacity-building and engagement has brought new voices to a national and international dialogue. This particular design process has given new weight and visibility to the importance of including women and addressing gender, which strengthens the resulting model and helps build community buy-in and ownership of green development.

NEXT STEPS

- Submission of the final proposal (ERPD) for a jurisdictional Mai Ndombe green development program to the Carbon Fund-FCPF by March 2016.

- Upon approval of the final ERPD, the DRC and its stakeholders in Mai Ndombe would seek a signed emission reduction purchase agreement (ERPA), which would provide financial support for full implementation of green development activities in the region. Implementation planning would begin in 2016.

- With this additional support, the DRC and its partners in this process aim to secure long-term finance for green growth objectives, and to achieve that green growth through community-led initiatives and appropriate national policies on REDD+, land tenure, community engagement, forest monitoring and management, and social and environmental REDD+ safeguards.

- Documentation of the innovations, strategies and lessons that emerged from the program design and implementation processes to share them with the world.

CONCLUSION

The participatory design of a jurisdictional, landscape-scale green development program that protects the forests of the Congo while supporting sustainable forest use, empowering communities, and improving local livelihoods is a significant milestone. It represents an important first step toward a more inclusive way of addressing the deforestation and forest degradation the Congo Basin faces, one that bridges divides and reconciles differences for the benefit of forests and the people who depend on them. The work done here offers valuable lessons—not just for the DRC on a national level and for other Congo Basin countries, but for forests facing similar threats around the world.

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"THIS PROCESS IS THE HOPE OF A NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER."

Bruce Ebengo, Inongo ER Mai Ndombe Community Representative

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100% RECYCLED

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This document was produced as part of Project REDD+ for People and Nature II, 2013-2015, a Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation supported program.

OUR VISION

WWF's Forest and Climate Programme works to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests as carbon stores is secured by green economic development that benefits people, the climate and biodiversity in transformational ways.

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Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
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