



WWF

FACTSHEET

2013

WWF FOREST AND CLIMATE PROGRAMME

REDD+ Inspiring Practices

STRENGTHENING LAND TENURE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY LAND-USE MAPPING IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

SNAPSHOT

What

» Community involvement in participatory land-use mapping as the basis for land-use management planning, conservation of natural resources and securing of land tenure in customary areas in the Lac Tumba region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Who

» Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)
 » Civil society organizations
 » Conservation International
 » Ministry of Environment, Conservation of Nature, and Tourism (MECNT)
 » Natural Resources Network
 » Norad
 » Rainforest Foundation
 » Réseau Africain des Forêts
 Modèles
 » Pact
 » Wildlife Conservation Society
 » WWF

Where

Lac Tumba region, Democratic Republic of Congo

When

2010–Ongoing

Project Team

Flory Botamba
 Project Manager, REDD+ for People and Nature/REDD+ Focal Point, WWF
fbotamba@wwfcarpo.org

Carla Ngoyi

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification Officer, WWF
cngoyi@wwfcarpo.org



SUMMARY

This REDD+ Inspiring Practice focuses on participatory land-use mapping and land-use planning being carried out with communities from customary areas, known locally as *terroirs*, in the Lac Tumba region of the DRC (Bandundu and Equateur provinces). The process was designed to recognize and respect the community visions and priorities for management and use of village land and natural resources. Through this work, local communities gained knowledge of the policy, legal and contractual issues that may affect land use and local rights, and the capacity to fully participate in land-use decision-making processes.

EXPECTED CHANGES

- Communities acquire legally recognized status and, in turn, secure formal recognition of local land uses in relation to other development plans or commercial interests.
- Land use of customary land areas is mapped.
- Communities have capacity and tools needed to develop land-use and land-management plans.
- A foundation is established for income-generating activities, and systems are created for sharing income from natural resources.

- Communities and provincial or national government have a basis for benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- All stakeholders are supported in more efficient management of their natural resources to avoid waste, over-exploitation, nepotism and illegal use of these.
- A sense of community ownership and responsibility of natural resources and land use is developed.

CONTEXT

In the DRC, land use and access to resources are complicated by a dual system of statutory and customary laws regarding land tenure. Under current statutory law, most land belongs to the government, and rural people can gain right of use only through government-granted land-use concessions. While several legal texts recognize communities' rights to varying degrees, these texts are often in conflict.

On the other hand, the customary approach to land tenure and natural resources use remains the *de facto* system to manage and gain access to land and other natural resources, especially in rural and suburban areas. Customary tenure can be decentralized

or centralized when decision-making power is decentralized and vested with chiefs (*chefs de terre*) of terroirs ranging between a few thousand hectares around a single village to multiple hamlets or villages. In other scenarios, authority remains centralized with the government, covering hundreds of thousands of hectares of land that encompasses a large number of villages to which limited decision-making power is devolved. Adding another dimension is the presence of indigenous people in the area. Traditionally, groups of indigenous Batwa people did not have formal access to a terroir, but used large tracks of the forest at will. Most of these groups are now sedentary and either recognize their own terroir around their village or share a village terroir with Bantu villagers (the general name for the numerous ethnic groups who speak the Bantu language) when living in the same village.

DRC's Forest Code (2002) decentralizes and devolves forest resource management to local communities and promotes the coordination between customary authorities and the local administration. According to this code, communities can formalize forest access and use rights in the form of community forest concessions granted by the government in areas zoned as protected forests, or by acquiring long-term concessions similar to those the government makes available to industrial logging companies in areas zoned as production forests. However, the implementing procedures for the allocation of community forest concessions have not yet been formalized, and, therefore, no community forest concessions have yet been created.

In the DRC, the primary land-use and land tenure challenges that local communities face include:

- Little involvement of local people in rural development policies;
- Lack of access to productive land for some groups;
- Multiple conflicts over land tenure;
- Growth of the rural population in some parts of the country.



PHOTO: JULIE PUDLOWSKI / WWF



STAKEHOLDERS

DIRECT STAKEHOLDERS

INVOLVED IN PROJECT DESIGN, MAKE DECISIONS, AND RECEIVE BENEFITS.

- Civil society organizations
- Customary authorities and legally recognized local community organizations
- Local government and rural committees
- Ministry of Environment, Conservation of Nature, and Tourism (MECNT)
- National Steering Committee for Participatory Zoning
- WWF (member of the National Participatory Zoning Steering Committee)

STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS

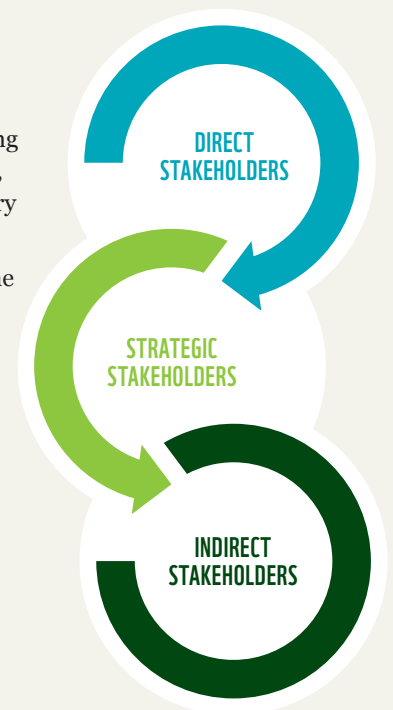
PROVIDE MATERIAL, HUMAN, AND OTHER RESOURCES.

- African Wildlife Foundation (not working in the Lac Tumba landscape specifically, but member of the National Participatory Zoning Steering Committee)
- Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)
- Conservation International
- Natural Resources Network
- Norad
- Rainforest Foundation
- Pact
- Wildlife Conservation Society

INDIRECT STAKEHOLDERS

INFLUENCE PRACTICE WITHOUT BEING DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

- Individual community members (they do participate directly, though, through representation by legally recognized local community organizations).





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

2010–2013: Participatory mapping of six terroirs in the North Bateke Chiefdom in the Bolobo territory. The method adopted for this work is participatory mapping using satellite images of the region as a starting point. Land-cover and land-use maps are produced after the participatory mapping of 21 communities across the six terroirs, a process that engaged more than 750 people. Maps help particularly in the monitoring of the loss of forest cover, land-use activities, land tenure and the community management of natural resources. This exercise helps identify land rights and confirm land limits approved by all neighbouring communities. The maps produced are used to inform local management plans. Activities included the following:

- **Consultation** between the team of facilitators, chiefs and the local communities on the issues of land tenure and mapping kicked off the process.
- **Introductory workshops** were held in each terroir where working sessions were conducted with diverse participants, including customary authorities, local representatives of the state authority, local NGOs, youth, older people and women to ensure a participatory process.
- Each community **delineated its land** according to customary uses, including forests, agriculture, sacred sites, habitats and areas of cultural and historical importance. The map with these areas delineated was sketched out on the floor and then transferred to paper.
- Members of each community with a good knowledge of their land were quickly trained as cartographers on the use of a global position system (GPS) tool. They **measured community limits and identified tenure and land-use conflicts** with neighbouring areas.
- Using geographical information system (GIS) technology, the original maps were enhanced to include **geo-referenced information**.
- Each map was presented to the whole **community for its validation** on limits, occupation and land use. Conflicts on land tenure were identified at this stage.
- After corrections were made based on comments from the validation workshop, **four final types of maps were produced** for each community—spatial, land tenure, land use and land affectation.
- Maps were presented to political and administrative authorities for their **official validation**.

2010–Ongoing: Maps are officially recognized by relevant authorities.

WWF worked with community partners and administrative authorities to facilitate the process required to obtain official recognition of community maps. This process of recognition begins with the local Territory Administration and continues through to the District Commissioner, Provincial Interior Ministry and, finally, the National Interior Ministry.

2010–Ongoing: Local committees for development and conservation (CLDCs) are established at the village level and are organized according to the traditional structures of participating ethnic groups.

CLDCs are not formally recognized by the government and do not replace existing decision-making authorities but become the mechanism through which decision-making regarding land and natural resources management traditionally occurs. They are also considered a platform for dialogue and action for the development of the village and function as an intermediary between communities and other institutions at local, state and provincial levels.



PHOTO: JULIE PUDLOWSKI / WWF

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The mapping exercise encourages traditional knowledge and practices, and promotes more effective management of community forests. This process also empowers communities by ensuring that customary power and land uses by communities, including women, are reinforced and integrated into land-use planning. A land-use plan based on the needs and issues identified by community members and other local stakeholders will guarantee the legitimacy and sustainability of REDD+ at the local level by ensuring that REDD+ strategies are adopted by the actual users of the forest and the agents of deforestation.
- Community mapping is closely linked to the REDD+ MRV process by building local capacity to collect and track mapping data. Communities worked together to analyze imagery and better understand deforestation tracking and shared information they collected with national-level MRV databases.
- Capacity has been built to transfer land-use management by working with local communities to map land cover within territories and the customary use of resources. Maps of land cover and customary use are being used as a basis for the development of local land-use plans. In addition, these maps serve as descriptive materials that raise local awareness about issues of sustainable management.
- Almost one million hectares have been mapped, approximately 146 terroirs have been engaged, and nearly 350 CLDCs have been organized. The maps and numerical data gathered have been shared with institutions, including Institut Géographique du Congo and Institut National de la Statistique at the national and provincial levels. Printed maps are distributed to communities, customary authorities, including land chiefs, and the territory administrators.

100%
RECYCLED



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.

Photos and graphics © WWF or used with permission.
Text available under a Creative Commons licence.

f / wwff



/ wwfforestcarbon



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.
www.panda.org/forestclimate

© WWF Registered Trademark Owner © 1986, WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund), Gland, Switzerland

CHALLENGES

Costs for the mapping exercise ran high, and operations were logistically challenging.

The costs associated with the community mapping exercise ranged between US\$2,000 and US\$6,000 per terroir, depending of the logistics, the size of the terroir and the accessibility of the areas. Mapping teams found that they needed between three and seven days per terroir, and mapping in much larger terroirs would require a longer period of time. WWF has trained 19 young cartographers in this process who are brought on as consultants when budgets allow. CLDCs can sometimes map areas more easily, and their work can be carried out at a lower cost.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Support and buy-in from communities takes time.** During the mapping exercise, some community members were reluctant to participate at first; however, they began to trust the process once they recognized the potential benefits. Some communities are already using the maps to prepare joint management activities with their neighbours where demarcation conflicts have been addressed, or to defend their rights against logging companies that try to exploit their forests without their consent.

- **Understanding customary and official governance is critical for the legitimacy and sustainability of REDD+ projects.** In a country such as the DRC, where customary laws are a key to defining land-use management, it is important to work with the local chiefs first to obtain approval to work with the communities. WWF systematically included representatives of the Territory Administration in these mapping exercises. These representatives also participated in the inception and final validation workshops for this process. This approach led to better communication between the communities and the government.

- **Strengthening local governments leads to more effective engagement.** Building the capacities of local governments could mean developing local committees or providing tools to help better manage local lands. In Malebo (an area in the Lac Tumba landscape region), WWF provided computers and training to community representatives (young men and women) 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 be effectively involved in the REDD+ process at the local and district levels.

- **To accurately measure the performance of REDD+ activities and to report nationally on efforts made at the local level, it is important to integrate community expertise and participatory mapping into the MRV process.** In this case, the team worked to ensure that all information and data from the participatory mapping exercises in the field were incorporated back into national databases. Base maps identifying different types of land rights and land holdings (customary or otherwise) and the geographic location of REDD+ activities is part of the MRV process and should be included in MRV work.

- **Microzoning at the local level with villagers should be consistent with broad guidelines laid out by higher levels of governance for mapping exercises and participatory mapping, where they exist.** To be officially recognized by government agencies, the maps must be created using acceptable guidelines and standards.