



Ministère de l'Environnement,  
Conservation de la Nature et  
Développement Durable

# Forest Landscape Restoration for Sustainable Development and Climate Change:

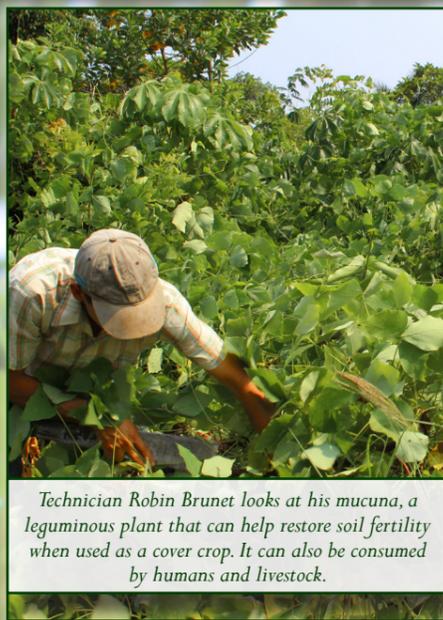
## Opportunities and Challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



### Why Forest Landscape Restoration?

The DRC has embarked on an ambitious low carbon development strategy with a key emphasis on forests and climate change, as outlined in the National REDD+ Strategy and Investment Plan. A critical component in this strategy is the development of decentralized “integrated programs” at the provincial level. Integrated programs are cross-sectoral policy harmonization efforts covering not only the forest sector, but also other sectors such as agriculture and energy, where indirect drivers of deforestation must be addressed. The Forest Landscape Restoration framework (FLR) can provide an invaluable tool of coordination between multiple sectors, which are essential in delivering on REDD+ and climate mitigation and adaptation goals in DRC.

Improved cookstoves can cut down significantly on biomass consumption as well as women's workloads. Projet Équateur's are made with local materials and locals are trained to learn how to make the bricks themselves.



Technician Robin Brunet looks at his mucuna, a leguminous plant that can help restore soil fertility when used as a cover crop. It can also be consumed by humans and livestock.

Shifting agricultural practice is the main driver of deforestation in the DRC. While this type of cultivation can be sustainable, increasing populations and demands for fertile land increasingly pressure forest resources.



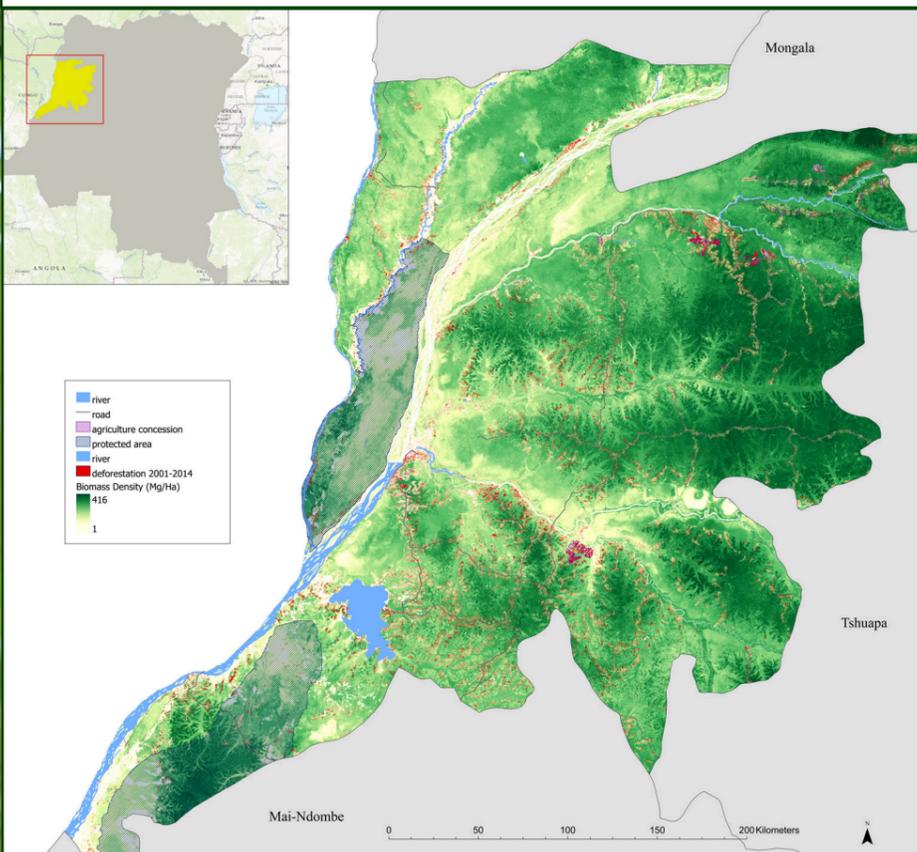
### What can FLR do?

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by increasing the productivity of landscapes, enhancing the resilience of forest ecosystems, and reducing the vulnerability of forest dependent communities. Actions to conserve, sustainably manage and restore forests can contribute to economic growth, poverty alleviation, good governance, food security, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation. Restoring forest landscapes can help secure resource rights for local people while promoting their participation in natural resource decision making.



Coordination between interventions in different sectors is key to the success of an emission reduction program. For example, the DRC national energy plan strongly emphasizes the potential of hydropower production in the nation's vast river basin. But uncontrolled and widespread forest loss will compromise the viability and productivity of hydropower by disrupting seasonal flows of water (drying) or through sedimentation from soil erosion.

### Équateur Province Biomass and Deforestation



The current national deforestation rate of 0.3 per cent is relatively low in comparison to the average deforestation rates of other tropical countries. However, the country is among the top ten worldwide forest cover loss in absolute terms, with an estimated deforestation of more than 350,000ha per annum over the period 2000-2010. The Equateur region alone lost approximately 1 million ha of forest cover from 2000 to 2014, principally through small holder agricultural expansion, making this group a critical focus for incentives to resolve the forest conservation and economic development paradigm. Deforestation is concentrated in “hotspots”, which the FLR approach might help prioritize across sectorial programs.

### Challenges and Opportunities

#### Agricultural development and forest conservation:

Small holder slash and burn agriculture is the main driver of deforestation in the DRC. Additionally, due to increasing population pressure and a shortage of available land, fallow periods become too short to allow soils to regenerate sufficient fertility leading to land degradation.

While those impacts are currently localized, the development of policies to promote investment in industrial agriculture and infrastructures risk to increase deforestation, as such policies will make agricultural land more valuable. Judicious planning of land use and effective controls limiting the conversion of forest to agricultural land is needed beforehand.

#### Forest conservation and biomass energy demands in the DRC:

Dependence on biomass energy is a critical issue for sustainable development in the DRC where, combustible renewables and waste (overwhelmingly, fuel wood and charcoal) made up 93 percent of total energy use in 2008. Over 90 per cent of the urban population depends directly on biomass fuels for energy needs, including cooking. As fuel supplies become depleted, energy prices will increase making energy poverty more prevalent.

There are distinct opportunities for renewable energy provision at small and medium scales e.g. solar plants, run of the river hydrokinetic turbines. However, uncontrolled forest loss will compromise the viability of hydropower in the long term. The key challenge for DRC is to deliver a low carbon energy production plan, whilst maintaining its forest estate.



Projet Équateur Assistant Emmanuel Kabemba explains how they will use a problem tree analysis to look at capacity deficits to his focus group at a provincial REDD+ investment plan workshop.