



WWF-Belgium  
REDD+ DRC

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# CBFF Luki REDD+ Pilot Project

A farmer carrying bananas in Luki, Democratic Republic of Congo © WWF-BELGIUM

Enabling rural development, the fight against poverty, preservation of biodiversity and mitigation of climate change: The 'Integrated REDD+ Pilot Project around the Luki Biosphere Reserve (LBR) in the Mayombe Forest' simultaneously addresses these pressing issues in the Green Heart of Africa.

## Context

The Luki Reserve, recognized as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, is situated in the Bas-Congo province in southwestern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and is the southern-most point of an ancient rainforest. The reserve covers 33.000 hectares and was established in 1976. The natural forests surrounding the reserve are threatened, as they are subject to uncontrolled extraction by the local communities. The threats are exacerbated by several factors. Firstly, there is a lack of involvement by provincial authorities. Secondly, few people have the means to access alternatives to illegal exploitation, and thirdly, a growing population has led to an increased demand.

**90% OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION  
IN THE DRC COMES  
FROM FIREWOOD**



- › **Full name:** Integrated REDD+ Pilot Project around the Luki Biosphere Reserve (LBR) in the Mayombe Forest
- › **Location:** Bas Congo Province, Democratic Republic of Congo
- › **Duration:** 3 years
- › **Budget:** € 2.339.105
- › **Beneficiaries:** Local communities living in the vicinity of the Luki Biosphere Reserve (10.000 households directly; 100.000 inhabitants indirectly)
- › **Objective:** Contribute to the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation and poverty reduction in the Congo Basin

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## Introduction

The project, financed by the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), in partnership with the government of DRC, is jointly implemented by WWF-Belgium and WWF-DRC in three areas around the LBR: Lukula, Seke Banza and Muanda. It is a REDD+ pilot project (see box), aiming to develop a REDD+ strategy for the DRC. It will create a firm base for the implementation of REDD+ projects in the area, while developing the capacities of the local authorities and raising awareness of the local communities about the opportunities and challenges of REDD+. The global objective of the project is to contribute to the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation and the reduction of poverty in the Congo Basin.

### Specific goals of the project:

- › Expand the forest cover and permit natural regeneration from savanna to forest;
- › Improve the living conditions of communities present around the LBR and establish a local governance system;
- › Contribute to the development of a national REDD+ strategy to enable DRC to reap the benefits of the carbon market and payments for ecosystem services

## Activities

- › **Installation of 1.000 hectares of woodlots** in collaboration with the local communities in order to increase the supply of sustainable wood energy and consequently reduce the pressure of energy needs within the Reserve;
- › **Natural regeneration of 5.000 ha of savanna** to restore soil fertility, store carbon, increase habitat availability for fauna and provide additional sources of firewood;
- › **Participatory management and protection of natural forests of the LBR** with the support of eco-guards;
- › **Set-up of 30 new pilot farms.** Integrated management of agriculture, as promoted by the pilot farms, provides a nutritional and profitable alternative to the exploitation of forest resources. Sustainable agriculture becomes the major occupation of the participants, and is an alternative to destructive activities;
- › **Development of a REDD+ methodology.** Establishment of necessary tools and financial and institutional mechanisms for REDD+ certification to sustain the project locally and in favor of communities and local authorities.



Limba forest in Luki, Democratic Republic of Congo © WWF-BELGIUM

# BENEFICIARIES

The direct beneficiaries of the project include:

- › 10.000 households that will receive subsidies in agro-forestry inputs through 50 Local Development Committees (LCDs);
- › At least 500 smallholders who will receive aid to establish small private woodlands;
- › 30 peasant farmers who will be supported to execute pilot farms;
- › 650 smallholders and 250 provincial officers who will receive training and all inhabitants temporarily employed by the project for seedling production and planting.

The indirect beneficiaries of the project are the 100.000 inhabitants of the areas surrounding the LBR (60% women), the provincial authorities, civil society and local communities who will receive training and awareness-building sessions on REDD+. The national authorities will benefit from information, data and experience, in their preparation of a REDD+ strategy.

# EXPECTED IMPACTS

The expected impacts of the project are of environmental, climatic, institutional and socio-

economic nature. Reforestation and pilot farms will lead to a decrease of pressure on natural forests. The project allows for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions because of an increase in forest cover and a decrease in deforestation rate and is therefore expected to eventually contribute to the constitution of carbon stocks and the reduction of global warming. Moreover, the natural regeneration of savannas is expected to increase availability of suitable habitat for fauna. Lastly, the strengthening of participative management through local development committees together with the encouragement of integrated agriculture will reduce food insecurity and household poverty and will allow the development of temporary employment. This is the socio-economic component of the project.

# SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

This project is born from several successful initiatives implemented in WWF's previous projects. They include:

- › 350 hectares of forest naturally regenerated from savanna;
- › 218 hectares of land reforested with fast-growing species and;
- › 30 pilot farms for integrated management of agriculture established.

## REDD+

Deforestation and forest degradation account for up to 20% of greenhouse gas emissions, overtopping the emissions caused by the entire transport sector. In order to mitigate climate change in a cost-effective way, the global community designed REDD+, a program aiming to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and increase conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. The idea is to create financial value for carbon stocks in forests, providing incentives for developing countries to preserve their forests. Before REDD+ can be implemented, countries need to build their capacity for this mechanism, called 'REDD+ Readiness'. Several pilot projects are being designed and implemented with this aim. CBFF Luki is a REDD+ pilot project, aiming to increase the REDD+ readiness of the DRC.

Reforested plot in Luki © WWF-BELGIUM



# PARTNERS

The project is carried out and supervised by WWF-Belgium, working together with WWF-DRC for the implementation of the field activities. The project is associated with 3 partners:

- › **ONFi (Office National des Forêts – Bureau international):**  
ONFi will develop a REDD+ methodology concordant with international standards;
- › **OSFAC (Observatoire Satellitaire des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale):**  
OSFAC will develop the mapping analyses necessary for the implementation of a REDD+ project;
- › **CLP-RBL (Comité Local de Pilotage de la Réserve de Biosphère de Luki):**  
The CLP is responsible for the proper management and protection of the LBR.



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A smiling boy carrying firewood for sale in the Democratic Republic of Congo © KATE HOLT / WWF-UK



#### 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 and nature.

CBFF LUKI

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