



WWF-Belgium
REDD+ DRC

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CBFF ECOMakala+ REDD+ Pilot Project

A truck loaded with bags of charcoal driving towards Goma from Virunga National Park © KATE HOLT / WWF-UK

Enabling rural development, the fight against poverty, preservation of biodiversity and mitigation of climate change: The 'Geographically integrated ECOMakala+ REDD+ Pilot Project' simultaneously addresses these four pressing issues in the area surrounding the city of Goma and the Virunga National Park.

Context

Situated at the border of the Virunga National Park in the North Kivu province, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the city of Goma has nearly 1.000.000 inhabitants, with the second highest population density in the country. The area has been subject to violence and wars for almost 20 years, resulting in rural migration to the more secure city of Goma. 97% of the population living in North Kivu is dependent on firewood and charcoal, 'makala' in Kiswahili, for energy as they do not have access to electricity. Legal forest resources, from outside the Virunga National Park, are insufficient to meet the energy needs of the population of Goma as the forests surrounding the city are almost entirely cleared. The great majority of wood supply to the city consequently originates from illegal, unsustainable logging within park borders. This energy crisis is particularly linked to the lack of involvement of provincial authorities in the management of timber resources, the lack of alternatives to deforestation, and the increase in demand. The energy crisis has major effects on the

living conditions of households dependent primarily on charcoal, mainly the poorest, as well as on biodiversity, forest cover and the climate.

- › **Full name:** Geographically integrated ECOMakala+ REDD+ Pilot Project
- › **Location:** Province of North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo
- › **Duration:** 2,5 years
- › **Budget:** € 2.494.891
- › **Beneficiaries:** Local communities living in the surroundings of the Virunga National Park (4.000 households and 600 farmers directly; 858.000 inhabitants indirectly)
- › **Objective:** Contribute to the reduction of deforestation and poverty in the Congo Basin.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Introduction

Financed by the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), in partnership with the government of DRC, WWF-Belgium and WWF-DRC are executing this project jointly in three areas (Rutshuru, Nyiragongo and Masisi) in and around the southern part of the Virunga National Park. This project was set-up in 2013 and will run until 2015. It is a REDD+ pilot project (see box), aiming to develop a REDD+ strategy for the DRC. The main objective is to contribute to the reduction of deforestation and poverty in the Congo Basin, targeting both the sustainable supply of charcoal and a decrease in demand, by implementing remunerative activities for the local populations.

Specific goals of the project:

- › Expand the forest cover around the Park;
- › Improve the living conditions of the communities surrounding Park;
- › Contribute to the development of a national REDD+ strategy to enable the DRC to become eligible for carbon market benefits and payments for ecosystem services.

Activities

- › Establishment of 1.000 hectares of woodlots around the Virunga National Park to increase the supply of sustainable wood energy. The reforestation activities are executed in partnerships with smallholders, contributing directly to the reduction of poverty;
- › Support to the production and commercialization of 4.000 improved stoves, which require half the charcoal of the traditional stoves. This contributes to a reduction in the demand of charcoal;
- › Enhancement of the protection of the Virunga National Park against illegal charcoal production;
- › Support to the formalization of tenure rights and mediation in case of land conflicts;
- › 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 local communities and authorities.



Women producing improved stoves © WWF-BELGIUM

BENEFICIARIES

The direct beneficiaries of the project include:

- › 600 farmers and other concerned communities who will benefit from private micro-reforestation and the additional revenues from the sale of forest products (charcoal, wood);
- › 4.000 households in Goma who will benefit from the improved stoves;
- › Other community members of the local communities living in the three territories surrounding the Virunga National Park constituting the intervention area of the project, who will benefit from temporary jobs available during production, opening and upkeep of plantations, as well as during production and sale of the improved stoves.

The indirect beneficiaries of the project are all inhabitants of the intervention area (858.000 people), who will benefit from the distribution of this source of sustainable wood energy expected to halt the surge of charcoal prices. Implementation of the project will further allow the strengthening of capacities of the provincial staff, and by extension, contribute to efforts carried out by provincial and national institutions in structuring more fair timber and charcoal markets.



Woman and child, selling charcoal originating from Virunga National Park © KATE HOLT / WWF-UK

EXPECTED IMPACTS

The impacts of the project are expected to be environmental, climatic, social, institutional and economic. The installation of private micro-woodlands and the popularization of improved stoves should decrease pressure on natural (protected and non-protected) forests, and

consequently contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. In terms of the climate, the project allows a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, because of an increase in forest cover and a reduction of deforestation rate. Eventually, it will contribute to the formation of carbon stocks and the reduction of global warming. Socially, the project will increase resources of the communities due to lower charcoal prices as well as job creation. An additional benefit is the lowered time and risks associated with firewood collection, particularly for women and children.

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. ECOMAKALA+ is a REDD+ pilot project, aiming to increase the REDD+ readiness of the DRC.

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

From 2007 to 2012, WWF has executed similar projects in the area. These successful projects achieved the following results:

- › 5.479 hectares reforested in cooperation with 67 local farmers' associations and 4.933 farmers;
- › 300 technicians and more than 4.000 planters have been trained on tree nursery and reforestation techniques;
- › 528 persons have been trained in the optimization of traditional and semi-traditional carbonization techniques;
- › 109 masters in carbonization techniques have requisite competencies to train persons willing to carbonize;
- › 47.000 improved stoves produced and sold.

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 5 partners:

- › **ONFi (Office National des Forêts – Bureau international):**
ONFi will develop a REDD+ methodology concordant with international standards;
- › **UCL (Université Catholique de Louvain):**
The UCL will develop the mapping analyses necessary for the implementation of a REDD+ project;
- › **ICCN (Institut Congolais de la Conservation de la Nature):**
ICCN is responsible for the proper management and protection of the Virunga National Park and will be reinforced in the fight against illegal deforestation;
- › **UN-Habitat:**
UN-Habitat will implement the formalization of land titles;
- › **WWF-US:**
WWF-US has developed a program which will be adapted and allows following illegal deforestation in a participative manner.



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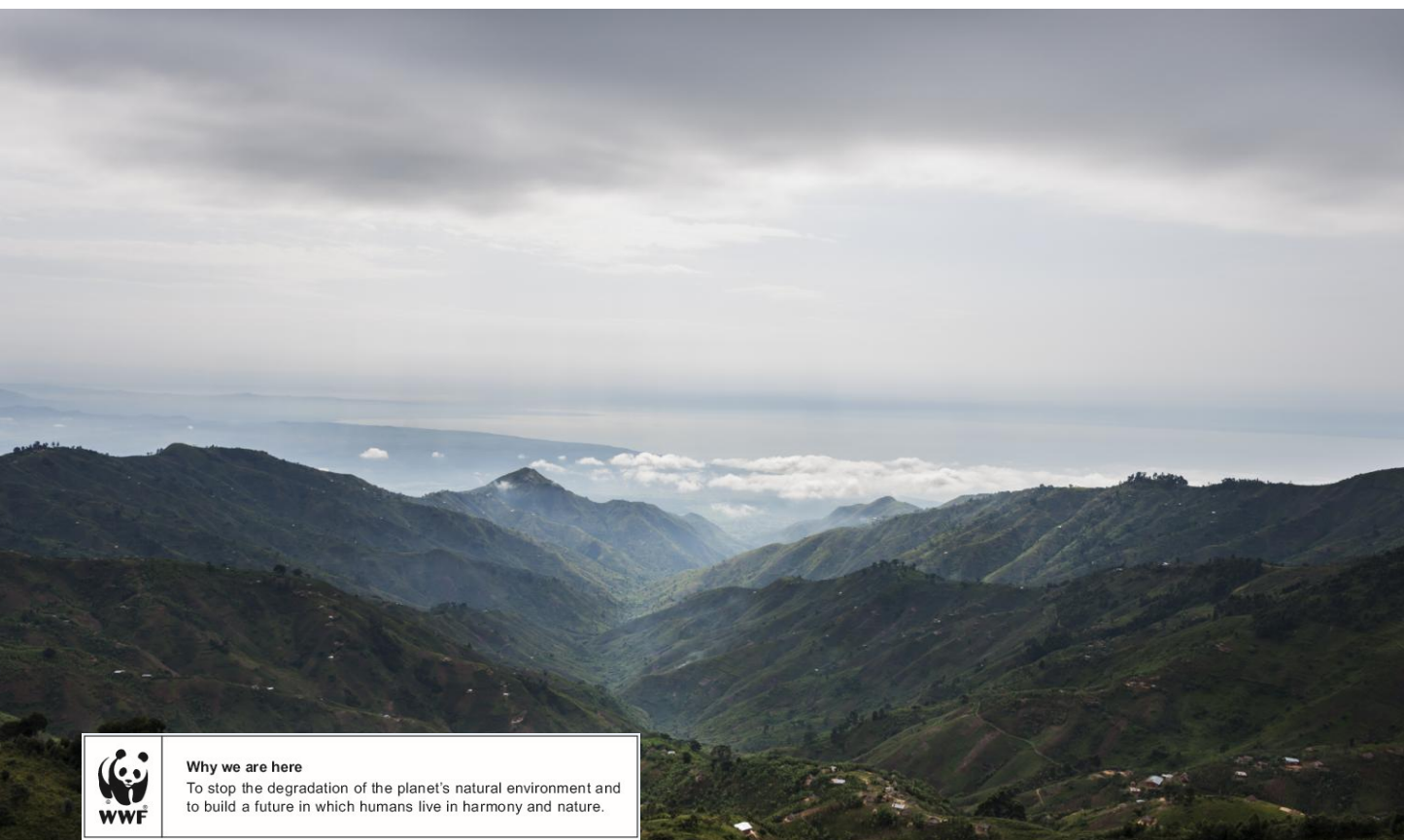
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Population growth and agricultural practice nearby the Virunga National Park © BRENT STIRTON / GETTY IMAGES / WWF



	<p>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.</p>
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