Context: Deforestation, a factor in climate change

On the edge of the tropical forests in the Congo basin, the Mayanda region is a supply basin for food crops and charcoal for the cities of Boma and Kinshasa (400,000 and 10 million inhabitants respectively). As the local populations are highly dependent on forest resources (slash-and-burn agriculture and cooking with charcoal), demographic growth is leading to overexploitation of resources and degradation of the land, with consequences for living conditions: food insecurity and land disputes. Deforestation and degradation of forests are the main factors of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and are increasing the vulnerability of inhabitants to climate change.

The solution: Simple management plans

As part of the Defiv-Dafoma project, GRET is promoting environmentally respectful agricultural and forestry practices on a pilot scale in the Mayanda region. Simple Management Plans (SMPs) for resources on the scale of customary lands are a tool to make these practices part of a regional development approach. After a detailed land inquiry, five SMPs recognised by the local authorities were developed by GRET. These SMPs reflect the five year planning period defined by the communities for their investments. This solution reconciles:

- **Effects on food security** with improvement of agricultural yields and the opening-up of the region will make it possible to sell surplus products.
- **Mitigation of GHG emissions** thanks to development regulations to avoid deforestation and agroforestry systems enabling reforestation of degraded land.
- **Adaptation to climate change** by promoting techniques that encourage diversity of cultivations and minimizing the dependency of local populations on carbon inputs and the vagaries of the climate.

This solution is replicable in all rural environments, where access to resources is managed by customary law and is not subject to violent protest.
**Initial results (since 2013)**

- **15 hectares of agroforestry plantations** for demonstration purposes were developed under the supervision of an umbrella structure made up of producer organisations and two village nurseries. Rehabilitation of infrastructures made it possible to **double agricultural yields**. Local populations’ living conditions and standards were improved.

- Demonstration activities were organised to introduce inhabitants to **practices that contribute to carbon sequestration and provide an alternative source of fuelwood**.

**Challenges and questions**

To implement this solution effectively it is necessary to:

- Support the **land mapping process** underway as part of the implementation of community forestry or the deployment of REDD+ on the scale of the administrative jurisdictions;

- Strengthen the local **governance system** to make SMPs durable in the context of decentralisation of natural resource management;

Adopt a **policy for investment in the green economy** to support the implementation of SMPs that will give credibility to the proposed agricultural and forestry practices.

**Recommendations**

- **Invest in a high quality territorial diagnosis** of deforestation factors and local management of resources, from an agro-climatic and socio-economic point of view.

- **Include local populations in management decisions** and in the tracking and assessment of the implementation of SMPs.

- **Strengthen the capacities of administrative bodies in charge** of regional development and sectoral policies.

- **Provide financial and technical support to local communities** to implement the investments identified in the SMPs, with subsidy systems incorporating environmental conditions. Payments for environmental services (PES) relating to respect of the SMP limits making it possible to combine the investments necessary for the introduction of new practices and financial incentives for their adoption, while awaiting the expected increase in income for communities.

**Further information:**


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