



Consultations with local people to guide investments related to mitigation in the land use and forest sectors

*Report of stakeholder consultations in 12 districts
in order to validate key elements
of the project developed jointly
by the FAO
and the Congolese Ministry of Forest Economy*

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List of acronyms

LDC: Local Development Committee
IC: Improved cookstove
CEMA: Agricultural Machinery Center [*Centre d'Exploitation des Machines Agricoles*]
CMEC: Savings and Credit Union [*Mutuelles d'Epargne et de Crédit*]
CERPAC: Community Action Promotion Exchange and Resource Center [*Centre d'Echanges et de Ressources pour la Promotion des Actions Communautaires*]
CMDCC: Community Management and Development Committee
CIB: Congolaise Industrielle du Bois
INDC: Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
CRDPI: Industrial Plantation Sustainability and Productivity Research Center [*Centre de Recherche sur la Durabilité et la Productivité des plantations Industrielles*]
ASC: Agricultural Sector Chief
UC: Urban Community
DD: Departmental Director
ENI: Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
GCF: Green Climate Fund
GHG: Greenhouse Gas
ID: Initiative Développement
INS: Social Work Institute [*Institut du Travail Social*]
MEF: Ministry of Forest Economy [*Ministère de l'économie forestière*]
NGO: Non-Government Organization
WFP: World Food Programme
LDP: Local Development Plan
NEAP: National Environmental Action Plan
PRONAR: National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme [*Programme Nationale d'Afforestation et de Reboisement*]
RC: Republic of Congo
DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo
REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SNR: National Reforestation Service [*Service National de Reboisement*]
TOR: Terms of Reference
LULUCF: Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
VER: Verified Emissions Reductions

I Mission background

1 Nationally Determined Contribution for the Republic of Congo.

The Government of the Republic of Congo ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and other multilateral agreements on the environment. In this context, it developed a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) which played a key role in identifying the country's vulnerability in the face of climate change.

Moreover, a National Strategy and Action Plan for Climate Change and Variability (NSAP/CCV, 2004) was developed. Congo committed a national contribution, although the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions level remains very reasonable, lower than the global average. The global phenomenon of climate change has a very substantial impact on agricultural production conditions, as well as the ecosystem balance, although Congo has conserved significant forest cover (65% of the country), which forms a carbon sink and a biodiversity reservoir that is inestimable for the entire planet. The country does not feel adequately supported by the international community in its efforts to preserve low-carbon alternative policies that are light on natural resources, and that come within the wider context of the "green economy" promoted in the INDC. The country's resources and considerable potential in terms of agriculture, forestry, hydroelectricity and tourism are advantages for the development of a low-carbon, employment-generating economy.

The GHG emission mitigation policy in the Republic of Congo revolves around the following two axes:

- mitigating GHG emissions from the energy sector and combatting unplanned deforestation (REDD) by controlling energy consumption, while using more renewable energies.
- maintaining, or even strengthening the forest carbon sequestration potential, through better management of the sector as well as reforestation.

The Republic of Congo's contribution should, in a conditional low-carbon scenario (depending on support from the international community), allow a reduction in GHG emissions by approximately 48% in 2025 (which is 8 Mt CO₂ eq) and 54% in 2035 (which is 19 Mt CO₂ eq) versus its trend-based scenario.

➤ **Low-carbon scenario:**

Forestry Sector

Forestry and reforestation activities, forest conservation

Agricultural expansion, one of the primary drivers of deforestation represents 81% of the country's emissions. Demographic growth will lead to increasing food needs, resulting in the development of subsistence and industrial crops, some of which could lead to an increase in deforestation, which remains low at present (net deforestation of 0.043% per year [BRLi, 2014]).

In relation to this development, the measures taken are based on:

- the adoption of a new forest law which requires the use of low-impact farming techniques, as well as forest certification. The objective is that almost all 11.7 million hectares of forest area already allocated to production are managed based on management plans.

- reforestation operations within the context of PRONAR currently only covering 500 ha, should increase to 100,000 ha per year, and includes forestry and agroforestry plantations, as well as forest restoration areas.
- the adoption of a National Land-Use Plan (NLUP) to guarantee a permanent forest estate. However, note should be taken of the low deforestation rate and high natural sequestration potential of the country's rain forests, which greatly exceeds the emissions, and may even increase thanks to the plantations.

Within a conditional low-carbon scenario, the proposal is to go even further and to:

- ✓ Require that all management and logging units become certified in 2025, and that at least all loggers with more than 100,000 ha of "useful" area in their concession set up cogeneration units that recycle wood processing products
- ✓ In 2035, reduce unplanned deforestation to 20% of its current level by implementing REDD+, including in protected areas;
- ✓ Generalize the use of improved stoves (20% in 2025 and 50% in 2035);
- ✓ Improve all charcoal kilns in 2025 (yield increase from 15 to 25%);
- ✓ Transfer a part of the plantations intended for oil palms into savanna (100,000 ha);
- ✓ Develop wood processing;
- ✓ Train supervisors in various forestry and woodworking schools;
- ✓ Create a forest observatory

Agricultural sector

Agriculture is very underdeveloped in Congo as only 2% of land is used for food production with very rudimentary techniques. Agro-industry is essentially limited to the production of sugar and maize. As a result, 80% of food products for urban areas are imported.

The proposal is to develop 50% of savanna within the context of private-agricultural cooperative partnerships to produce food commodities (cassava, peanuts, sweet potatoes, potatoes, bananas, plantains, yams, rice, meat, palm oil, maize...), but also to export commodities or livestock feed (soy, pellets). Sugarcane or palm oil production could also be extended to the production of ethanol or diester for use as an agricultural and rural fuel. In the case of Congo, there is no competition between energy and food production due to the available space.

The agricultural techniques used would definitely be agroforestry and agri-ecology techniques, promoting legumes, producing fuelwood (specifically pellets) and services, while mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, thus constituting an important co-benefit between mitigation and adaptation.

Cocoa growing projects enabling a reduction in emissions due to deforestation are examples to be replicated. Livestock numbers would be quadrupled within the context of silvopastoral techniques, which would be an additional emission factor. New food production companies would associate with cooperatives of farmers controlling the land (example of Zambia, [Keith Palmer, Patient Capital]). These associations would result in the transfer of technology and inputs to farmers, not to mention social actions, within a spirit of respect for the land and the biological richness of the surrounding area (creation of biological microreserves). These actions would be conducted in partnership with development NGOs (such as IPHD). Jobs created are estimated at 700,000 (5 ha per farmer over 66% of the developed areas), which is the predicted rural employment demand in 2035. With self-sufficiency being achieved, export products could reach 13 million tons, thus contributing to poverty reduction in the rural sector.

(Source: Republic of Congo - Intended Nationally Determined Contribution within the context of the UNFCCC - September 21, 2015)

2 STUDY BACKGROUND

2-1 The REDD National Strategy+

In order to reduce its GHG emissions and to guide its investments in respect to mitigation in the LULUCF sector, the Republic of Congo has defined a REDD+ National Strategy and a REDD+ Investment Plan (REDD+ IP) which establishes the objectives, axes and priority investment areas, institutional arrangements and implementation framework.

The REDD+ Investment Plan includes an ambitious financial framework, which aims to obtain financial support from international donors, such as the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), CFI and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

In this context of implementation of the country's commitments, the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) requested FAO support in developing a project funding proposal for submission to the GCF.

2-2 Ministry of Forest Economy's project request to the FAO

In full accordance with the government's objectives (see INDC), the Project aims to reduce emissions related to deforestation and degradation caused by slash-and-burn agriculture and fuelwood. In order to reduce these emissions, the Project will support the implementation of agroforestry and forestry systems, as well as improved charcoal-making and charcoal-based cooking techniques and technologies. Various benefits related to climate change adaptation will also ensue from these activities, as well as socioeconomic benefits. The Project will concentrate its action to reduce GHG emissions from forests on two hotspots for agricultural production and fuelwood supply in the country, specifically the basins of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The intervention areas should therefore play a predominant role in supplying these basins and should show strong potential for reducing deforestation and degradation or even strong afforestation/reforestation potential.

The Project will essentially aim to support two categories of direct beneficiaries, namely: (1) producer groups (cooperatives and associations) and (2) private land owners. In the case of the latter, the Project will establish a maximum size for the Projects it will support, which will be between 10-50 ha.

The project revolves around two main objectives and four components:

The two main objectives which will be presented and explained during consultations in 13 districts of five departments are the following:

- Supporting the adoption of climate-smart agricultural and agroforestry practices and sustainable income-generating activities (IGAs), as alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture, particularly in the country's deforestation hotspots;
- Substitution of non-sustainable fuelwood taken from natural forests with the creation of a sustainable fuelwood supply source in the supply basins near the main urban centers (mainly Brazzaville and, to a lesser extent, Pointe-Noire)

The four components can be broken down into the following detailed activities:



Component 1:

Land-use planning and strengthening of land tenure rights

- 1.1. Fuelwood supply master plans for the Project's three large supply basins are established
- 1.2. Sustainable simple management plans and local development plans are developed and implemented
- 1.3 Land tenure rights of beneficiaries are strengthened to increase the sustainability of their activities

Component 2:

Deployment of sustainable agroforestry, forestry and agricultural systems

- 2.1 Agroforestry and forestry systems to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture and provide a sustainable fuelwood supply source are implemented and operational
- 2.2. Assisted natural regeneration (ANR) and forest protection are promoted in beneficiary communities
- 2.3. A structure for supervision, capacity building and technical and financial support to agroforestry, forestry and agricultural initiatives from beneficiaries is implemented and operational
- 2.4. Support is provided to the development of new climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models

Component 3:

Fuelwood consumption reduction and sustainable supply

- 3.1. Capacities for the production and distribution of improved cookstoves are improved and the use of improved cookstoves in households targeted by the supply strategies is strengthened
- 3.2. A communications campaign on low-fuelwood consumption practices by households and promotion of energy alternatives is conducted
- 3.3. Organization and production techniques of charcoal makers operating in the targeted districts are strengthened in order to reduce wood needs and GHG emissions

Component 4:

Strengthening of national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains

- 4.1. Agroforestry and forestry initiatives from beneficiaries are supported in developing and implementing robust and bankable business plans
- 4.2. The capacities of national credit institutions (banks and microfinance institutions) are strengthened in order to increase credit supply in the agroforestry and forestry sectors and support backed initiatives
- 4.3. A credit programme (credit line/revolving fund) and/or a guarantee line better suited to the context are created to support initiatives at the different stages of their development (production, processing, transport, marketing)
- 4.4 Market access by beneficiaries is improved by the implementation of purchase agreements and sales platforms

The Project concept note was submitted to GCF for review that ultimately helped improve its design.

The FAO planned to launch consultations among local populations by recruiting a consultant or NGO with a national presence to hold consultations in each district targeted by the Project. These consultations will enhance identification of local priorities and needs.

The FAO also plans to recruit several experts, including an expert on the improved cookstove issues.

2-3 Partnership between the FAO and the NGO ID

ID has established a presence in Congo since 2005 and is working on four programmes throughout the country, in line with two strong themes:



- Support of decentralization and local development: in 10 districts in three departments (Pool, Bouenza and Lékoumou). ID has developed an original approach for consultation and ownership by local populations of issues concerning them, the identification of solutions, and support to implementation. Specifically, the establishment of frameworks for consultation in the districts, the Local Development Committees (LDCs), led stakeholders from each area to think comprehensively by: establishing a profile for their district and developing their Local Development Plan (LDP), a strategic planning document that examines all interacting issues relating to land and its development.
- Support to reduction of deforestation around towns, in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and around the six main urban municipalities and communities in the Department of Bouenza. Since 2013, ID has been pursuing the establishment of a sector for the manufacture-sale of improved cookstoves using wood and charcoal, which may in the end become a viable and independent sector with no external financial support. This experiment started with the creation of an improved cookstove specific to Congo, inspired by existing techniques in other countries, but adapted to local expectations and traditions in terms of cooking with wood or charcoal, guaranteed raw material supply sources and local knowledge. To date, more than 5,000 improved cookstoves have been sold in Brazzaville; the expansion to Pointe-Noire started in 2018.

ID has already obtained 13,500 Verified Emissions Reductions (VER) related to savings in wood and charcoal, generated by the first 1,500 Improved Cookstoves (IC) sold between 2014 and 2016. The certification body is Gold Standard, and ID is the second entity in Congo to obtain this recognition, after CIB-OLAM.

Within this context, the FAO approached ID to review the procedures of the two interventions, in order to better adapt the proposals it aims to develop with the GCF, in line with government guidelines and axes of the REDD+ IP.

The mission consists of conducting a number of decentralized consultations in 12 districts from five agricultural and forestry departments:

- Department of Kouilou: districts of Madingo-Kayes, Mvouti and Hinda
- Department of Niari: district of Louvakou
- Department of Bouenza: districts of Loudima, Kayes and Madingou
- Department of Pool: districts of Ngoma TséTsé, Igné et Ngabé (the district of Kinkala was already subject to direct consultation by the FAO; however, the report of the DDA (Departmental Directorate of Agriculture) interview is provided in Annex 2)
- Department of Plateaux: districts of Ngo and Mpouya

The objective of these consultations was to present all components of the Project, to facilitate discussions, to use various meetings and site visits to measure obstacles and opportunities, and to produce a report providing recommendations for the GCF Project that are relevant and incorporate gender issues.

The general objective of these consultations was to contribute to effective participation of various stakeholders in the implementation of the GCF Project in these five departments and 12 districts. Specifically, this involved:

- *facilitating dialogue and exchanges around the activities of local stakeholders;
- *reporting on issues related to the pressure exerted on ecosystems and climate change;
- *identifying aspects concerning the application of laws and local governance relating to agricultural land;



*identifying activities to restore and protect forest ecosystems and biodiversity and then collecting the expectations and needs of local communities in respect to local development.

Taking into account the geographical extent of the mission, this activity was assigned to CERPAC (a NGO already taking part in local development activities and very familiar with the local context) in the department of Kouilou (3 districts) from ID's recommendation.

ID is therefore expected to produce a report of stakeholder consultations in 12 districts, three with the collaboration of CERPAC, in order to validate the key elements of the GCF Project.

II Report of stakeholder consultations in 12 districts in order to validate the key elements of the GCF Project



1 Consultation summary

Objective of the consultations: The general objective of these consultations was to contribute to effective participation of various stakeholders in the implementation of the GCF Project in these five departments and 12 districts. Specifically, this involved:

- *facilitating dialogue and exchanges around the activities of local stakeholders;
- *reporting on issues related to the pressure exerted on ecosystems and climate change;
- *identifying aspects concerning the application of laws and local governance relating to agricultural land;
- *identifying activities to restore and protect forest ecosystems and biodiversity and then collecting the expectations and needs of local communities in respect to local development.

Dates and times.

12 Districts in five departments were the subject of consultations:

Department of Kouilou:

- District of Madingo-kayes: May 21 to 22, 2019
- District of Mvouti: May 27 and 28, 2019
- District of Hinda: May 23 and 24, 2019

Department of Niari:

- District of Louvakou: May 23 to 24, 2019
- Dolisie - Departmental Council and DDA: April 18, 2019

Department of Bouenza:

- District of Loudima: May 21 to 22, 2019
- District of Kayes: visits from April 17 to 20 - plenary meeting on May 15, 2019
- District of Madingou: visits from April 17 to 20 - plenary meeting on June 15, 2019

Department of Pool:

- District of Ngoma TséTsé: May 9 to 11, 2019
- District of Igné: May 15 to 16, 2019
- District of Ngabé: May 15, 2019 and June 6 to 8, 2019
(the District of Kinkala was already subject to direct consultation by the FAO)

Department of Plateaux:

- District of Ngo: May 12 to 14, 2019
- District of Mpouya: June 4 to 5, 2019

Methodology

* plenary meetings were routinely organized in each district capital, with the exception of Goma TséTsé where, following the troubles in Pool, the State local council was established provisionally at Nganga Lingolo.

These meetings brought together local authorities, including Agricultural Sector Chiefs (ASCs), forestry division heads, representatives from the SNR and agricultural machinery centers, representatives from producer groups, including women's groups, and representatives of land owners.

The meetings took place in two parts:

- first, facilitating engagement by participants, asking them to describe their agricultural practices, their difficulties, specifically in terms of land access and producer/land owner relations, what climate change means to them, if they know the term “agroforestry”, and if they believe deforestation to be a reality on the ground

- then, presenting the Project, overall and then point by point, to start the discussions and collect opinions

* individual interviews, site visits, and some focus groups gave an on-the-ground insight into issues exposed in plenary meetings and already deployed agricultural practices.

Reports in Annex 2 - Photos in Annex 7

Main stakeholders met

The plenary meetings brought together 415 people, including 62 women (*list of attendees in Annex 3*)

The State local council of each district and their close associates were all very involved in the plenary meetings; in the cities that also host urban communities, they were partners and participants.

Most of the ASCs generally mobilized producer groups, proposed field visits and took part in the discussions.

Forest economy representatives were also mobilized in plenary meetings and field visits.

Agricultural groups were routinely well represented in the discussions, and at least two representatives from women’s groups attended each session.

Land owners were always well represented and effectively participate in the discussions

Main concerns and recommendations for the GCF Project

Main concerns	Recommendations
Access to land continues to be a major concern for producers: difficulties in obtaining long-term access; difficulty in expanding yields; prohibition against planting trees; conflicts between “land owners” in terms of the validity of ownership (= insecurity for producers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Dialogue needed between land owners and producers to promote the development of agroforestry, involving land owner families* Clarification of land ownership by supporting procedures for obtaining official land titles* Development of the practice of long-term access contracts (<i>emphyteutic leases?</i>)* Ensure the development of women’s access to agroforestry
In savanna areas, despite the possibility of increasing yields, access to mechanization is random and slash-and-burn agriculture in forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Raise producers’ awareness about their own possible role in climate change mitigation* Set up pilot experiments in savanna areas

areas is still preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourage real access to mechanization in savanna areas, when conditions are met (no risk of erosion, adequate plant cover) with the corollary prohibition of slash-and-burn agriculture * Encourage agroforestry in savanna areas (orchards, fast-growing plantations, timber, windbreak hedges) * Disseminate good practices in terms of crop rotation and use of organic fertilizers * Rely on already existing experience and knowledge, encourage exchange of experiences
Farm sizes are variable, but conditioning Project support at a minimum of 10 ha will end up ruling out the majority of producers in most districts, particularly where there is little or no mechanization	Review this data, and adapt it to the context of each district, with a lower bottom limit (2 ha to start with when there is no mechanization, which can be extended later on).
Most groups are not registered, particularly the vast majority of women's groups: the requirement to be in a formal group deprives most producers of access to the Project	Presenting a project as a group may be a rule, but formalization of the group cannot be a prerequisite, rather a logical consequence of the project to be supported. Specific attention should be paid to the integration of women, who are too often forgotten in development projects, and application approval mechanisms should be adapted to real situations on the ground.
Fuelwood is a widely-used resource, with use increasing with the level of need in towns: in savanna areas, this leads to felling even of fruit trees, and in forest areas, valuable trees (precious wood) are used to make charcoal and bake bricks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Raise awareness of land owners, charcoal and brick makers on the use of "sustainable" fuelwood, in other words, wood from forests planted for their activities. * Revitalize plantations of fast-growing forest species AND knowledge in terms of logging of planted forests * Require re-planting for each felled tree, thus promoting existing tree nurseries (or their creation) and dissemination of planting and maintenance techniques
Farm management, budgets planning and operating accounts are almost non-existent practices, and even the concepts are rarely understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conducting management training is a priority and a prerequisite for the Project, for everyone, male AND female producers * Provide a long-term vision of potential gains when planting forest species and fruit trees * Provide close, long-term monitoring of

	beneficiaries' initiatives
Even the terms "agroforestry" and "agroforestry techniques" are unknown	Basic training is essential, but is not enough; there is a need for support in implementation, as well as organization of experience sharing, which would provide reassurance about new techniques for producers living in insecurity, and motivate them to also get involved. There should be a reference to the SNR in each department, whose implementation of such agroforestry techniques could be better known and disseminated
Producers complain about difficulties related to site access and transport of yields	This problem is a serious reality in ALL districts - Refer to priorities and investments planned by the government. With regard to marketing issues, there should also be discussions about yield increases, as markets and trade between wholesalers and producers are currently poorly organized
Use of and access to microcredit is very rare due to the lack of agencies and the non-existence of a microcredit supply suited to agricultural producers. Added to this is the non-existence of operating accounts and even everyday operational management	There should be discussions at the highest level in order to create a credit supply suited to the farming world, but also at local level, with the opportunity for access by producers and their groups to a neighborhood agency, to open accounts and to take loans, pay back loans, save... All this should be created at local level
"A contribution of 20% is too high"; 10%, depending on the project area supported may be a handicap. Adaptations should be found in terms of payment	Generally, the idea of a contribution is accepted and even deemed normal. It is even considered as an element that could discourage opportunists. The level of 10% is acceptable. However, for a vast majority of women and indigenous peoples, arrangements will need to be made (advance at zero interest, and repayment on operation or harvest, for example)

2 Detailed explanation

2-1 Involved parties:

Under the direct responsibility of the ID Country Director, two teams of two individuals covered the intervention areas.

In the departments of Pool, Plateaux, Bouenza and Niari (9 districts).

Agnès ROSSETTI - ID Country Director

Present in Congo since 2014, she supervises the implementation of four projects that she developed for the NGO ID within the context of calls for projects, in three departments, as well as in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, and she is already familiar with some of the intervention areas. She has much experience in designing inclusive local development policies integrating social, economic and environmental issues, and with consultation techniques in complex environments.

Ediane MBOUSSA - Consultant

She already worked with the NGO WCS on the “Batéké Plateaux” project and was involved in the Ngo sector in agroforestry experiments with the local populations. She joined ID in Zanaga (Lékoumou); since October 2018 she is supporting local development committees, after training in local development and consultative approaches. She contributes significantly in plenary meetings, by explaining and rewording complicated project concepts in vernacular languages, thus allowing speakers with poor French to express themselves easily and freely.

In the department of Kouilou (3 districts).

Nelly Tsata-Comte - CERPAC Coordinator

Since April 2012, Nelly-Françoise Comte, a local development agent, coordinates the Resource Exchange Center for the Promotion of Community Actions (CERPAC), based in the oil town of Pointe-Noire in the Republic of Congo. This organization is involved in the development of the territorial and economic sectors. Since 1996, Nelly-Françoise Comte works in microfinance, the creation and development of small businesses. In her opinion, the synergy of community leaders to address the needs of a territory and/or sector is the beginning of solutions for its development. The vision on which she bases her commitment to local development is that communities in the rich subregion of central Africa, the heart of the continent, effectively become the driving force for sustainable development in a peaceful, integrated and prosperous Africa. In order to make this a reality, she mobilizes local development organizations from countries in the subregion to create a partnership network.

Astrid Ouotou Mpika - CERPAC Rural Development Officer

After an internship at CRDPI for Agroforestry, Astrid MPIKA went into agricultural entrepreneurship. An agricultural engineer by profession, since 2017 she holds the position of Rural Development and Natural Resource Management Officer at CERPAC.

Astrid strives to get producers started on cultivation practices that conserve ecosystems.



2-2 Interventional methodology:

2-2-1 Location

Site meetings and visits were held over two days in the following locations:

- Department of Kouilou: districts of Madingo-Kayes, Mvouti and Hinda
- Department of Niari: district of Louvakou
- Department of Bouenza: districts of Loudima, Kayes and Madingou
- Department of Pool: districts of Ngoma TséTsé, Igné et Ngabé (the district of Kinkala was already the subject of direct consultation by a FAO team)
- Department of Plateaux: districts of Ngo and Mpouya.

2-2-2 Intervention Procedures

In the 12 districts, the interventions took place as follows:

2-2-1 Individual interviews or focus groups on site using the following outline:

- Telephone or first-hand contact with each local State officer and each Agricultural Sector Chief to announce the mission, set dates, and request contact with groups, land owners and villages preselected for the focus groups or site visits.
- An interview in four of the five departments with the Departmental Directors of Agriculture and/or Forest Economy, namely Pool, Bouenza, Niari and Kouilou. In the department of Plateaux, the remoteness of the capital, Djambala, 130 km to the west of Ngo, did not allow for interviews with the local State council services.
- An interview with two Departmental Council Presidents (decentralization and local economic development policy) - presently those of Bouenza and Niari.
- An interview in each district whenever possible (when they are present) with the Agricultural Sector Chief, representatives of the Ministry of Forest Economy, including the National Reforestation Service, Agricultural Machinery Centers and NGOs active in the sector, if applicable. It should be noted that these individuals often took part in plenary meetings and expressed their points of view within this framework.
- Focus groups and site visits took place with:
 - 1 - independent producers and men's or mixed groups
 - 2 - independent women producers or women's groups
 - 3 - local economic operators and CSOs
 - 4 - in two districts, indigenous peoples (districts of Ngo and Louvakou)

2-2-2 "Plenary meetings", held routinely and officially in each district capital

Chaired by the local authority, Head of the district or District Secretary General, these meetings routinely brought together representatives from various producer groups, men and women, land owners, representatives of decentralized district departments, including ASCs, representatives of the Ministry of Forest Economy and/or SNR, farmers' unions and agro-industrial companies, if applicable.

The meetings were organized around two axes:

- presentation to participants of their territory, their activities, their practices, their difficulties and their knowledge of the main terms used for the GCF project, with the following question template:
 - Introduction of participants
 - Presentation of the session agenda
 - Objectives of the meeting: identifying agricultural practices, how most people live, use of bush fires or slash-and-burn agriculture, opinions on deforestation, how and who makes charcoal,...
 - Distribution of roles between men and women - families, large farms - farm size - group or individual activities
 - Main difficulties encountered (access to land, water resources, mechanization, climate change, marketing, rural tracks, use of microcredit...)
 - Climate change: how is it perceived in this district?
 - Deforestation: problem or not? role of the SNR? what does it do? is it known? who has already planted trees?
 - Agroforestry: have they heard of this term?
- based on the logical framework of the GCF Project, after presenting the Project outline and explaining each component, get participant reactions on the methods and content, and ask them to express the strong points and obstacles in terms of the context and particularities of their district.

In order to simplify understanding, the provisional logical framework was distributed to participants so that everyone would have a means to understand the overall logic.

2-2-3 Presentation of the results of meetings and visits

The proposed intervention areas are not a single entity, and have their own characteristics, as well as common problems.

2-3-1 Replication of the plenary discussions will initially be at district level:

- a- It is important to retrace how participants perceive their own territory, their activities and the expression of their questions and difficulties.
- b- Presentations of the Project raised numerous questions, some specific to the territory, others globally referring to the consultation area; the replication echoed this.
- c- The main lessons learned from the discussions, component by component, for each territory, will be described, with recommendations specific to each territory. The experiences and opinions gained from site visits and specific meetings will be included in this part.

2-3-2 Overall summary

A summary of the consultations, as well as recommendations at project level for presentation to the GCF will be compiled for the attention of the sponsors, so that the Project can better meet its objectives in variable local contexts and in all intervention areas, with full objectivity and without dogmatism.

2-3-3 Annexes

The application to be submitted to the FAO will be completed by annexes including:

- * The report compiled by CERPAC on the three intervention districts (Annex 1)
- * The main reports of meetings and visits held (Annex 2)
- * The attendance lists of participants in plenary meetings, district by district (Annex 3)
- * The list of contacts (Annex 4)
- * The cost of renting land and tractors (Annex 5)
- * Illustrative photos of sites visited, meetings held and interesting experiences identified (Annex 6)

2-3 Recap of plenary meetings and site visits

2-3-1 Population in the Congo:

Some data to keep in mind:

There is no reliable recent data; references to the census date back to 2011 on the International Statistics Institute (INS) website; more recent data, not from the INS, is circulating but from undetermined sources; figures should therefore be handled with caution and the lack of data means that the rural exodus and lack of manpower raised locally cannot be measured.

- Population (2016): 5.13 million inhabitants (World Bank)
Demographic growth (2016): 2.6% (World Bank)
- 61.8% of inhabitants live in the country's six main towns, with 67.5% under the age of 30 years (World Bank)
Density: 15 inhabitant//km² (but 10.8 inhabitants/km² in rural areas)

Life expectancy (2015): 62.9 years (World Bank)

Human Development Index (2016): 135th out of 188 (UNDP)

In the intervention departments and districts, the available data appears below:

District	Number of villages	Number of neighborhoods	Inhabitants (INS data 2011)	Area in km ² (including the agricultural activity area) (source: EU - Analysis of territorial dynamics -2014)		Large logging concessions and main protected areas
Louvakou	81	2	13,408	3,021 (1,004)	No	Agri-resource
Kayes	33	1	13,000	1,260 (332)	No	SARIS, Eco-oil, WFP
Loudima	27	11	35,155	2,910 (183)	Yes	Tolona, Eco-oil, WFP
Madingou	41	21 in Madingou (full-function municipality) 8 in Bouansa (urban community)	62,800	980 (290)	Yes	Limestone production for SARIS

Goma Tsé-Tsé	44	8	14,342	1,583 (24)	No	-
Igné	58	3	23,811	4,150 (326)	Yes	Malakou-Tréchat free zone Protected area under MEF-Aspinall Foundation management
Ngabé	46	5	39,416	6,711 (255)	Yes	Protected area under MEF-Aspinall Foundation management
Ngo	35	4	17,000	6,123 (277)	Yes	Protected area under MEF management IPHD
Mpouya	21	3	12,825	2,469 (39)	No	Ngalissa, Brickworks
Mvouti	26	1	18,094	3,491 (135)	No	Dimonika biosphere reserve
Hinda	18	3	32,995	1,747 (513)	Yes	Eni-
Madingo Kayes	40	1	13,290	3,410 (202)	No	Conkouati Park under MEF management

2-3-2 Recap of plenary meetings and visits by district

12 plenary meetings were held, one per district, in line with the wishes expressed in the meeting to exchange views held on May 1, 2019. **These consultations brought together 415 individuals, including 62 women.**

A Department of POOL

A-1- District of GOMA TSETSE

This district has faced 18 months of serious problems and its capital remains difficult to access, it was looted and set on fire like many towns. The district council office is still hosted in temporary buildings in Nganga Lingogo, which is where the plenary meeting took place in a modest sized room, with 38 participants and the full involvement and support of the head of local State council and the Agricultural Sector Chief.

It was risky to talk about the future and the development of agricultural practices with people having been murdered in the recent past, with others having had everything stolen and/or destroyed, whose survival will not be assured through agricultural work.

A-1-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 10, 2019 in Nganga Lingolo - provisional district headquarters

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

38 participants, including four women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities:

- ✓ Activities: agriculture (cassava, peanuts, bananas, pineapple, fruit trees...), production of wood and charcoal, livestock production (Batéké hens), fish farming (understocked ponds, need for fry of production species)
- ✓ Since 2012, a union of all producers in the district was created. At this time, visits of the executive to all cooperatives are planned to remotivate members
- ✓ Lack of seed and adequate equipment for effective farming; they need improved cuttings of cassava, tomatoes, aubergine...
- ✓ Houses and former fields destroyed during the events, there are only new plantations. The still-terrified inhabitants find it difficult to return to their villages and are afraid of developing their activities more intensively, as they could still be destroyed
- ✓ Lack of support to revitalize their agriculture
- ✓ Problem with product transportation, the UNDP has taken on rehabilitation of the Mayoukou Road.

Fuelwood

- ✓ To live, everyone now cuts down trees and makes charcoal, which is a rapid source of income (wood piles or bags of charcoal between 3.4 and 4 USD).
- ✓ The shortage of petroleum and gas in the political capital increases the demand for wood and charcoal, which are supplied to Goma Tsé-Tsé
- ✓ Land owners do not allow poor young people to work free of charge on their land (they therefore resort to the production of wood and charcoal)
- ✓ Charcoal making is very arduous and takes 2 to 3 weeks, but there is no choice to feed their families.

Land

- ✓ Land is leased for cassava at 84 USD per year for 1,600 m²; the price is set after the land owner visits the area chosen by the farmer and the amount may be as high as 168 USD/ha. For charcoal makers, land with trees (including in forest areas) is leased at 201 USD/ha. The more high-value species there are after logging, the higher the rental
- ✓ Land rental amounts are high because of proximity to Brazzaville.
Most landowners do not farm, they are happy with rental income. At the same time, there are producers who wish to plant but lack the land to lease.
- ✓ The process of obtaining land titles has already started.

Climate change observation

- ✓ market gardeners lost their seeds because of a lack of rain in March
- ✓ very high temperatures and bright sun from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. instead of 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. previously.

Agroforestry

- ✓ Agroforestry is still not understood by farmers
- ✓ Agriculture is more common in forests than savanna areas. As a result, no agroforestry plantations or subsistence crops exceeding 10 ha can be seen; operations must be done manually
- ✓ Reforestation in savanna areas is more susceptible to fire because maintenance is more expensive.

Groups

- ✓ There are groups, but each member has his or her own plot and they get together for sales.

Access to credit

- ✓ Formal groups have bank accounts
- ✓ No credit supply for producers
- ✓ Nobody has training in drafting project proposals and developing business plans. CARITAS has supported women traders, providing them with 67 USD to buy retted cassava and resell it.

Other observations

- ✓ No training center for young people although they are motivated
- ✓ People get their supplies in Brazzaville
- ✓ No drinking water because boreholes are no longer working and water sources are not developed.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Goma TséTsé

Component 1

- ✓ The proposal to support resource planning, land-use planning and land right strengthening was appreciated because it comes within the context of the Land Law.

Component 2

- ✓ Land owners agree with the FAO's vision to contribute to climate change mitigation by promoting agroforestry and forestry systems, with the support of producers, whether or not they are land owners
- ✓ The Project should also support proactive individuals, as formal groups are not all motivated. It should review the minimum areas in these hilly, non-mechanized areas, as in the absence of mechanization, the largest area that these groups are able to develop is 5 ha
- ✓ Women rarely form groups, they manage alone; this should be taken into account
- ✓ Agreements between land owners and producers are possible for the implementation of this Project and land owners plan to engage with their peers on this win-win opportunity by establishing contracts
- ✓ Standardization of the land rental cost for agriculture is desired
- ✓ In terms of fire problems, it is necessary to:
 - Be stronger and embark on legal proceedings

- Raise awareness of inhabitants on the importance of firebreaks to preserve their products in the long-term
- Encourage daily maintenance and effective field demarcation

Component 3

- ✓ The advantages of agroforestry and improved coostoves (the Congo Mboté range is already known) are understood, and for charcoal makers, support towards improved charcoal making methods would be of great assistance
- ✓ In terms of fuelwood use, this must really be explained; the support of land owners must be obtained and legislation may also be required
- ✓ The Head of the district is prepared to implement a mechanism encouraging the use of wood from forests planted for this purpose.

Component 4

- ✓ For participants, an increase in credit supply and improved market access is the key to development. Moreover, they agree to their 20% or 10% contribution, as this practice already existed in previous projects
- ✓ Can the 10% contribution from groups be paid as follows: half at project start-up and the other half over time?
- ✓ Support in improving their production and sales would be welcome.

A-1-2 Site visits and interviews at GOMA TSETSE

Three site visits and two interviews were conducted in Goma Tsétsé:

Interview with the head of the district (05/09/2019):

He initiated the development of Community Management and Development Committees in the villages under his jurisdiction, but the conflict reduced this all to nothing.

The district is characterized by hilly areas and a secondary forest area under great threat from the pressure of demand from Brazzaville (from the village of Makana to the border with the district of Kinkala).

Agriculture only takes place in forest areas, shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn agriculture; the local people do not know how else to plant. Both animal and plant species no longer regenerate themselves. He is already doing a lot of awareness-raising as well as work on driving out charcoal producers who cut down no matter what, particularly by “stealing” trees (unauthorized felling).

Land owners are also responsible for deforestation. They earn good amounts by leasing hectares of land for felling (200 USD/ha and more).

His major concern now is agropastoral revival, in order to reduce pressure on the forest and allow people to live decently.

He welcomes this project, and believes that it will be very popular, but action is urgent.

Interview with the Agricultural Sector Chief (05/09/2019)

Fully aware of the dilapidated state of agricultural activities, he feels powerless to act, and does not even have the means to furrow his area, although he is happy with supporting initiatives near Nganga Lingolo, where he travels by foot.

He will organize for us to visit two dynamic market gardening sites and will arrange a meeting with the president of the local union; he believes in agroforestry and describes the farmers from this sector as being open and ready for change, subject to observing firsthand “that it works” on pilot experiments.

Visit to a market gardening group in Loukanga (adjacent to Nganga Lingolo - 05/10/2019)

This group (family and friends) practice market gardening here and grow subsistence crops in the district of Ngabé along National Road #2 (RN2). It is chaired by a woman, Mireille, who describes difficulties with water: floods during the rainy season and a serious shortage in the dry season. Recent seasonal shifts have caused seedling loss (no rain in March - heavy rain in May). She has kept some trees on the land she is leasing, but cannot plant as the land owner, who she gets along well with, would not agree to it.

Visit to a second market gardening group in Loukanga - 05/11/2019

Totally unexpectedly, this group is equipped with a drip irrigation system, installed by people from Benin who gave them access to the land on their departure. The equipment is fragile and handled with little care, apparently more through lack of knowledge than negligence; and replacement equipment is not available in Congo.

They are all young, which is also remarkable, and are renting the land. They have knowledge of market gardening, but no formal crop rotation plan and no accounting management for their operation; they have produced many cucumbers, tomatoes and aubergines, but know neither the weight, the income generated nor the initially incurred expenses. They have opted for organic farming and would like to learn techniques to make biopesticides and compost; with the agreement of the owner, they have planted papaya and banana trees on the slopes, but would like to do more.

They are happy about the prospect of agroforestry and the opportunity to be trained..

Visit to the President of the Local Farmers Union - 05/11/2019

These Local Unions (LUs) are characteristic of the department of Pool, there are none elsewhere. Being the result of a project conducted with the Evangelical Church of Congo and support from Swedish churches, these LUs are today supported by GESCOD, a French Association for decentralized cooperation between the Grand EST region in France and the Department of Pool. The main aspects of the GESCOD project are: structuring of the LUs, development of their organizational and advocacy skills, support to aviculture and the production of raw materials necessary to manufacture livestock feed. At the President's farm, some attempts to plant species under fruit trees can be seen around the plot, but more in an attempt to develop a restricted area than within an agroforestry dynamic, as this is unknown and poorly understood.

A-2 DISTRICT OF IGNIE

This district, including the main commune, Ignié (also called PK Rouge or PK45) is 45 km from the center of Brazzaville. It has the characteristics of being attracted by the capital, to have a free zone for industry (Maloukou Tréchet), to host a part of the Lésio-Léfini reserve, and to be an important supplier of foodstuffs, while remaining an essentially agricultural district. This district, situated north of the capital and on the RN2, was not affected by the troubles in Pool between 2016 and 2018.

A-2-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 16, 2019 in Igné, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Secretary General

33 participants, including four women

List of attendees in Annex 3



Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ The inhabitants of Igné are major producers of subsistence crops and are more advanced in their agricultural practices (they farm areas of up to 100 ha); they already use seeders and the most commonly traded crops are: cassava, peanuts, watermelon, sweet potato, pepper and aubergines
- ✓ They also raise livestock (poultry, goats, sheep)
- ✓ The presidency gave Chadians large areas to breed cattle, which over time devastated crops and about which “nothing could be said”
- ✓ Mechanization is a real problem in terms of respect of the agricultural calendar, as machines are not always available; they are often broken down and inactive for long periods before being repaired, despite the existence of the agricultural machinery center
- ✓ Some planting is done in the forest, which is very protected here (see Lésio-Léfini reserve), but especially in savanna areas as the district is essentially made up of savanna
- ✓ The problem of damaged agricultural tracks is an obstacle to increased production as products are difficult to transport from field to market. Currently, these tracks are being improved with the support of the State
- ✓ There is a problem with the cost of transport due to the remoteness of the large plantations, as the surrounding land has already been logged, and/or planted (see around Ignié)
- ✓ Water problems (chronic shortage in the dry season) and access to agricultural inputs were raised (“fertilizers are expensive but industrial agriculture cannot be done with organic”: ASC).

Fuelwood

- ✓ Charcoal is produced by individuals, essentially young people, and gallery forests are completely destroyed.

Groups

- ✓ Igné has at least 100 formal groups, including two women’s groups, and the rest are mixed. In fact, activities are done more in groups (some groups work on the same land and others on different pieces of land) than on an individual basis, unlike most other districts. Most groups are formal and have bank accounts.

Mechanization

- ✓ A hectare is plowed for 67 USD (state tractor) and 84 USD (private). “You have to pay in advance, and you do not know when the tractor will come”. Tractor operators require large areas in order to come, and access to these large areas is difficult due to land lease problems.

Land

- ✓ The district has a land-use plan (see Ministry of Land-Use Planning, General Directorate of Local Development) and a civil society platform is emerging in local development
- ✓ Land and application of Law 21: A campaign is planned in the near future for the Land Law to be disseminated by the relevant departments
- ✓ Access to large areas is difficult due to land lease problems.

Agroforestry

- ✓ How can agroforestry be implemented when the land is currently leased for a maximum of two years (crop cycle) with one hectare going for 59/75 USD?
- ✓ Agroforestry is a known term, explained by the participants themselves, and is already practiced in the area:
 - PRONAR has 2,000 purchased ha, operated by the SNR, which is developing tree plantations and allows the local people to farm subsistence crops there (cassava, watermelon...) for the first two years
 - PRONAR has also financially supported producers from the district in setting up agroforestry plantations by giving them access to land

Climate change

- ✓ Climate change can be seen in Igné by: increased heat in the month of April while in past years it was cooler and it was difficult to remain outside without being covered. Moreover, there was no heavy rain in April, but rather in May, the month during which the rain tends to disappear, and it rained a lot.

Access to credit

- ✓ There are no microfinance institutions in the district, everything needs to be done in Brazzaville, 45 km away. Banks do not finance agricultural projects because they believe the projects to be risky.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of IGNIE

Component 1

- ✓ This component will promote the sustainable management of natural resources; “at least, it will be clear where there is cultivation, where trees are being planted and where trees can be felled; consideration should also be given to investing in trees to prevent slope erosion”.

Component 2

- ✓ Following heated, but rich exchanges/discussions between producers and land owners on opportunities for non-land owners to benefit from tree planting, the latter (the most recalcitrant in the district) discovered a benefit in their land power: allowing trees to be planted would bring economic advantages in terms of land rentals and shared benefits, via contracts
- ✓ Land owners emphasized the need to also raise awareness of their families, not only the representatives, because long-term leases are still not an accepted practice
- ✓ The participants believe the proposed 10 to 20% contribution to be normal
- ✓ They emphasize the need for technical training, as well as training in managing their operations and compiling applications
- ✓ Farming areas: will groups who are failing on 2 ha be able to uphold their commitment on 10 ha? Motivated groups must be chosen, whether or not they are formal (in this case, do not rule them out but motivate them to register) and consideration should be given to lowering the bar, but with more capable people.

Component 3

- ✓ “It is good, the FAO thought about helping mothers with cooking using improved cookstoves that emit less smoke and use less wood. The FAO also thought about charcoal makers, wishing to improve their productivity with planted trees”

- ✓ In terms of illegal woodcutting and bush fires, it is necessary to focus on the youth and encourage them to become interested in agroforestry.

Component 4

Participants are happily awaiting the materialization of this last component, and they drew attention to the key points for success:

- ✓ When it is launched, the Project must have available and working tractors
- ✓ Support should be for all producers meeting the criteria, whether or not they are land owners
- ✓ It is necessary to increase site visits for potential groups prior to selection to check that they are hard-working
- ✓ Through contracts, the Project must ensure that producers do not divert land and that land owners maintain their ownership of the land being used
- ✓ Erosion must not be aggravated and it would be a benefit and a relief for the population if the Project agreed to fund tree planting in these areas that the tractor cannot access
- ✓ The population must be taught to log some of the planted trees for income to maintain the rest of the trees and develop new plantations
- ✓ What about land holders who are willing and motivated but are not in groups?

The producers who will be supported must be monitored and supported, given that agroforestry techniques are still not well understood.

A-2-2 Site visits and interviews at IGNIE

Two interviews were held: with the Secretary General of the District (05/09/2019) and with representatives of the only two women's groups registered in the district (05/16/2019).

Two site visits were conducted in the district of IGNIE on 05/15/2019 (one cooperative and one new village, Nkouo).

Interview with the district SG (05/09/2019)

The SG is a person who worked at the Ministry of Decentralization and is highly dynamic in his territory; he worked on inviting representatives of the district's activities and on making the session a real success. He came to the ID site to prepare the meeting, introduced his district and compiled the list of invitees. The Head of the district met the two consultants the morning of the plenary meeting, but left the running of the meeting to the SG.

Interview with the Presidents of two women's groups from Ignié (05/16/2019)

The reports of the meetings held with the two women's groups representatives will be compiled within a specific framework (see point II-4)

Site visits of 05/15/2019:

* New village of Nkouo

The visit to the new village of Nkouo was inspiring. The total land area is 150 ha. It has a village facilitator and a President, who welcomed the two consultants. The objective was to offer agricultural employment to 80 young farmers (40 households); the project was decreed by the Head of State to

combat unemployment. Each beneficiary received a house, with a modern chicken coop for the production of eggs, a vegetable garden with promising yields due to organic manure, and 2 ha to be developed.

Some created market gardening sites, which can be developed for much of the year but which face a problem in the dry season ("rain-fed market gardening") due to a lack of water .

Others did plant trees, fast-growing species as the village is short of wood, as well as fruit trees.

However, after the departure of the Israelis who headed the state-mandated operation, the majority of the facilities are partially unclaimed.

They lack technical support and basic training in farm management. The price of eggs dropped with the importation of Cameroonian eggs, while the cost of livestock feed has increased; egg producers are close to bankruptcy. In addition, there has been a drop in sales related to the economic crisis, a problem with product storage and no processing activities.

In this new village, which has no land problem, there is real potential for agroforestry activity: the willing to invest in it must still be demonstrated.

*Visit to the cooperative "Terre nourricière": 15 active members, including three women who grow subsistence crops.

The first difficulty addressed was that of land: they work the land for a maximum of two years and then the land goes back to the owner; "those who want to produce are blocked from land access".

The PDAC (*Projet d'Appui au Développement de l'Agriculture Commerciale* [Commercial Agriculture Development Support Project]) is indicated as a problem. It is very slow and unclear in its instructions as the service provider must create his or her own budget forecast ("not us!"); "they ask for bizarre information such as GPS type, which is underdeveloped in BZV; they ask for weights, although nobody weighs, everything is measured". "They demand 25 to 50 ha for a single tenant, which is impossible with land owners" and "it is important to train people beforehand".

In terms of mechanization, there are many tractors but they are not well-maintained, they arrive randomly and cost 75 USD for plowing, and the same amount for spraying.

Another problem in this area is that water is very short between June and October (this problem was reported repeatedly in the RN2 consultation area, whether on the Pool or Plateaux side".

A-3DISTRICT OF NGABE

This district has a unique characteristic: Mbé, a small village of 3,000 inhabitants, midway between the RN2 and the district capital, Ngabé, is a royal estate in the Republic of Congo, 200 km from Brazzaville. In this village in 1880, a peace and friendship treaty was signed between Makoko, the Tékés king and the French explorer Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza. Congo then became a French colony until 1960. Today, Mbé is the capital of the Téké kingdom.

The district of Ngabé can be considered to be in two parts, the savanna part over an immense plateau, which goes from the borders of the Lésio Léfini reserve to the eastern confines of the plateau before descending over the river part, along the Congo River where the capital is located, which is also an urban community.

The two access tracks are in a state of terrible disrepair, almost unusable in the rainy season; it took approximately three and a half hours for the FAO delegation and two consultants with experienced drivers to travel 80 km and this is at the beginning of the dry season.

The plenary meeting was held in the room of the district council office and was chaired by the Head of the district Mr. Mabiala, who welcomed the two consultants and an FAO delegation, and three representatives, respectively from the Ministry of Land Affairs, PRONAR (its National Coordinator) and the MEF. These persons provided details and expert responses to the questions raised by participants, enriching the discussions which, this time, essentially took place in the vernacular language.

A-3-1 The plenary meeting

Date: June 7, 2019 in Ngabé, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

38 participants, including two women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ Activities: fishing, hunting, gathering, agriculture (cassava, peanuts, bananas, maize, sweet potatoes, yams, tomatoes, chillies, aubergines, peppers, pineapple, butter, fruit, avocados, mangoes, kola, soursop and palms), production of wood and charcoal, livestock production (cattle, sheep, goats, poultry)
- ✓ To create a 1 ha mechanized plantation near Ngabé, an amount of approximately 207,000 F is required (clearing, land, plowing and spraying)
- ✓ Water problem in the dry season, in savanna areas, as well as the rest of the geographic area of the Batéké plateaux
- ✓ Maize gets attacked by insects and they do not know what to do
- ✓ They combine rain-fed market garden crops with subsistence crops
- ✓ Farmer-livestock breeder conflict: cattle, with Chadian cowherds, devastate the fields and farmers are forced to work in the forests (the cattle do not go into the forest). All this because the cattle owners are authorities from whom the population cannot claim damages.
- ✓ Added to this is the devastation of fields by elephants in the Lésio Léfini reserve, a fully protected species that can not be killed, and no compensation is provided for losses.

Mechanization

- ✓ In the riverside area, agriculture is arduous due to a lack of mechanization and deterioration of the road, which limits production and sales
- ✓ Moreover, tractor plowing is more expensive in riverside areas (84 USD) than in continental areas (59 USD).

Fuelwood

- ✓ Forests have been destroyed in comparison with 20 years ago.

Land:

- ✓ A hectare is leased at 25 USD for a subsistence crop cycle (18 to 24 months for cassava).

Groups

- ✓ In total, 140 groups were identified by the ASC who arrived one year ago, but many are informal; a site visit is planned by the ASC
- ✓ Some groups manage an area of 8 ha manually, 50 ha/100 by machine

Transport - travel:

- ✓ How can market gardening work when the vehicle takes three days to reach the market - and boats take two days on the river to reach Brazzaville?

Agroforestry

- ✓ Agroforestry is already in practice, but has still not been effectively appropriated by producers as, without being land owners, they cannot plant; there was no positive response to the question “who has already planted a tree?”
- ✓ All those with tree plantations are definitely land owners, and others have bought land; it should be emphasized that the public trees in Ngabé are already very old
- ✓ The PRONAR director presented the benefits of agroforestry.

Access to credit

- ✓ In terms of lack of access to financing, “support is usually provided to unreliable projects”; this district has a major dispute with the PDAC service providers, as only two projects were accepted, and not for the most hard-working groups. This dispute impacted the plenary meeting, as it generated a lack of confidence, which was expressed on several occasions
- ✓ The producers complain about a certain degree of abandonment, lack of equipment and access to credit to support them in their initiatives
- ✓ No microfinance organization exists in the district of Ngabé. People have to travel to Brazzaville to open and operate an account and to take loans (five hours by road!); a single attendee confirmed having already taken out a loan.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of NGABE

Component 1

- ✓ The development master plan, and its implementation with the simple management plan may contribute towards resolving the farmer-livestock breeder conflict and the conflict between land owners, and may guarantee crop survival throughout the cycle (no more movement from one site to another despite rental costs paid when another land owner appears and contests)
- ✓ Due to the weight of tradition in the district, the local people must avoid sacred areas, which should be better protected; however, the sacred forest is currently devastated by tree felling and slash-and-burn agriculture; a development master plan may contribute towards protecting these species
- ✓ The land affairs advisor clarified the land registration process in great details. He also emphasized that the law allows free use of land for subsistence farming. The State also has land that it may make available to producers under contracts of 18 months to 99 years.

Component 2

- ✓ Profadell supported some groups in the establishment of agroforestry plantations, which means that land owners are willing to rent their land to producers for tree plantations, but the Project must guarantee their land tenure rights
- ✓ The tradition of mutual assistance between producers for cultivation operations is very common in the district
- ✓ The criterion concerning support to projects of 10-20 ha is possible in the continental area; however, in the riverside area, there is not enough space and work must be done by hoe; moreover, replanting is necessary and adaptations need to be made, with areas of 2 ha and more
- ✓ Water and forestry administration prohibits deforestation, but apart from this not being respected, what are the alternatives and supporting measures?
- ✓ The agricultural and forestry departments must find a solution that compensates producers for devastation caused by protected species (ndlr: obviously, the existing relevant provisions did not reach Ngabé)
- ✓ A 20% contribution is a little high. In order for the opportunity to be given to everyone, it would be preferable not to ask for more than 10%, as those in the riverside area do not have good income and therefore no savings. Finally, by demanding large operating areas, with projects at 16,840 USD and more, and with a contribution of 10% which is 1684 USD and more, it will not be possible for everyone, particularly women
- ✓ A comment was made on the possibility of finding the 10% contribution by taking a bank loan, but only those with operational accounts and the ability to travel (5 hours to BZV) can benefit.

Components 3 and 4

- ✓ The proposals listed in these two components were welcome by participants and they hope that they will become a reality. Specifically, it is good not to prohibit the manufacture of charcoal, but to promote plantations of trees for fuelwood. However, the logging sector is not in place and currently individuals (often young people) “poach” the timber; their sensitization and involvement in the Project are essential
- ✓ Participants do not wish to relive the PDAC situation, which only accepted two groups in a large working district like Ngabé. They demand transparency, support in development of their projects and equity.

A-3-2 Site visits and interviews at NGABE

Two interviews were held with the district SG and with women taking part in the plenary meeting, and four visits were conducted to the Vice-President of the LU, an arborist, a large subsistence farm and the Ngabé market.

The report of the meeting held on 06/07/2019 with the women present at the plenary meeting will be drawn up within a specific framework.

- With the district SG (06/06/2019)

He first wanted to address the issues that would probably be discussed in the plenary meeting, and a conversation was held on the problems of isolation and abandonment of the district, despite the public equipment and local services which would normally be deployed.



With the Vice-President of the Ngabé LU (05/15/2019)

His operation is located towards the RN2 and his experience with agroforestry was addressed. The project did not get completed; plowing was done but PRONAR did not provide seeds and the beneficiaries had no idea of how to operate their plantation. He is not a land owner, but had an agreement with his land owner to log for 10 years on an acacia plantation. He asked that we not merely launch projects, but specifically that we monitor them, criticizing the fact that “people come through, make promises and then there’s absolute silence”; there is no access to seeds, even acacia.

He warned the project developers to be careful with large operational areas, as many find it difficult to manage smaller areas and it would be better to sustainably manage an area of a few hectares than to go too big and not manage.

Mechanization is not much of a problem, “there are private individuals who manage tractors and do not let them break down. With a cost per run of 76 or 85 USD, they know where their interests lie”.

He believes that forming groups is necessary to become effectively organized, but he advised against trusting cooperatives, instead aiming at those whose members are shareholders, who work without expecting State assistance.

In terms of logging, there must be sensitization and training on logging, as those who have planted trees believe that it is intangible at this time. They do not harvest timber ... and continue to go into the forest.

Visit to a 14 ha tree-growing cooperative in Mpoumako (05/15/2019)

The visit covered 14 ha of fruit and forestry plantations, with 12 people including five women, who all work. They do not use hackworkers, just a tractor, which costs 420 USD to create a firebreak at the beginning of the dry season. They planted one forest of acacia and eucalyptus trees in 2011, but do not know how to log it: no chainsaw, no knowledge of markets and opportunities. They also have no operating budget and do not know how to create one, although they have opened an account.

Visit to a 300 ha operation (06/06/2019)

Situated 30 km from the RN2 on the Ngabé road, the visit revealed a group of about 10 people, managed by a couple, which uses younger hackworkers (up to 60) for various tasks. They have a massive cassava yield and a 20 ha forest plantation (acacias, eucalyptus) that they do not know how to log. They planted some fruit trees and they would like to expand, but do not know how. They specifically do not know how to plan marketing.

Management of the operation? They have an account, but it is complicated to go to Brazzaville.

In fact, to sell cassava, they hire trucks at 1010 USD to go to Brazzaville; the tractor costs 101 USD for plowing and 67 USD for spraying; they owned one tractor and one truck but everything has broken down.

Market visit (06/07/2019)

The visit was quick - there are a few local products for sale, a little fresh fish, some bananas, arrowroot and gnetoum, some local tomatoes, a little salted fish (the boxes say “made in Norsk”) and smoked fish (local this time); the bush meat arrives a little later, also in small amounts.

B Department of Plateaux:

B-1 Ngo District:

Ngo, the capital of this savanna district, hosts a fine reserve and is at the crossroads of the roads to the north and east, which provides an active market. It could potentially develop a green tourism activity, but past attempts are rather on the decline (Mpoh site, elephant watching).

B-1-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 13, 2019 in Ngo, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Secretary General of the district

18 participants, including two women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities:

- ✓ Activities: agriculture (cassava, peanuts, bananas, maize, yams, tomatoes, chilies, aubergines, peppers, pineapple, butter fruit, avocado, kola, hunting, gathering, palm and mango trees), production of wood and charcoal (on an individual basis), livestock production (poultry, goats, sheep and pigs), all running free due to a lack of means to make enclosures and provide livestock feed
- ✓ Former project:
 - FAO supported aviculture, but at the end of the funding period everything stopped, because they were no warehouse for livestock feed, and the purchase cost reduced the profitability of the project
- ✓ Currently, transport costs are very high considering the state of the road; one bag of fufu costs 10/12 USD instead of 5 USD previously
- ✓ Lack of water: the inhabitants buy water during the dry season, 1.70 USD per barrel of 200 L
- ✓ Large-scale farmers include IPHD and the director of SNPC who have more than 100 ha, but groups have less than 10 ha and individuals 3 ha at the most
- ✓ Bush fires are very common and cause crop losses. However, according to the local people, creating a firebreak means reducing cultivation space and it requires money to do this every year; this is the case with trees (ndlr: and what gain, what loss?? nobody present knows how to evaluate).

Mechanization

- ✓ The Etsouali village machinery center (67 USD for plowing and 67 USD for spraying) has insufficient tractors (only 2) to meet the demand and most tractors are old or broken down
- ✓ Producers need to contract private companies at a higher cost: 84 USD for plowing and 84 USD for spraying

Groups

- ✓ Most groups in the district are just a name, there is no motivation in the work; after being supported, when the projects ended, they broke down and hardly anybody continued the activities
- ✓ in the villages, there are also women who help each other with sowing, weeding and harvesting, but each woman has her own field (exp. presented by a participant at the meeting in Ngo: six women each have 2 ha).

Climate change

- ✓ “We find it difficult to distinguish between the short dry season and the long rainy season, we are experiencing more heat and the sun appears from 6 a.m.”

Land

- ✓ A hectare is leased at 42 USD, only to non-natives who do not live in the village and who wish to plant fields of subsistence crops, whereas village inhabitants use the land free of charge.
- ✓ Land is not leased for tree plantations, as this amounts to losing a part of one’s land. Orchards existing in the district belong to land owners
- ✓ Sale of land already occupied by some land owners due to ignorance about the border of their land.

Agroforestry

- ✓ In Ombima, where a large semi-industrial nursery exists, agroforestry started with the support of PRONAR
- ✓ WCS supported the establishment of agroforestry plantations, which are no longer maintained. The fruit trees were burnt and only eucalyptus and acacia trees remain (2013-2016).

Fuelwood

- ✓ Improved cookstoves are considered expensive, but after a detailed presentation by the local saleswoman on the manufacturing cost, participants welcomed the initiative, which will allow these cookstoves to be made by local artisans (which will increase employment in the village)
- ✓ A constraint raised by the saleswoman was that welders generally embezzle the money from orders and do not keep to deadlines.

Access to credit

- ✓ No microcredit service, but in the coming months, MUCODEC (*Mutuelles Congolaises d’Epargne et de Crédit* [Congolese Savings and Credit Unions]) will be present.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Ngo

Component 1

- ✓ The Project’s support in land allocation and the land legalization process will contribute towards avoiding conflict between livestock breeders and farmers, between those from the reserve and those who make charcoal and between land owners and producers.

Component 2

- ✓ After several conversations on the importance of agroforestry and the advantage of ensuring that the Project benefits all motivated producers, even those who do not have land, the land owners positively changed their comments based on the guarantee of a contract validated by the authorities, which offers the possibility of harvest sharing, in terms of trees (Exp. 10% per harvest for 25 years, renewable)
- ✓ In relation to the reality of the district, the most motivated individuals are not in groups, but prefer to work as a family so that they have control. Therefore, supporting only formal groups would mean sidelining the dynamism of the district; failures are etched into the memories of participants in past projects which did not contribute to development and which were a disaster.
- ✓ Agroforestry is still not well understood; it is really necessary to educate, train and assist in implementation.
- ✓ The pre-screening criteria for sub-projects are acceptable, as they eliminate hair-brained schemes thanks to the 20%-10% contribution.

Component 3

- ✓ Improved cookstoves are already used in the district, but welders and law enforcement authorities awareness needs to be raised if production is going to comply with the lead times
- ✓ With regard to charcoal, the idea of increasing the professionalism of charcoal makers, often young people, and the use of planted wood, is a good thing.

Component 4

- ✓ The support intended under this component is what the population has always demanded: explanations, technical training, management training, training on how to create a business plan, set up a project, assist in implementation. If the commitments are respected, this support will contribute to local economic development
- ✓ The need for training was reiterated, as the lack of income management is an obstacle to the sustainability of the supported activities. (Exp. WCS agroforestry plantations burnt in the absence of a firebreak; people did not see the income that could be generated after 5 years, despite some difficult times between the 2nd and 5th years). It will be important to offer a long-term vision for agroforestry activities, particularly in terms of income.

B-1-2 Site visits and interviews at Ngo

Unlike other districts, it was not possible to meet with the agricultural sector and forestry brigade chiefs as the ASC had traveled the same morning of the plenary meeting. The second, on mission to Etsouali, will be met two days later on the return trip to Ignie.

Two interviews, with the Head of the district and a saleswoman from Congo Mboté, were held and five site visits were conducted.

With the Head of the district (05/12/2019): the approach and procedure for the consultation were explained to him, and recent agroforestry experiments conducted by the NGO WCS were evaluated, showing a local situation where the issues are not understood.

With Gladys, improved cookstove saleswoman (05/13): she noted the overly rapid departure of the project, and orders from clients that she cannot honor due to the negligence of the two artisans trained in the village, who were paid, but never made the improved cookstoves. She believes that the demand is in Ngo, an important traffic hub, but also in Djambala (the district capital) and Gamboma (on the North Road).

In Mpoh, about 12 km from Ngo (05/14/2019): on the way to Djambala, an agroforestry site was visited with the village SG. Supported by WCS, there was a group of about 20 people for 2 ha of plantations, half orchards, which did not avoid fire from the 3rd year and the end of the subsistence crop cycle, and half eucalyptus and acacias, which form a small local forest.

Two findings:

* in a group of 20 people, everyone expected the others to work and suddenly, no firebreak was created and the first bush fire annihilated avocado and butter fruit trees.

* fast-growing eucalyptus and acacia plantations, already larger, resisted the fire and became loggable at five years, but nobody dared to generate income from it, "we don't know how to do it and if we can do it". Finally, reference should be made to the planting of Nietoum in this artificial forest: it worked well and the indigenous people come to get supplies.

In Ebou, between Ngo and Mpoh (05/14/2019) and with ARL on RN2 (05/13/2019), on the way to Brazzaville, the same observations were made and the same cause was put forward: out of a group of 20+ people, only two or three worked, they became tired and fire destroyed all the fruit trees.

Moreover, they do not know how to log their planted forest. The experiment with Nietoum also worked.

Site visit to Ombima on the North Road (05/14/2019): vast private nursery and plantations of fruit trees, bananas, cocoa, in combination with subsistence crops and involving local populations in the mixed cropping. This enterprise is starting, the facilities are all of industrial level, the vision is there; but we are not getting information on the five-year vision and the forecast and investment budgets and anticipated gains.

Visit to the CEMA in Etsouali (05/15/2019): situated in the south of the district, the CEMA, a former site managed by IPHD, was taken over in 2016; there are about 20 people, tractor drivers included. Most of the old tractors are broken down and three work normally. Repair turnaround times are through an instruction to the Ministry of Agriculture and take weeks; often the parts are recovered from out-of-service machines; “the people there don’t realize our urgency here”. A visit to the hangar and the garage building showed the seeders and new trailers being stored. Any breakdown seems very complicated to manage. The requested price is 76 USD/ha for plowing or spraying; our respondent confirms that payment is after the service is provided, but we also collected contradictory statements. There is an obvious lack of management of this equipment and of the center.

Visit with the head of the forest brigade in Estouali: camping along the RN2, he carries out checks on logging trucks and vehicles likely to be carrying poached meat. He was informed of the content of the plenary meeting, presentation of the GCF Project and the discussions.

B-2 District of Mpouya

This district is situated two hours away, on a stony trail that is difficult to navigate, inaccessible to vehicles with tires in poor condition, but usable in all seasons. Fiefdom of the current Minister of the Interior and Decentralization, he is patently concerned with the well-being of the inhabitants in his region because, in addition to the trail that was remade in 2016, the new district council office is operational, a drinking water borehole is operational in the village, the tractor is available (for a fee) and boats service the different villages along the river that are inaccessible by private vehicle. It consists of two areas, a large savanna area with immense expanses with no trees, characteristic of Plateaux, with forest destruction on the horizon, and a riverside area with villages along the river who live off fishing, hunting, subsistence crops and wood, that we could not visit. A weekly market is held and traders come from the DRC, just on the other bank.

B-2-1 the plenary meeting

Date: June 5, 2019 in Mpouya, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

35 participants, including five women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities



- ✓ Activities: net fishing, agriculture (cassava, maize, bananas, pineapples, no orchards of at least 1 ha), production of wood and charcoal, semi-modern brickyard, gathering, livestock production (poultry, goats, sheep and a large cattle farm 9 km from the center of Mpouya), periodic quarry
- ✓ Cassava is sold retted and bound
- ✓ Fields are created in forest, as well as savanna areas
- ✓ According to some, production in the forest is better than in savanna areas, and others believe that it is the same for forest and savanna areas - a good choice of site is all that is needed.

Groups

- ✓ Mechanized groups work up to 20 ha, but the non-mechanized groups along the river only work from ½ to 1 ½ ha. Those on the continental section have no problem with mechanization, because Minister Mboulou has made tractors available to them, plowing is almost free of charge and this cost is purely symbolic. He also equipped the villages along the river.
- ✓ There are essentially informal groups, it is complicated to go to Djambala. Obtaining agreement is slow at department level. What of those in the process of obtaining authorization and who wish to submit their application? Will the Project eliminate them or support their process?

Transport - travel

- ✓ The state of the road makes it difficult to transport products and the vehicle only comes once per week; purchasing power in the villages is very poor because there are few public officials.
- ✓ Existence of a border market used for product trade between Congo and the DRC.

Climate change

- ✓ Lost of 1 ha of banana trees due to heat and sandy soils that do not retain enough water.
- ✓ Previously, in May, there was less rain, but this year we had very heavy rain. However, when planting was supposed to take place, there was not enough rain.

Agroforestry

- ✓ How to plant the second rotation in the same tree plantation? "It is possible as the tractor can go between the trees if the gaps are respected." In a funding request, is it possible to request support for two types of trees: fruit and non-fruit trees? (Response given: Yes)

Land

- ✓ Obtaining a land title is very costly, applying to the land registry costs a lot of money.

Access to credit

- ✓ There is no access to microfinance in this district or in Ngo
- ✓ Lack of support, no good income after sales; as a result, young people move to towns.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Mpouya

All the components were evaluated by the participants

Component 1

- ✓ This raised no problems. It is considered important to discuss limiting deforestation and replanting in savanna areas; a unique characteristic is that access to land is not a problem here, it is free for those who want to do subsistence farm; only large operations must pay, as their purpose is commercial

- ✓ There is still no fairness for those who want to be land owners; the procedures are costly and the land owners here are not rich; procedures could accelerate with the advent of the programme.

Component 2

- ✓ There is no knowledge on orchard in Mpouya and no positive response was given to the question “who has already planted a tree?”
- ✓ Concern about the operation size and contribution: in the Plateaux area, producers are capable of working 10 ha and more, but the contribution corresponding to these 10 ha may be high; there is a risk of eliminating dynamic groups because they are not in a position to contribute.
- ✓ Groups are not formalized, everything is very far (the capital, Djambala, is four hours by road, and there are no regular vehicles from Mpouya); everybody thinks that 5 ha for groups of 5 to 7 people would be a good start, manageable and a good plantation test.
- ✓ In the riverside area, everything is done manually in the forest, as well as the subsistence crop fields of ½ ha; here, support should start with areas of 2 ha; there is still a very strong belief that everything grows better in the forest.
- ✓ In particular, support should primarily be given to motivated people, when they are really working on the land. They should be encouraged to obtain authorization, and should not be eliminated on the pretext that they have no authorization.
- ✓ Emphasis is also placed on the total lack of access to seedling trees, and the need to be trained in these new techniques and supported in implementation.
- ✓ Young people have no jobs, they are faced with poor yields and they leave for towns; they must be involved in such a project, they are willing to learn if there are prospects. They are not included in the attribution rules because they have nothing.
- ✓ **In the district, there is no problem with planting trees, whether land owners or not, everybody can plant, unlike other districts.**

Miscellaneous:

- ✓ It rains abundantly and the district would need technical support in drying cassava
- ✓ Informal producers in groups must be identified so that they can be recognized.

Component 3

- ✓ There is a little charcoal making, but the greatest impact is related to slash-and-burn agriculture along the river
- ✓ Timber is also logged for buildings and brickyards (big consumer in the dry season).

Component 4

- ✓ There must be support in developing projects, and training in forecast operations management is requested; nobody knows how to do that here
- ✓ Having an account is very complicated, there is nothing on site or in Ngo. People have to travel very far, there is no access to microcredit and no participants have already used it.

B-2-2 Site visits and interviews at Mpouya

Apart from the plenary meeting, two interviews with women and with the ASC were held, and two visits were conducted in Mpouya: the brickyard, and a subsistence crop site on the Plateaux managed by a family group.

The interview with the women will be the subject of a framework bringing together all interviews held.

With the Agricultural Sector Chief, the interview was held ahead of the plenary meeting (06/05/2019). He prepared the two consultants by presenting the situation of agricultural activities in the territory, summarized in the report of the plenary meeting.

With the Lisungui group (06/05/2019): this mixed group has a female president (Clarisse); it farms 6 ha of cassava in the savanna; added to this is a little sorrel, peanuts, yams and aubergines but, as it is a commercial enterprise, rental is 50 USD/ha, and the tractor is 84 USD x 2 per ha (plowing and spraying). There are two crop cycles (cassava-maize) on the same area which is then left to rest for five years. The President took part in the plenary meeting. She wishes to learn about planting trees and even to create the nursery; the group, through the family, is partial owner.

It should be emphasized that the farmed land is about 10 km from the village. The women go there by foot, and they need to camp during maintenance and weeding operations. This gives an idea of the living conditions and difficulties of the farmers.

The brickyard (visit of 06/05/2019) is in the immediate vicinity of the village and bakes construction bricks. It has two operating models: the first, traditional, is currently used with high wood consumption and several "small" ovens. An enormous, semi-industrial construction with 3 large ovens is in the immediate vicinity. The installation is new and has obviously not yet been commissioned; our speakers cannot explain its operation or the startup delay or, for both installations, the cubic meters of wood consumed.

C Department of Bouenza:

C-1 District of Madingou

This district hosts the department's capital and is largely situated in the Niari valley where the land is fertile. Large underexploited spaces characterize the landscapes. The well-established SNR has already implemented agroforestry tests. There is a fine nursery and the authorities planted fast-growing trees during tree days in 2017 and 2018, supported by the SNR and then the NGO ID, which implemented a fuelwood consumption reduction project by promoting a local Improved Cookstoves sector (at department level) and by supporting the creation of six "tree nursery" enterprises. Some strips of forest remain, particularly towards the district of Boko Songho, in the foothills, which have been "attacked" by banana producers and farmers, due to strong beliefs in the enhanced production capacities of the forest.

In this district, the land issue was predominant throughout the discussions.

C-1-1 The plenary meeting

Date: June 15, 2019 in Madingou, the capital of the district and the department of Bouenza

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

42 participants, including four women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed



Agricultural activities

- ✓ According to an analysis by participants, the district is an agricultural storehouse and a little of everything grows there: peanuts, cassava, maize, bananas, soy, yams, vegetables, fruit trees, everything “except cocoa, here it’s rather coffee that grows”
- ✓ The main difficulties listed and approved by the majority of the participants:
 - Lack of access to plant protection products and market gardening seeds
 - Diseases: flies which attack mangoes, the mosaic virus which attacks cassava, diseases affecting beans; “many losses and much impoverishment”
- ✓ - Even where there are tractors, there is a drop in production because of insufficient fertilizers. However, one participant emphasized the existence of Moukouna to shorten fallow periods and naturally fertilize the soil, and requested its distribution to food producers
- ✓ The same participant was approved when he asked for organic solutions to be developed for fungicide and insecticide treatments, “because chemicals are toxic.”

There were repeated requests relating to the lack of knowledge: archaic traditional practices, no understanding of seeds, no knowledge of soil quality, no knowledge of biopesticides and organic fertilizers.

Transport - travel

- ✓ Travel difficulties were raised due to the state of tracks and, in certain places, their isolation (the other side of Niari).

Mechanization

- ✓ Archaic practices were raised due to a lack of mechanization, although the extent and quality of the land would be suitable
- ✓ There is a recurrent difficulty in getting a tractor to come to the area, even after having paid months in advance (example: tractor paid for in October 2018 still did not come in June 2019); “they do not respect agricultural calendars”, “the machines are often broken down and take long to repair”
- ✓ However, costs are high: 185 USD for the plowing/spraying combo.

Land

- ✓ There is an unwritten, but implemented law which says that trees must not be planted, because in time, the property will be transferred to the person who planted, because they stay there for a long time
- ✓ The ASC asked for assistance on access to land, which is a headache: the PDAC requests a minimum of 25 ha and what land owner will give over 25 ha? The cooperatives wish to work, but the land owners must facilitate access to land
- ✓ A land owner responded that the Ministry of Land Affairs is in the process of helping them, but there are “shady” land owners and work must be done to bring land owners and producers together
- ✓ A producer responded that contracts are never respected: “if there is a death, it’s a problem”
- ✓ The DD for industrial promotion agrees, underlining the difficulties in accepting long-term crops: in case of death of the owner, everything could be called into question by the heirs
- ✓ One producer mentioned the case of crops which started growing and then, owners different to whose leased the land expelled the producers and appropriated their work.
- ✓ Another land owner emphasized that one must either be an owner or purchase land for planting purposes, which set the discussion off again
- ✓ However, it is impossible for a non-land owner to purchase 5 to 6 ha of land to farm, it’s an exorbitant amount

- ✓ The Head of the district himself expressed his wish for the authorities to support young people in planting trees, but is concerned about the willingness of land owners to facilitate this type of project
- ✓ Another land owner attempted to calm everything down by stating that land owners will agree to type of crop from the moment there is an understanding and a signed contract, with ownership secured by recognition under Law 21.

In conclusion, “negotiations must take place with those who have their papers, the Minister of Land Affairs was clear on that.”

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Madingou

Component 1

- ✓ The idea of creating development plans was rather well received by producers; it concerned some land owners but did not generally really pose a problem
- ✓ Attention to what real dialogue does in the district was emphasized
- ✓ With regard to land processes, these are already in progress and the AF are heavily involved.

Component 2

- ✓ Farm size caused a real debate: “10 to 50 ha? that rules out most groups from Madingou”.
- ✓ ASC: “only 3 groups could achieve that, taking into account the land access difficulties and financing problems; financing margins are low, it would be better to start small and well, with good will and a wish to learn about management; start small, succeed, intensify.
- ✓ The groups: few are formal, even within the plenary meeting. There is lassitude among informal groups, they do not believe in it. Projects only come to those who are supported “by well-placed relatives”. The ASC confirms, “register without expecting any projects as a result”.
- ✓ The women’s groups are not formal; only accepting formal groups and farms exceeding 10 ha rules them out immediately.
- ✓ Receiving training, and particularly support in application compilation and implementation came up many times in the discussions.

Component 3

- ✓ Better management of the remaining strips of forest and their conservation, with an incentive to use trees planted for charcoal and brick baking is appreciated.
- ✓ The Congo Mboté Improved Cookstove is known by everyone present.

Component 4

- ✓ The debate on microcredit was animated; the experience with ACTED was poorly understood, and nobody believes they benefited from it. The practices of MFIs are criticized, particularly as repayments start at the end of the first loan month, while no speculation generates income in less than three to four months
- ✓ Marketing support is desired, particularly if there is a revival of fruit trees
- ✓ The unfortunate experience with peanut seeds distributed by Eco Oil left behind negative traces - some vigilance is necessary in this regard under this Project.

C-1-2 Site visits and interviews in Madingou (between April 17 and 20)

In this department capital, five interviews were conducted with the president of the CDB, the DDA and the DDEF (Department Director of Forest Economy), the representative of Land Affairs, as well as the SNR.

Four site visits were conducted: a private nursery, an experimental agroforestry site, the SNR nursery and an SNR agroforestry site.

The various visits and interviews, conducted in-depth at the start of the mission from April 17-20, before the option of holding plenary meetings was adopted, were the subject of detailed reports appearing in Annex 2, and corroborating the statements made in plenary meetings.

C-2 District of Kayes

This district is within the orbit of the town of Nkayi, the fourth largest city in the country with 73,000 ha and a sugar industry, which has swallowed up all nearby land to farm sugarcane (32,000 ha concession, 14,000 of which are farmed). This territory is noted for its fuelwood supply difficulties, felling of fruit trees to bake bricks, and the use of cassava stems to prepare meals in the more modest households. Most producers must travel up to 15 km to reach the fields, or cross the Niari River by ferry, with its fickle schedules, to cultivate manually on the other side. Bouenza is also reputed to be arboreal land with aging orchards and disappearing knowledge. However, in this district, there are several landmark agroforestry experiments in existence, other than SNR experiments, supported by the ASC, by the NGO ID, or by individuals trained by ID or the ASC.

C-2-1 the plenary meeting

Date: May 25, 2019 in Kayes, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

25 participants, including three women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 6

This meeting held in the office of the Head of the district of Kayes, hosted a delegation from the FAO and associated experts, who contributed to the discussions and responded to questions if necessary. The gender consultant held a separate meeting with the women present, after the plenary meeting.

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ Activities: agriculture (cassava, peanuts, maize, yams, tomatoes, soy, bananas, pineapples, fruit trees...), wood and charcoal production, brick making, livestock production (poultry, goats, sheep, cows), fishing
- ✓ Seeds are difficult to find, one has to go elsewhere, time is wasted and sometimes the season is missed
- ✓ Lack of availability of manure and other fertilizers
- ✓ Movement of products is difficult due to unusable tracks
- ✓ Lack of customers to buy the yields
- ✓ Lack of technical assistance in farming and management
- ✓ Risk of soil impoverishment by continual usage with no improved fallow period and with the use of Daba (according to them)
- ✓ Crops attacked by the mosaic virus
- ✓ Soy is suited to their soil but unfortunately there is no organized market, no mechanism for processing and at this time, soybean meal is imported.

Mechanization



- ✓ With mechanization, the groups manage from 18 to 28 ha. However, tractors are not always available
- ✓ Tractors cannot access the other bank of the Niari, the work is arduous and producers only manage 1 or 2 ha.

Fuelwood

- ✓ Uncontrolled felling of trees for timber (cooking and brick making) and charcoal. The Water and Forest Department specifies that tree felling is not prohibited. However, it requests notification in order to monitor felling progress (sustainable use) and to recover taxes (very low, according to it).

Groups

- ✓ A total of 30 groups are formalized, but the meeting believes that those who work harder are informal
- ✓ Division of groups after project support due to misunderstandings and working differences, which led to the creation of family-based, informal groups.

For women's groups, the land use threshold is 3 ha (land access and available time to devote to the common field)

Land

- ✓ Farmers go further and further despite the available, uncultivated space because some of the land belongs to SARIS and other land belongs to land owners who do not lease it
- ✓ All projects go to Nkayi instead of Kayes where the land owners live. As a result, there is resistance/opposition by the latter to lease land
- ✓ Land owners would rather lease land than sell it, as the law prohibits the sale of land
- ✓ The lack of money is an obstacle to obtaining land titles, which is a very costly process
- ✓ Land owners believe that, if they lease their land for tree planting, they will lose it. There is a risk that producers will falsify papers to become land owners.

Agroforestry

- ✓ Agroforestry is already practiced in the district, but only land owners have this right, because land is only leased for subsistence crops, 1 ha for 84 USD. Presentation of the benefits of agroforestry by the FAO National Consultant and the FAO Head of Mission.

Access to credit

- ✓ Microfinance was started in Kayes with community funds, but the proximity and competition with those from Nkayi caused shareholders to withdraw their shares and there is no longer a guarantee fund, which closed down.
- ✓ "Microfinance organizations offer credit with requirements that the producers cannot meet."

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Kayes

Component 1

- ✓ The participants agreed with the project proposal on land-use planning and strengthening of land tenure rights. For them, this proposal could resolve land conflicts and allow producers to operate effectively
- ✓ The Project will only be able to support those who are already in the process of obtaining a land title and not those waiting for the Project's arrival
- ✓ The State requests 5% of the land as compensation for obtaining a land title, an alternative for land owners who do not have the means to start the process

- ✓ The land owners present request that visits be made to the villages to explain to all the inhabitants, and particularly the family members of land owners, who will not understand as they did not take part in the session.

Component 2

- ✓ How will the time for sensibilization on climate change be defined, as well as outreach on the country's economic and climate development through agroforestry?
- ✓ In terms of agroforestry, the land owners would like production to be shared as the land will be exploited in the long-term (emphyteutic leases)
- ✓ The opportunity should also be given to those not in groups, who are often the bravest
- ✓ The agricultural department must communicate more in order to identify major producers and support them in formalizing their activities
- ✓ The 10% or 20% contribution will eliminate profiteers and those who are not organized.

Component 3

- ✓ The use of improved cookstoves is not new in the district and the improvement in charcoal making techniques will be an advantage for charcoal makers. There is full agreement on the mechanism.

Component 4

The Project proposal to support business plan development and implementation will strengthen the abilities of producers in terms of financial management. In addition, strengthening access to microfinance in order to increase credit supply in the agroforestry/forestry sector, and improvement through the establishment of purchase agreements and sales platforms, are the levers for development of a district. The participants have many expectations.

C-2-2 Site visits and interviews in Nkayi and Kayes (between April 17 and 20, 2019)

It was not possible to meet with the newly arrived Kayes ASC, but the Nkayi ASC helped with meeting two dynamic groups living in Nkayi but working in the district of Kayes, one of which is testing an agroforestry experiment with the support of the ASC; the other, a women's group established on the other side of Niari, very clearly explained the current impossibility for women to plant even one tree in their fields.

Their meeting was the subject of a focus group on a nganda right in the middle of the neighborhood, attracting other people into the discussions. The visits focused on the agroforestry sites of the abovementioned group, interviews on the sites of two tree nurseries supported by the NGO ID, and a visit to an experimental field on the other side of Niari, with the discovery of the daily difficulties endured by those cultivating there.

The various visits and interviews, conducted in-depth at the start of the mission (April) before the option of holding plenary meetings was adopted, were the subject of reports in Annex 2.

C-3 District of Loudima

This district, adjacent to Niari, has fertile land in the Niari valley and in the forest in its northern part. It is the site of a large fruit station of old mango trees, taken over by Eco Oil three years ago, as well as softwood plantations, with a Chinese company harvesting the sap. The SNR has a nursery there and the NGO ID also supported an initiative to create a tree nursery, with a pilot orchard.

The IRA (*Institut de recherche agricole* [Agricultural Research Institute]) and the IRF (*Institut de recherche forestière* [Forestry Research Institute]) are also established in this district.

C-3-1 the plenary meeting

Date: May 22, 2019 in Loudima, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

25 participants, including two women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ Activities: agriculture (cassava, maize, beans sowed beside Niari by creating dams, peanuts, pigeon peas, bananas, pineapples, fruit trees, but it was noted that citrus grows well in forest areas with not too much sun exposure), production of wood and charcoal, livestock production
- ✓ Problem with the mosaic virus, as there are old cuttings
- ✓ Bush fires destroy the cassava fields
- ✓ Despite their good will, there is a lack of supervision and monitoring of producers
- ✓ Inhabitants do not produce many vegetables, because there is no coldroom to store unpurchased products
- ✓ No warehouse for livestock feed and no veterinary pharmacy, which means that livestock breeders do not have what they need to feed their animals and as a result, let them roam free
- ✓ Agricultural tracks are very isolated and prevent effective marketing of the products; transport is arduous.

Mechanization

- ✓ Mechanization hinders respect of the agricultural cycle; 1 ha is plowed at 101 USD and the second at 50/67 USD
- ✓ A lack of plowing techniques by tractor operators can cause a loss of the arable layer that is good for agriculture.

Land

- ✓ No customers for plants produced at the nursery supported by ID, as land owners only lease land for subsistence crops, not to plant trees, for fear that the land will revert to the producers in future generations
- ✓ According to the law, when a family owns orchards, the State allocates this land to this family (*according to one participant, much fear expressed over loss of ownership because of trees*)
- ✓ Problem of land leased or sold to several producers at one time. They are forced to leave the site despite crops already planted
- ✓ Today, land owners fight amongst themselves because land was previously given freely, but now has to be paid for
- ✓ Land owners allow felling of Cambala, an endangered species and an important carbon source (inexhaustible)
- ✓ Most landowners still have no land title.

Fuelwood

- ✓ The Chinese log SNR trees without replanting
- ✓ Construction with baked bricks increases deforestation, even fruit trees are cut down
- ✓ Loudima and Sibiti supply Nkayi, a savanna town where the few remaining trees were cut down by SARIS to establish sugarcane plantations

- ✓ There is an increasing demand for fuelwood, but very few trees planted for felling purposes, which would reduce the pressure on natural forests
- ✓ Loss of SNR forest species because of charcoal makers who take advantage of unintentional fires to cut down burnt trees
- ✓ Land owners allow felling of Cambala, an endangered species and an important carbon source (inexhaustible)

Climate change

- ✓ This year's peanut production will not be good because there was no rain in April, and stronger winds than in past years.

Agroforestry

- ✓ The benefits of agroforestry were explained in more detail by the head of the Forest Research Center (1 liter of Citriodora sells at 505 USD)
- ✓ Loss of several fruit trees from the fruit station caused by fire, something which did not happen before; management failure, as well as the fact that these trees are old (100 years), no longer give good yields and need to be replaced.

Access to credit

- ✓ The CMEC offers subprime loans, with short-term repayment conditions, less than a crop cycle, and that was only possible with support from ACTED and WFP.

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Project in progress to set up a cassava processing factory to contribute to the school canteen supported by the WFP
- ✓ No community development management committee

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Loudima

Component 1

- ✓ The participants appreciated the FAO approach, which consists of involving them and obtaining their opinions on the different components
- ✓ Land owners approve of the support in the land registration process planned by the Project
- ✓ Loudima wishes to have an LDP.

Component 2

- ✓ The land owners present were positive after the discussion about planting trees, as the Project makes provision for a safety margin on their land ownership through contractualization, and they understand that this would open the door to development in the district. Moreover, climate change affects everybody
- ✓ All land owners must be sensitized to avoid a situation where dynamic groups are not funded due to a lack of registered land in their areas. In addition, the rest of the inhabitants should be mobilized on the importance of agroforestry
- ✓ Maintaining support only for formal groups would be a little regrettable, as there are hard-working individuals who prefer to work alone or in family groups in order to avoid problems of laziness of certain group members
- ✓ The criterion of a minimum area of 10 ha for a sub-project to be funded will be an obstacle and will not offer all categories (women, indigenous peoples and family groups) the opportunity to get involved in the Project

- ✓ The inhabitants in Loudima need to be made aware of the importance of plants grafted in nurseries and the importance of planting trees (+ replanting after felling)
- ✓ The required contribution of 10-20% to receive support is considered logical by the participants.

Component 3

- ✓ The use of improved cookstoves is known and appreciated, as well as the new charcoal making techniques planned under the Project, which will improve the knowledge of charcoal makers.

Component 4

- ✓ Assisting producers in developing business plans, improving microfinance, credit supply and facilitating producer-market agreements, proposals which meet community needs.

Others

- ✓ Insist on field demarcation with firebreaks to avoid wildfires
- ✓ The local people would like the tree felling by the Chinese to be accompanied by reforestation
- ✓ Adding cassava leaves to the school canteen is the wish of the local people, as it is a traditional food and another outlet for their crops (see WFP)
- ✓ Need for training on agricultural practices and management.

C-3-2 Site visits and interviews at Loudima

An interview was held with the ASC on April 18, as he was ill and could not be present later on. He provided information and advice to prepare for the plenary meeting and contact the groups.

Three visits took place on 05/21/2019, some on the agricultural production sites of groups taking part in the plenary meetings (2) and some in the recently created nursery. These sites are particularly far from the main roads and there are difficulties with access and transport. As seen firsthand, producers experience difficulties with certain land owners who give them fragmented land, which does not facilitate operations or use of mechanization. On these plains, trees are nearly nonexistent. Apart from cassava plantations, fields combining peanuts and maize are numerous, but production was hindered by late rains followed by heavy rains. On the roadside, there are charcoal operations in small forest areas and two earth kilns in the process of making charcoal were noted. This is the domain of the charcoal makers who came from Pool after the conflict, as the local people do not really understand these techniques and generally use wood. Outlets are easily found with the high demand of Dolisie and Nyaki.

With regard to the nursery, which is remote, the tenants find maintenance and marketing difficult. Recent communication campaigns by the cooperative to which they belong on the importance of grafted plants and the renewal of aging orchards, coupled with training in layering, recycling and grafting, led them to start preparations for the new season and to assess the cost of setting up a demonstration orchard, which could subsequently be used as a park for their grafts.

D Department of Niari:

A single district near the RN1 and Dolisie, Louvakou was retained for consultation. Two interviews also took place in Dolisie with the President of the department and his associates, which essentially highlighted the need to develop a strategic planning document for the department, to be developed in consultation in the districts. ID's experience in Pool and Bouenza in promoting local development is also requested in Niari. The interview with the DDA was cut short, because he had already met a FAO delegation and he simply enabled contact with the ASC from Louvakou.

D-1 District of Louvakou

This district near Dolisie (30 minutes away on a good track) has two facets, with savanna similar to areas in Bouenza after the Niari valley, and an extensive forest area on the Mayombe foothills and in the area adjacent to Loudima, which is operated by private companies. Unknown before the study is the presence of an indigenous minority, which led to interviews being expanded to cover an indigenous village close to the capital. The presence of a female district chief also led to wider participation by women in the plenary meeting.

D-1-1 the plenary meeting

Date: May 24, 2019 in Louvakou, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the (female) Head of the district

49 participants, including nine women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Photos in Annex 7

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ Activities: agriculture (cassava, peanuts, bananas, maize, yams, tomatoes, squash, ginger, pineapples, butter fruit, avocados, kola, palm trees and mangoes), production of wood and charcoal (on an individual basis), livestock production (enclosed pigs, cattle, poultry, sheep and goats)
- ✓ The inhabitants practice slash-and-burn agriculture in the forest area; stubble-burning is less developed
- ✓ Tree felling to establish banana plantations that produce well in the shade
- ✓ Income from agricultural products does not enable producers to invest, and they do not know how to develop a forecast budget or a balance sheet
- ✓ Lack of technical support and means to implement new techniques
- ✓ Peanut cultivation poses a problem as most producers do not manage to cultivate during the second cycle due to lack of understanding of suitable land and seasonal changes. Example: over 3 ha sowed with only three harvested bags, same finding for maize, which requires soil amendment due to its acidity
- ✓ No understanding of cropping practices suiting different types of soil
- ✓ No local market, producers transport everything to warehouses in Dolisie and in the end make no profit
- ✓ The climate is good, but leaching with this type of relief (mountain) means that other zones become impoverished
- ✓ In the district, women work more than men in terms of agriculture
- ✓ Deterioration of the road hinders sales.

Groups

- ✓ Encourage individuals to join forces for cultivation operations, each on his or her own site, motivating them to be recognized in the same way as family groups. One situation drew the attention of the authorities: a formal group based in Louvakou center had 13 members at the outset, but only two remained to work. However, the harvest was taken away and sold by lazy people who gave no thought to those who had spent their energy on it. So officially, today, the authorities only recognize these two members

- ✓ ASC: Monitoring of groups is easy when they are formal, and he encourages informal groups to register
- ✓ The youth representative emphasized that young people are not interested in agriculture, there are no young people in the groups, but somehow they have to be mobilized
- ✓ Size of group operations: 6 ha semi-mechanized, ½ to 1 ha non-mechanized.

Land

- ✓ No space to expand fields: “we are forced to plant everything on the same land, as land owners dictate the sites to be leased and they are generally poor quality, marshy and inaccessible by tractor in the rainy season. Plowing is therefore more manual, and market gardeners do not produce in the rainy season. They use pesticides and fertilizers because of the poor land made available to them
- ✓ Rental for 1 ha is 84 USD per cycle.
- ✓ The Land Affairs Representative warned land owners about the importance of land titles and the consequences. For producers using unregistered land, there is an article in the law on the free use of land for subsistence plantations; however, for commercial agriculture, there must be an agreement with the land owner.
- ✓ The district of Louvakou has a land owners’ association, which is not the case in other districts.

Fuelwood

- ✓ There is much more forest destruction by loggers than by the local people who make charcoal from shrubs and not from large trees or fruit trees.

Mechanization

- ✓ Mechanization is difficult in hilly land, which justifies the lack of large plantations
- ✓ Plowing cost: 1 ha at 84 USD + 20 USD for fuel, the same for spraying; all these realities discourage producers
- ✓ The agricultural machinery center has old machines, as evidenced by the fact that this year, a producer ordered a tractor in October 2018 and it arrived at the end of March 2019; how is it possible to cultivate and respect the cycles? A second cycle, which was not their custom, is now attempted. Producers may wish to farm 2 ha, but because of a lack of machines, they limit themselves to 1 ha
- ✓ CEMA representative: “the local people lack planning, they demand everything at once and clear the land to be plowed, which means that there are tire punctures and delays.

Climate change

- ✓ The rains are not understood and tractor operators do not plow at the right time.

Agroforestry

- ✓ The representative of Agri-sud (a local private company) is delighted by this Project as, although they have rice plantations, trees could be used in their case for windbreaks and as a source of firewood. The company has been in existence for four years and in production for two years
 - ✓ Agroforestry is practiced by land owners and producers who have bought the land. It is strictly forbidden to non-land owners as the law (*not written*) gives the land right to those with orchards
- Explanation of the advantages of agroforestry, particularly acacia and citriodora, by the SNR Representative.

Access to credit



- ✓ The CMEC has already given loans to some producers with the following condition: having an account that has been in operation for a minimum of three months containing 5% of the requested amount.
Unfortunately it will be closed as PADEF who was supporting it is no longer there.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Louvakou

Component 1

- ✓ Land owners are suitable candidates for starting the land registration process but they need support as the process is very costly
- ✓ The Head of the district: Need for support to obtain a development plan (LDP).

Component 2

- ✓ Land owners' proposal: to lease the land with secure contracts (emphyteutic leases), a win-win situation with benefit sharing
- ✓ In the case of the Bantu, a 20% contribution is too high. Perhaps 10% would give everyone the opportunity to contribute towards being supported at the given time
- ✓ Please note: The indigenous peoples are not able to come up with the proposed contribution of 20% to 10%: as well as being disadvantaged, they are not land owners in the villages where they are settled
- ✓ The 10 ha required for a start is a little much, in light of the results of former projects. It would be better to start with less and to understand everything, techniques and management
- ✓ The Project must conduct a study of the soil in Louvakou to find out what crops should be supported
- ✓ Need for limestone to amend the soil and for improved cuttings to combat the mosaic virus
- ✓ Cooperatives started up around 1980, but the Congolese have still not appropriated this method of work
- ✓ Encourage individuals to join forces for cultivation operations, each on his or her own site, motivating them to be recognized in the same way as family groups.

Component 3 and Component 4

- ✓ The participants approved the proposals brought up in these two components
- ✓ Charcoal makers and forestry companies must reforest after felling trees
- ✓ The SNR Representative and the ASC were suggested to provide technical support to the population provided it is voluntary
- ✓ The ASC should identify all large producers on an individual basis and support them in the formalization process.

D-1-2 Site visits and interviews at Louvakou

Firstly, it should be emphasized that the FAO delegation took part in site visits the day before the plenary meeting, and that the gender consultant led a focus group with about 10 women in a room in the district council office.

A prior interview was held with the (female) Head of the district and the ASC to provide an initial description of the district and to verify the effective participation of local stakeholders in the plenary meeting.

Two field visits, proposed by the ASC, were held:

* The first visit, in Louvakou itself, was introduced by the head of a family group created in 2015 with 10 people, three women and seven men, full of ideas, hard-working, with 5 ha of banana trees and mixed subsistence crops, a little fish farming, rice, papaya trees, pig farming; on their housing plot, they have planted fruit trees and grow ginger underneath it.

They have one full-time employee and have set up a work schedule with their members, but they do not have an operating account and do not know anything about it. They also have a fish farming site, but have obviously not mastered fish farming techniques.

* The second visit was a few kilometers away on the heights behind Louvakou where the farm is run by a group of eight people, including two women. The failure of recent crops which did not take rain delays into account led them to start growing watermelons, sold at 0.42 USD/kg in PNR. They used straw to protect their watermelons, with good yields.

We found out the costs from our respondent but the expenditure/income statement was not done; transport costs are high, 168 USD for the 4x4 to PNR; the cost of the tractor is 168 USD for plowing and 135 USD for spraying; clearing costs 168 USD/ha.

They also planted a few fruit trees, but need to be trained.

* The third visit will be improvised after the plenary meeting and will be held in the indigenous village located 10 km from Louvakou, with access by a rutted track and then on foot; indigenous issues are the subject of a specific framework.

E Department of Kouilou

Three districts were included in the consultations and were subject of plenary meetings. These were held by two consultants from our partner, CERPAC, using the same approach. This NGO developed a specific report, attached in Annex 1 to this report. In addition to the consultants from CERPAC, two experts from Forest Economy also took part in all the plenary meetings: Mr. Julien Guy Kazotti, SNR Expert and Mr. A. Patrick Essamba-Lola, CRDPI Expert.

E-1 District of Mvouti

This district, situated in the heart of Mayombe, is serviced by the Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire Railway; this situation led to concentration of most of the population along this route. Situated midway between Pointe-Noire and Dolisie, this district's activities are supported by artisanal logging, which supplies these towns with fuelwood.

The district of Mvouti also hosts the Dimonika biosphere reserve, which covers an area of 136 km² in the Mayombe forest, which was recognized by UNESCO in 1988. Dimonika is also known for its small-scale gold mining activities.

E-1-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 28, 2019 in Mvouti, the district capital
Meeting chaired by the Head of the district
32 participants, including seven women
List of attendees in Annex 3

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ The most well-known activities in the district are agriculture, hunting, livestock production, gathering, logging, small-scale gold mining and crafts
- ✓ Slash-and-burn agriculture is practiced. In particular, bananas and pineapples are grown, followed by yams, taro, cassava, butter fruit, avocados and citrus. The population is aware that human activity is contributing to the destruction of ecosystems and the greenhouse effect. They know that they are destroying the forests.
- ✓ Farmers do not have a culture of conserving agricultural areas. Furthermore, they prefer primary forests where slash-and-burn agriculture starts
- ✓ The cassava cuttings provided by CRAL (*Center de Recherche Agronomique de Loudima* [Loudima Agronomic Research Center]) to Koulila village to combat the mosaic virus were deposited in Dimonika with no instructions or information.

Groups

- ✓ The district includes 66 cooperatives (list provided to the Departmental Council) spread out in different villages. However, Mvouti does not want this because it does not work, too many tensions because of laziness. This structure is a constraint because the population of Mvouti does not want pooling of agricultural activities. The cooperatives have all been formalized, but very few are operational for the reasons mentioned above. There are homogeneous and mixed groups.

Land

In the opinion of land owners:

- ✓ The new land law gives too much freedom to non-natives. Non-native people take advantage of the length of time they have been in the district to illegally occupy land. Some sell it.

In the opinion of the farmers:

- ✓ The land system is a limiting factor to reforestation.

Fuelwood

- ✓ Increasingly numerous illegal immigrants (unknown people living in the forest) unsustainably cut down trees, even in primary forests, that they do not use and generally abandon. In this way, the primary forest in Nkomi has disappeared
- ✓ The forest in Limba, planted by the SNR, has similarly been devastated
- ✓ Charcoal making is uncontrolled, charcoal makers cut any trees, even noble species
- ✓ From their point of view, charcoal provides resources to fund other activities
- ✓ Charcoal making from wood is a common activity, it brings in capital.

Climate change

- ✓ Fields are becoming infertile
- ✓ Termites are attacking some fruit trees

- ✓ Drying out of banana trees and rotting of cassava has become a scourge in the district of Mvouti.

Access to credit

- ✓ Access to microfinance is nonexistent in Mvouti
- ✓ Women fund their activities by selling or processing their crops, such as cassava.

Others

- ✓ NGOs are discredited, they make promises that they do not keep. Several NGOs came to Mvouti without doing anything
- ✓ Elephants invade the Makaba area, starve the local people and cause a human/animal crisis
- ✓ Small-scale gold miner show no respect for fields. Gold-mining trumps crops.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Mvouti

Component 1 Legislation

- ✓ The village chiefs present agreed to make the local people aware of the important matter of climate change. They wish to engage with the public authorities on non-compliance with forest conservation laws. The delegates present assumed the task of disseminating the message about protection of the primary forest in the villages, and ensuring the government formally identifies those contributing to global warming, manufacturers, as well as populations
- ✓ For villages isolated in the reserve, the State must find a solution for their situation of isolation and abandonment (no road to transport their products, no teachers in the school, no nurses in the abandoned healthcare center).

Component 2 Training

- ✓ Communities wish to acquire new agricultural work methods to become stakeholders in the fight against climate change.
- ✓ Farmers need new cultivation technologies to increase their production without destroying anything.

Component 3 Reforestation

- ✓ Possibility of deforestation/reforestation agreements between landowners-farmers/landowners-manufacturers
- ✓ The development of nurseries in the districts with the SNR and arboriculture with the CRDI should be encouraged.

Component 4 Funding of projects on fuelwood alternatives

- ✓ Funding of alternative activities to manufacture charcoal may save the primary forests still in existence
- ✓ Fish farming is possible as an alternative activity for young people who unsustainably cut down trees.

E-2 District of Hinda

Hinda, the district capital, is located 35 km from Pointe-Noire in the Department of Kouilou. It is located on the Congo-Ocean railway line and on the RN1. It is the site of an ENI-CONGO (oil company) onshore operational area and receives support for its community development (schools, water, health, agriculture, electricity...). A phosphate mining project was ratified in 2018 (renewal/extension). The site of important industrial activities, it is still an agricultural district that supplies Pointe-Noire.

E-2-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 24, 2019 in Hinda, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

40 participants, including six women

List of attendees in Annex 3

Practices and difficulties expressed

Agricultural activities

- ✓ The district of Hinda is suitable for market gardening, and taro, cassava and sweet potatoes are also grown. Arboriculture, pig and poultry farming are highly developed
- ✓ The women complain about the distance between the fields and the village
- ✓ All farmers practice slash-and-burn agriculture
- ✓ The women complain about a drop in yields. They record rotting of the cassava tubers.

The lands chiefs attribute this phenomenon to pollution by the oil, mining and forestry industries in the district, particularly the presence of the gas flare at the Bondi oil site, the former potash factory and the fields of eucalyptus. According to them, these are the reasons for warming of the area.

Groups

- ✓ Cooperative cultivation is accepted. A large women's association, headed by the Mayor, is present in all the villages. Two of them were present, from Hina and Kissoko
- ✓ The Hinda association has 80 members, they grow pineapples, maize and cassava
- ✓ The Kissoko association does market gardening over 5 ha and subsistence crops over 42 ha.

Land

- ✓ For land owners, the legal vacuum left by the state after the National Conference, which was supposed to provide legal instruments to accompany retrocession of land to land owners, is behind the disorder caused by land owner families today. Land allotments respect no rules
- ✓ Agricultural areas should have been determined at that time
- ✓ For farmers, access to land is still very difficult
- ✓ No project considers securing the land
- ✓ The land system encourages deforestation because producers can only practice market gardening and not arboriculture.

Fuelwood

Deforestation takes place without an order to reforest. Pointe-Noire's demand for fuelwood is significant.

Climate change

- ✓ The CRDPI case study highlights understanding by the target villages of the effects of climate change

- ✓ For farmers, water has become poor in quality, and with the presence of insects in the crops, a drop in production has been recorded.
- ✓ “The agricultural rain” no longer falls, the rain that waters gently and penetrates the earth.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Hinda

Component 1 Legislation

- ✓ A commitment by everyone to combat climate change by replanting after deforestation is necessary. It is up to heads of neighborhoods, villages and groups to pass on the message
- ✓ Legislation should cover issues of land ownership and abandonment of agricultural land, without which arboriculture will be difficult
- ✓ Access to land must be facilitated for small-scale producers.

Component 2 Training

- ✓ The need to educate communities on agroforestry opportunities and techniques to mitigate climate change was accepted
- ✓ To achieve this, the following training needs to be planned:
 - * Training on the need for and usefulness of cooperatives
 - * Training in education and financial management
 - * Training on characterization of the different varieties of cassava and their cultivation
 - * Training on mixed crops

Component 3 Reforestation

- ✓ Make provision to start tree nurseries to promote arboriculture
- ✓ Regarding the production of improved cookstoves, the youth would like to learn how to make improved cookstoves as a source of employment

Component 4 Funding and gender

- ✓ Ensure women benefit from the mechanisms and effects of the Project
- ✓ Establish community funds to finance women’s activities
- ✓ Assist farmers in securing land though the ability to acquire it, by better access to credit.

E-3 District of Madingo Kayes

The district of Madingo Kayes, situated in the northwest of the department of Kouilou, is the least populated. It has significant forest cover of approximately 83%, sought after in the south for the fuelwood and timber needs for Pointe-Noire. In its northern part, it hosts a part of the Conkouati national park (shared with the district of Nzambii). It has real tourist potential, with the proximity of the city of Pointe-Noire. Continental artisanal fishing is one of its unique characteristics within the country. This district also has potash mines and a mining operations renewal was signed in 2018.

E-3-1 The plenary meeting

Date: May 22, 2019 in Madingo Kayes, the district capital

Meeting chaired by the Head of the district

40 participants, including 14 women

List of attendees in Annex 3



Practices and difficulties expressed

Discussion on project opportunities

- ✓ The message is considered interesting, but it is “a fool’s bargain” for some who no longer believe in the establishment of the “Green Climate Fund”
- ✓ Africa is not the biggest polluter: why would it be at the center of climate change? And why does it need to mobilize itself?
- ✓ Deforestation caused by forestry companies across Madingo-Kayes is a lot more significant than that caused by small-scale agriculture.

Agricultural activities

- ✓ For women, rotting of cassava causes a massive loss of income
- ✓ Destruction of crops by elephants, which are protected: Nobody is planting anymore and the large village that used to be Yanga is empty of its population. Elephants are coming close to Madingo-Kayes. What are the alternatives?
- ✓ Development of insects that destroy crops
- ✓ Bush fires that make the forests vanish.

Main lessons and recommendations from the plenary meeting in the district of Madingo-Kayes

- ✓ The government must rethink its policy of supporting producers, to ensure that it is sustainable, better organized and beneficial to those who work hard
- ✓ Women want training on cassava varieties and their cultivation, but this training should be scheduled during periods where they can come, and they therefore need to be consulted
- ✓ Training requested on soil-free agriculture
- ✓ In order to promote arboriculture, a fruit station project is under consideration
- ✓ Training in agroforestry is necessary
- ✓ The development of apiculture in the area is possible
- ✓ Need for the SNR to sell its ideas and disseminate good practices among farmers.

3 Specific recaps: women and indigenous populations

Although some of the facts gathered about these two discriminated groups were partly expressed in the meetings and visits, it was decided to devote a specific paragraph to them in this report, as they are greatly overlooked or even forgotten in the development and project implementation process, despite repeated shows of their integration.

Towards what participation by women in the Project? Observations and possibilities

The first observation is the low level of participation by women in the plenary meetings, 15% of participants (62/415 people); some women were invited, representatives of groups, an indication we thought about it, but not representative of the prominent role of their labor, which provides their families' livelihoods, their children's education and everyone's health, the basis of development of any country.

The "gender" consultant organized meetings with women's groups, on the fringes of the plenary meetings, in Loudima, Kayes, Louvakou, Hinda and Mvouti.

On our part, we deemed it useful to supplement this approach wherever possible by asking the women present in the plenary sessions to take part in a brief conversation "between women". This process took place in four districts. Here are the results:

Ignié:

The two presidents of the two registered groups of 10 women ("je m'aime" (I love myself) and "terre et vie" (land and life) cultivate two collective fields of 5 ha; real professionals, they believe that they could do more if there was no problem with access to land and mechanization. They produce cassava, maize and soy. The members spend two days per week in the collective field and the rest in their own fields. They know the costs and keep a proper account of everybody's contributions. For example, a bag of cassava sold for 42 USD will cost between 3 and 8 USD for transport per bag; with stump removal, tractor operations (101 USD for plowing and 67 USD for spraying) and payment to the land owner (59 to 67 USD/ha), they can only earn 252 USD/ha when they are forced to sell the cassava on foot due to lack of ability to get to the market. The tractor is paid for in advance, but it can only come the following season. And with climate change, the second cycle seems compromised; they fully endorse progression towards arboriculture, which could be a source of income when they get older.

Mpouya:

* "All women are in charge of the children, all household expenses, all the responsibilities; the slightest illness in a child will ruin all their efforts to improve their daily life; we suffer greatly"

* The fields are far from their houses; they cultivate for two cycles and then wait five years; how can the fallow periods be shortened to limit this time?

The importance of starting orchards is evident, it could create a more regular income; however, they must be taught how to create a nursery

* Compiling an application requires time, learning, money for travel, and there is no money. Real attention should be paid to this by the Project: financial support and suitable timetables.

Ngabé

To make sure that women are informed about a meeting, the village chiefs, the ASC or the crier can be used to pass on information.

However, apart from Sunday afternoons they cannot make it: there are too many demands on them, they are carrying everything; when information arrives they first think that it is politics and then something vulgar.

And then, its poverty, they don't have the means to move about, to cover the cost of a meal. Often illiterate, they do not understand what is happening; explanations must be simple, support must be given to ensure the Project, climate change and their interests are understood and to ensure monitoring, and particularly support.

Madingou

In general, women are not part of associations. The previous trials did not work, so the women leave the men to go and do not get involved. Moreover, putting oneself forward, being capable, means risking hatred (jealousy) in the family and the village; "as soon as we go forward we are stopped, it is our fate to be forced back".

"Everything is lacking, no equipment to process our products (cassava, maize), we do not know the market, no links with buyers".

"Moreover, going to meetings, creating an application, traveling, that costs money that we don't have".

"If you want women to take part, provision must be made for financial support, choose times when they can come, have meetings between women."

"There must be provision for women supervisors in the Project, there must be training and field monitoring between women; being behind a woman leader means you will be monitored".

In the field, meetings were organized with women's groups (or mixed groups with female leaders):

In Madingou

Small women's group launching an agroforestry experiment: operation of the nursery in Madingou station motivated them to start up on land that belongs to the family of one of them, with technical support from ID. They first started with sweet potatoes, with its coverage that protects young plants; in October, they planned peanuts, maize and cassava, and also talked about pigeon peas. They know little about climate change issues and do not believe that there is deforestation.

In Nkayi

* Zita, a female nursery gardener, believes that the future lies in tree nurseries and in planting trees. She benefited from training by ID and requested technical and financial support. She then received training in biopesticides and finally in management of her small operation.

* The AFDB, a group that combats violence against women with HIV-AIDS, is attempting to access land for reintegration activities through economics.

* The women's subsistence crop group, supported by the ASC, says they have never been able to plant a tree, no owner would allow it, but they would like to ensure a sustainable income for their future.

In Mpouya,

* The mixed group cultivating 6 ha in savanna areas is also hindered by land management and their technical knowledge, and would like to diversify their activities; everything is a possibility, with the obstacle of distance and the track.

In Nganga Lingolo (Goma TséTsé),

The market gardening group would like to start up in agroforestry, while continuing market gardening activities, but which ones? The president would like to be well-trained, she would benefit from it, and on the subsistence crop site of the Invouba group (district of Ngabé).

Towards what participation by indigenous populations in the Project? Observations and possibilities

Three districts are affected:

Loudima, with an indigenous village 80 km from the RN1 (Ndollo), complicated by rainy season access and well known by the Head of the district; it was not possible to organize travel in the allocated time, or go to the site, or enable participation by the chief of the indigenous village in the meeting. This village was already supported three or four years previously in developing subsistence activities, but in the absence of a concept of ownership, the whole village made use of it and the experiment stopped there.

Louvakou: This district, a part of which is forest, includes several mixed Bantu/indigenous villages in separate neighborhoods. On the fringes of the plenary meeting, a visit to a village near the forest was organized with the support of a Bantu who defends their cause (present at the plenary session) and the SG of the district council office. On arrival, after the Bantu neighborhood, access was by foot; the men were in the forest, and it was therefore the women who came to welcome the visitors and answer questions:

How does the community live?

Everybody works in the Bantu fields, paid for piece work at around 1.7 USD/day. They do not cultivate their own fields; the women sell arrowroot; the community feeds itself with products from hunting and gathering, and cassava bought from the Bantu.

Why are they not interested in planting?

Ten years ago, they received tillage equipment, but nobody explained to them how to plant and cultivate and it was all resold.

Today, what is lacking to practice agriculture?

Tools are needed, as well as start-up money, technical support and monitoring to get the job done

A young indigenous person who cannot go into the forest (disabled) explained that he tries to cultivate a little, and that he borrows tools from a Bantu: that he cannot have access all the time as the Bantu also needs them.

However, land is available, and areas to farm are made available with no rental.

Who has already planted a tree?

This question made everyone laugh: indigenous people have no land therefore how could they plant a tree?

Mpoh (district of Ngo) - indigenous neighborhood: Here, the indigenous people also have their fields, assisted by the Lisungui project. An inhabitant from the Bantu village, Mesmin, an ex-eco-guard and an environmental conservation activist, helps them save to bring in the tractor: with their field, they have independence; they already have what they need for ½ ha per household; but the tractor takes a long time to come.

Their neighborhood is surrounded by butter fruit trees, planted by them, and which bring in an income every season.

They are not land owners, even if they are the first occupiers of this land, but access is free of charge if they cultivate less than 10 ha for subsistence purposes; however, they cannot plant trees on this land as the owner would never accept it, “unlike requests from Bantu ‘relatives’”.

Furthermore, if they planted trees, how would they then feed themselves?

In addition, what guarantee would they have if they planted trees? They are considered as having no rights and therefore, once the work is done, the owner could take back his land and they could say nothing.

A solution for them would be to plant fuelwood trees and fruit trees in the strip of savanna bordering the reserve.

4 Summary and recommendations

4-1 Component 1:

1-1 and 1-2: Master plans and management plans

Very few **development master plans** exist: one at the Ignié CU, and the other in Kinkala. In Bouenza, a departmental plan was outlined but not yet completed and without engaging the population, but of interest to the first chief.

In other departments, the experiences of LDPs led by inhabitants and local authorities with ID was appealing; why not work in this manner?

(see Annex 6: summary of two LDPs, attached as an example)

Fuelwood supply master plans must be part of larger units of **collaborative** spatial development plans; and these plans themselves should be part of a larger vision that the population has for its territory, in terms of improving conditions and life: if the project is to succeed, the population must appropriate the issues affecting it, and define its responses because behind a climate change mitigation project is the need for people trained in techniques, management, negotiation, product promotion, those who know how to read and write. Similarly, health concerns should be resolved locally, and structuring associated service activities cannot be ignored, such as repairs to mechanical engines, tool repair, access to seeds, road maintenance. Deficiencies in terms of schooling for children and lack of access to healthcare were highlighted on several occasions, but this is not transcribed as it is “not part of the subject”. Moreover, the rural exodus, the defection of young people and their lack of prospects, are subjects that are insufficiently taken into account in development projects.

Hence the emergence of the idea to establish local development plans, developed collaboratively and with discussions in subgroups, to ensure participation of and expression by women, young people and indigenous populations. This will give rise to development projects, taking into account national issues related to the environment and climate change, land-use plans, crops, fuelwood production, forest preservation and regeneration.

On what scale?



The village is not the most relevant scale, because inhabitants travel to cultivate in other villages, where land is available for rent, and also because land owners themselves are not restricted to one village, and finally because the allocated space, fields as well as forests, may be located in several villages. We recommend a district level analysis, and for reasons of efficiency, zoning by groups of villages, for example by track or road, or because several villages historically cooperated with each other.

The CMDC (Community Development Management Committees - 2013 decree) are underdeveloped or even non-existent, except in some places where the voluntarism of the ALs is expressed, as in Goma TséTsé; but in reality, without means, they cannot operate. If some become operational, contact persons would obviously be sought; but in terms of climate change mitigation, wider-scale collaboration should be encouraged.

Reactions to the idea of discussing and working on LDPs and development plans were favorable. It was complicated to explain, but the reactions were positive because there are already reference experiences (Pool and Bouenza), which could help with dialogue, clarify uses and help in conflict resolution, for example with cattle (Ignié, Ngabé) or in promoting areas for real protection. Specific attention is drawn to local compliance (today, the trend is in favor of anarchy) and an unpopular administration, which is considered mercenary (you can buy the possibility of making a profit, even if everything is destroyed) and this is specifically condemned in terms of forestry companies, and the impunity with which they illegally cut down trees. This administration is expected to ensure compliance with rules of common good.

ID and its partners like CERPAC already have experience with cooperation and development of strategic planning documents (LDP) and, when relevant, could offer their experience and expertise in implementation of these sub-components.

Finally, within the effective context of decentralization, local agricultural development should be added into departmental and municipal budgets in order to bridge the gap in incorporating priority actions for the most vulnerable populations.

The land problem

This was at the heart of nearly all discussions (except in Mpouya and Ngabé, where customary traditions endure, which allow free access to land for subsistence crops).

Land owners are clearly in the hot seat to block development, block producers' expansion plans, hinder large operations, block tree planting, be responsible for some deforestation by leasing forest land to charcoal makers. They are suspected of being "shady", those who pretend to be owners and others who take land already under cultivation.

Women and young people are even worse off, with land allocations jeopardized at each cycle.

Recognition of land tenure rights, and the prospect of securing contracts through the authorities, met with everybody's approval - producers and land owners; during the discussions, a number of

landowners themselves offered solutions (which was one of our goals) to promote tree planting projects, talking of also being winners (put forward on several occasions: rental at 10% of the harvest, which is better than a yearly fixed price and partly takes responsibility for climatic variations); the Congolese Land Law makes provision for emphyteutic leases, and these should be used for agroforestry.

Raise awareness? Convince? Garner support

Real attention should be paid to prior education of land owners, and their collective appropriation of BEING CAPABLE of acting to conserve the resources in their territory, guaranteeing everybody's future. Everybody became conciliatory during the discussions, and the land owners themselves recalled the absolute need to raise families awareness and encourage dialogue, not only with representatives. Acceptance of trees being planted by non-land owners and having reliable, solid and respected contracts will be the basis for the Project's success: work must be done to build confidence and cooperation.

Traditional arrangements are disappearing in all districts where rentals flourish; it is symptomatic to note that it is in remote or difficult-to-access districts that this tradition remains alive.

The importance of registering land, a condition for secure operations, is essential; however, where it exists, free access for subsistence purposes should be encouraged and used as an example, as being able to feed oneself is one of the foundations of development (that being said, this does not authorize long-term planting...)

Regarding State land

State land was also mentioned on many occasions, in the form of a question, "what to do with it?", specifically:

- 50 m strips along the RN1 could be reforested; this is the case in Bouenza, where there is a shortage of fuelwood everywhere. Groups of young people, as well as charcoal makers or brick makers, could become stakeholders, within an approach of learning techniques relating to planting/agroforestry, maintenance, operation, improved charcoal making, sales, management: in short, a project to be implemented with close support, which will teach a real profession.
- strips of savanna conserved along the natural reserve (case of Ignié, Ngabé, Ngo), which could be under the effective control of the MEF, to be used by indigenous peoples, women and young people for agroforestry, orchards and fuelwood, using the same approach of "project to be implemented with close support, which will teach a real profession", and contractualized agreements to no longer cut down trees in the forest.

4-2 Component 2:

Slash-and-burn agriculture

This is still commonly practiced, including in areas where the extent of the savanna could allow it to be eradicated. The belief that yields are higher in forest areas is strongly entrenched. The work incurred

by the need to create firebreaks in savanna areas, although this is not necessary in forests, is frequently put forward as a reason for remaining in the forest; the production of bananas is also clearly considered as only being possible in forest areas.

Various actions should be considered: firstly, proper sensitization about the reduction of unintentional bush fires, where most farmers feel helpless to act, coupled with real penalties for those who are caught, as impunity has been widely condemned. In addition, tests should be encouraged and comparative crop trials in savanna and forest areas should be promoted; several testimonials have confirmed the cultivation capacities of savanna areas. Soil analyses have also been requested to ensure crops are suited to the soil, or even to amend some soils to promote cultivation.

Finally, an ASC rightly expressed the idea that, if there was effective mechanization at affordable costs in savanna areas, people would no longer go into the forest.

The need to create firebreaks

When there is mechanization, some producers invest in it, because they are aware of the losses incurred if their plantations burn. However, it has been seen that support “given” to groups in the Ngo sector did not lead to appropriation and protection. To a certain extent, people don’t care once they have benefited for two years from subsistence crops, with almost free investment. In this case, there needs for better understanding of the effort required during these two years and then for another two to three years, in order to subsequently ensure a real, sustainable income, while continuing the same efforts of creating firebreaks.

A long-term vision is not common in people living from hand to mouth, and subcomponent 2.3 is essential for directing and ensuring close monitoring throughout the Project; training on its own is not very useful - it is monitoring of implementation and the prospect of moving towards operational autonomy of the supported Project that will determine whether or not the Project is successful. Operators must have a good long-term understanding of what they are investing in, they must understand that two to three years are almost without income, and that they must save on food crop production for the first two years to finance firebreaks in the years to come.

Understanding agroforestry practices

Apart from Bouenza-Niari, and one example in Ngabé where some individuals and groups have started the process and, even with the support of the ASC or projects, nothing has been done. However, with people who have confirmed their motivation and commitment, a real training-action strategy should be developed, with the primary objective of determining and working with motivated people, not the “groups of jokers” that many people mentioned, referring to numerous past failures.

Resorting to established groups, a recurrent dogmatism

Here, the issue is the recurrent dogmatism of only working with established and recognized groups: why rule out at least 90% of women and young producers, who are very rarely formally registered, and all individual producers highly invested in and “burnt” by groups who profit from the work of a few? The failures in Ngo are particularly telling on this subject, and recognized by the groups themselves on

site: the few hard-working people, tired of working for all the lazy ones, stopped and all the investments were lost in bush fires.

The GCF Project plans to encourage groups of individual farmers. From its side, ID had effectively avoided the risk of “opportunistic” groups by encouraging groups of individual farmers with common interests in training and purchase of inputs and tools (discounts on group purchases and transport), in organization of marketing (grouping of yields and chartering a vehicle, searching for reliable wholesalers) and functions (example of the pig sector: “breeders” and “fatteners”).

This pathway is to be confirmed, as is acceptance of informal groups, women’s groups or groups of young people under the age of 35 years, for example. In many districts, women are recognized for organizing themselves as a family or with neighbors to develop several fields, in each site in turn. Although agroforestry is prohibited to them at this time, it could be a way of increasing their income security in the future: for example, each having their own ½ ha within a common area?

We therefore recommend opening the Project to informal groups and groups of individuals capable of establishing common interest groups (see ID experience). The important thing is to bring together people who are motivated by learning and agroforestry, and not to use groups established for the occasion, who work only to a certain extent, or simply to include people able to develop applications and obtain grants, which will not meet (or will not only meet) the Project’s objectives.

To avoid these opportunistic groups as much as possible, we also recommend a revision of the per diem practice, which often hampers the project’s objectives by encouraging the participation of chiefs to the detriment of the implementers: in training, it would be useful to reimburse all travel costs - accommodation, meals, based on real costs, with a ceiling corresponding to negotiated local prices and nothing else.

Size of eligible operations

This issue gave rise to numerous discussions everywhere:

“A minimum of 10 ha rules out the vast majority of producers” is a phrase to be remembered.

Except for at Ignié, this opinion came out of all discussions.

- Also because mechanization is random (Ngo, Ngabé savanna, Ignié, Bouenza, Kouilou) or even absent or undesirable (erosion on slopes in fragile areas)
- When mechanization is possible and accessible, operations are in groups greater than 5 ha
- In the case of manual work, groups start at 2 ha and individuals may not exceed ½ ha.

We recommend a review of these tools so that they are better suited to the different contexts:

- In unmechanized sites, authorize support from 2 ha upwards for one holding, individual or not, and particularly for informal women’s groups or groups of three or four motivated young people, who share an area under contract with a land owner.
- Authorize support from 5 ha upwards in places where mechanization is possible (see following § “contribution”)

- Fund plantations that contribute towards the fight against erosion, with no contribution and with an approach of respecting strict operating rules, with reforestation, MEF control and imprisonment in case of non-compliance.

Expected contribution

Generally, the idea of a contribution is understood and accepted, even desired as a guarantee of attracting the most motivated and serious.

However:

- The cost of the contribution may be prohibitive; a rapid calculation for the Bouenza ID project establishes the start up cost for a pilot orchard together with subsistence crops to be around 1262 USD/ha; at 10 ha, a contribution of 1262 USD is required; women are unable to raise this as they devote everything they receive in cash to bringing up their children (schooling, health), too often without help from the fathers. The youth have nothing in front of them. The groups also confirm the same difficulty, as no areas covered by the Project are rich.
- Operational management, knowledge and abilities are non-existent: when you do not know how to manage a few hectares properly, how could you manage 10 to 50 ha? Would it not be better to have 10 high-performing agroforestry experiments on smaller areas that are well controlled and well managed than one or two that are ruined by lassitude, incompetence and lack of motivation once the money is paid?
- It would also be good to make provision for the possibility of paying part in advance and part when the first income is generated.

Training and support

A request for technical training and support was also a recurring theme throughout the discussions: not only training, but particularly support in implementation, as well as monitoring. The techniques are unknown and producers need explanations, as well as support in their implementation. What is good about the Project is that several experiments have already been launched that can be followed, used to communicate and visited to encourage others!

In Bouenza, nursery gardeners have already been trained by ID as part of an entrepreneurial dynamic. They can be the examples, the suppliers of plants and resources (including knowledge transmission) for other producers and entrepreneurs.

Support to management: There have been very few stories of producers who are familiar with their balance sheet: level of expenditure, level of production, income, final profit. This information is almost never known or monitored and it is urgent that such monitoring becomes common practice.

In this type of project, where the benefit is only really seen after several years, it is important to ensure visibility of the producers' activities for several years, to show what it is possible to achieve, not only over one or two years, but five to 10 years at the least. To cite an example, if this exercise had been carried out in Ngo, the groups might have had this long-term vision, with future profits, and they would have been motivated to create firebreaks.

4-3 Component 3

Charcoal makers

Individuals clearly predominate, with family and friends: it is pointless to establish a prerequisite for groups, but rather to encourage meetings together, to discuss better established projects, a vision for possible future improvements and support if agreement is reached. We had the opportunity for discussion with brick makers, who admitted that if they cut down fruit trees, it would cost them. Offering alternatives and developing the fuelwood sector with them may be valuable, a real profession in service of the population.

In terms of plantations of fast-growing forest plants, planters need to understand how to operate, what sector to focus on, how to establish contracts with charcoal makers or brick makers. To our great surprise, plantations of this type created in previous years, supported by PRONAR or WCS, are not developed at this time - nobody dares touch them or knows what to do; simply finding a chainsaw seems to be an insurmountable obstacle, as does creating piles for sale, as well as sales themselves. Here also, planters need to be supported in creating a joint vision, they need support in management, demonstration of the possible sectors, promotion of possible linkages.

Improved cookstove sector

We observed more extensive knowledge than expected of the models manufactured and distributed by ID. This was the opportunity for participants in plenary meetings in Bouenza, Pool and Louvakou to emphasize the extent to which towns demanded felling of trees and production of charcoal, in Dolisie and Nkayi and not only in Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville, and that this solution of promoting improved cookstoves should be implemented: the obstacle mentioned on several occasions was not knowing a nearby source of the stoves or how to buy them. From the Ngo side, there was regret that support to this experiment was discontinued too quickly.

Furthermore, the promotion of improved cookstoves as savers of wood and charcoal, like the need to manufacture charcoal and log timber from planted forests, could be disseminated more broadly by the government and department and district chiefs, both in terms of legislation and implementation. What is planned at this level?

The feasibility study (see product 1) conducted by three experts from ID was informed of these discussions, that will be incorporated in its study report.

4-4 Component 4:

See 4-1 Development of applications

This is a subject for both concern and doubt: concern because the quality level for applications is high, and the techniques are not mastered so how will it be possible? Then because business plans and other forecast management concepts are unknown to them.

Doubt was explicitly expressed in terms of impartiality of analyses, with the PDAC being a recent painful example with its unacceptable lack of transparency, dialogue, and monitoring.

We recommend prior wide-scale and decentralized training for volunteers to present:

* What is the project and its challenges? What are agroforestry, forestry and screening criteria? What sites are already in operation in or near the districts that they can go and see? This will also help in raising the awareness needed for action.

At this stage, it is absolutely necessary to plan specific training for women, young people and indigenous peoples, who need extra support in compiling their projects as they simply do not know how to do it.

* The content of potential applications, and support in the developing them.

We believe that, in the task descriptions for support personnel, it is important to stipulate the ethical obligation for dedicated and impartial support in helping applicants develop their applications and calculate their remuneration, that is not a not lump sum, but depends on the quality and relevance of the applications, and the project selection rate.

See 4 -2 and 4-3 Microfinance

Use of microcredit is extremely rare in agricultural settings, and out of the 415 participants in the plenary meetings, 10 at most had used it.

There are several reasons for this:

- Distance: microcredit organizations are far from the agricultural production sites.
- Inadequacy of credit supply for the farming world: banks require repayments to start at the end of the first loan month or at best the end of the following month. This is impossible for agricultural producers who derive their first income from their speculations three to six months after planting. The conditions are drastic: a requirement for 50% of the loan amount in their own savings, a monthly interest rate of 4 to 5%, repayments that start at the end of the month: credit is therefore expensive, suitable for traders and individuals with a guaranteed monthly income, and not entrepreneurs or farmers.
- Farmers' lack of understanding about the way such credit works also led us to query the loan allocation procedures; a producer supported within the context of the 2018 "ACTED" project followed the rules and made the repayments, but was not able to get a new loan once ACTED had left.
- The only example that we know of that has worked well is the Louingui women's fund in Pool; initially supported by an ID project and another Ministry of Social Affairs project, a guarantee fund allocation was provided; this enabled a monthly rate of 3% to be offered, a loan guarantee by the borrower (in savings in his account) of 30%, repayments deferred over several months following speculation; support by the MFI was routinely provided in compiling business plans to verify that the requested funds corresponded to a viable project. When the PADEL2 project, headed by ID, left in September 2016, more than 500 investors had an account and 160 loans were in process.

Solutions suitable for the small-scale farming world need to be developed with interested MFIs and at the highest level, and if this does not work, consideration must be given to the alternative of investigating the loan being carried by the Project itself, which will be repaid along the way.

The required contribution of 10 to 20% of the cost was called into question, with at least one or two attempts at a reduction to 5%, which was not adopted by the majority.

On the contrary, participants believed that these contributions would limit the risk of “jokers”.

However, more concern was expressed in terms of correlation with the size of bankable operations; a small-scale test followed by an extension would be entirely conceivable, this was repeated several times.

It is clear that for certain insolvent categories, women (except for the rare well-established and operational groups, such as in Ignié or Madingou), young people and indigenous populations, the idea of loans with zero or symbolic interest would be a solution, with a simple and clear business plan, a responsible and well understood commitment, a first payment followed by the majority of the repayment on harvest. These approaches should be developed and followed up with the beneficiaries, to be adopted by them and their projects.

For those who can, an advance is desirable, but should be correlated with more manageable operation sizes.

The goal is still to achieve an optimal number of hectares under sustainable agroforestry and reforestation, not to “make the numbers” immediately and with no guarantee over time.

See 4-4 Value chains

Product distribution is a key factor, but must also be worked on with the government. In effect, what is the use of production if tracks to transport the products are inaccessible? Some tracks that we crossed are in a state of appalling disrepair. How can the local people be left in such isolation, when there is such potential for development and national enrichment?

In terms of marketing opportunities, producers are often unaware of these opportunities, while wholesalers are looking for products.

It is not up to the Project to establish agreements and sales platforms. The proven risk is that the responsibility for everything will fall to the Project and not the producers and wholesalers, and that everything will disappear once the Project closes: this must really be the responsibility of the producers and wholesalers. However, the Project has an essential support role to play in creating relationships, and providing support/training in organization and negotiation.

It is therefore the project’s responsibility to support producers in meeting each other, organizing themselves, pooling resources and meeting with wholesalers and interested companies to establish agreements; the Project can facilitate and must support effective implementation, but must not do it instead.

Conclusion: What implementation?



With broad consultation, as requested and conducted, and with the immense expectations that resulted, it would be very inappropriate to start small and in one place rather than another; this fear was expressed, with mistrust of asking opinions and then seeing nobody come thereafter.

It is important to consider an organization that will enable a start in all planned sectors of intervention. This presupposes real organization of the Project with decentralization of teams:

- excellent in facilitation
- with good understanding of and adherence to the Project's expectations
- respectful of the farming world, educators
- technically competent, already promoting local knowledge for better development of the anticipated progress
- familiar with operating accounts
- with a vision of economic and local social development
- supporting projects consistent with the objective of mitigating the impact of climate change

These teams should ideally be solidly trained in advance, **mixed**, with skills in social development and agroforestry, and supervised by an experienced coordination team, with international recruitment.

Annexes

- * The report compiled by CERPAC on the three intervention districts (Annex 1)
- * The main reports of meetings and visits held (Annex 2)
- * The attendance list, district by district, of participants in plenary meetings (Annex 3)
- * The list of main contacts (Annex 4)
- * The cost of renting land and tractors (Annex 5)
- * Two examples of LDPs (summary documents) - (Annex 6)
- * Illustrative photos of sites visited, meetings held and interesting experiences identified (Annex 7)