

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology

ROAM
COUNTRY
BRIEF

Sustainable protected area management, allied with restoration interventions, can allow the recovery of wildlife in the Mangai landscape and enhance human well-being.

Why forest landscape restoration (FLR)

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is committed to long-term sustainability of its environment and development. Under the Bonn Challenge, the DRC has committed to restore 8 million ha of degraded and deforested lands by 2030.

To support the implementation of FLR in alignment with national and international commitments, the [Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology \(ROAM\) for the Mangai landscape](#) was led by IUCN and the Congolese Institute for Conservation of Nature (ICCN), and funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The FLR objectives in Mangai aims to conserve biodiversity, increase carbon sequestration potential, improve soil productivity and strengthen the rural economy.

The Mangai Protected Area (MPA), an IUCN category VI protected area managed by ICCN, is composed of the [Idiofa Hunting Area and the Mangai Hippopotamus Reserve](#). With an area of 1,176,875 ha, it aims to: (i) protect wildlife through regulated exploitation; and (ii) conserve, restore, manage and propagate wildlife and their habitats.

Before the 1970s, the MPA was a highly game-rich area. Since then, a catastrophic depletion of the wildlife population has occurred, mainly caused by: poaching and uncontrolled hunting; habitat destruction associated with unsustainable logging, deforestation, and the expansion of agricultural bushfires; poverty due to unemployment; and poor

QUICK FACTS

- **The Mangai forest landscape restoration opportunities present the potential of 1.6 million ha of restored landscape, representing approximately 20% of the DRC Bonn Challenge commitment.**

wildlife management practices and fires. The decrease in wildlife has resulted not only in protein deficiencies and malnutrition of the local communities, but also the disappearance of plant species. Other consequences are reduced tourism potential, lower incomes from hunting, and poverty. Nevertheless, there is a hope that all animal species still present will be protected and the proposed sustainable management plan will ensure long-term ecological balance and biodiversity conservation.

FLR interventions

The extent of land degradation demonstrated by the maps through spatial analysis combined with field observations and community consultation, were key for formulating the following restoration interventions, which aim to decrease human pressure on ecosystems and to provide economic alternatives to rural communities:

- **Creation of effective conservation areas** to recover the wildlife population, taking into account the agricultural and forestry activities of local populations.

- **Development of sustainable agriculture** to promote the sustainability of agricultural production, increase production of fuelwood, decrease natural habitat degradation and promote sedentarisation. Women are recognised as playing a key role in this intervention.
- **Reforestation and agroforestry** to decrease human pressure on natural forests for fuelwood and timber, restore degraded lands, and ensure the continued provision of ecosystem services.
- **Restoration of road infrastructure** to revive the local economy and MAP monitoring.
- **Natural regeneration** to stabilise land use around villages.
- **Stabilisation of ravine banks and beds** to avoid soil degradation and loss.

National policy frameworks and opportunities

Several strategic and programmatic mechanisms for the conservation of protected area have been developed in the DRC over the past decade. They demonstrate the national concerns and needs for biodiversity conservation, sustainable management, protected network expansion, participatory management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as access to resources, equitable sharing of benefits and integrating *ex situ* PAs.

Next steps

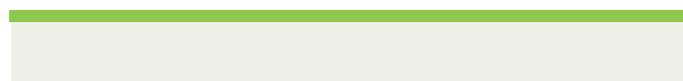
The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development plans to incorporate the results from the Mangai landscape assessment into the implementation of the national priorities and international commitments such as Bonn Challenge and land degradation neutrality goals.

Based on the results of this assessment, the Mangai landscape presents significant potential for the conservation of existing natural resources and restoring ecological functionality and ecosystem services.

The following next steps are suggested:

- Promote the understanding of forest landscape restoration benefits among stakeholders.
- Establish an effective dialogue platform for raising awareness with clan/land chiefs and local communities related to the benefits of current land laws, aiming to promote land tenure security.
- Actively involve women in the promotion of land use stabilisation initiatives and the transformation of the agricultural sector, through training and supporting the establishment of sectoral associations.
- Implement and maintain roads and guarantee access to the area, benefitting the local market and MPA monitoring and protection.
- Establish an inter-institutional consultation framework, coordinated by ICCN and involving the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Territorial Administration, Land Affairs, Economy, Rural Development, Tourism, Gender, and Government Institutions (ICCN, FFN) as well as some strategic partners.

The restoration of the Mangai landscape contributes not only to the Bonn Challenge, but also to other international commitments, such as nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, REDD+, Aichi Targets, the land degradation neutrality goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Resources:
InfoFLR.org
iucn.org/forests

