

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Country: CONGO REPUBLIC



The North Congo Forestry Landscape Project (PPFNC)

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Evaluation date: 22 avril 2025

KEY DATA ON FFEM SUPPORT

Amount of FFEM funding: € 1500000

Project grant date: October 20, 2017

Duration: 4 years

Project name: The North Congo Forestry Landscape Project

Project number: CCG 1126

Context

The Republic of Congo has a forest area of 23.5 million hectares, representing 69% of the national territory. The Congolese forestry sector contributes about 6% of the national GDP and 36% of the country's tax revenues. It is a pillar of the diversification and growth of the Congolese economy.

The forest area in Northern Congo is the largest natural tropical forest in the world certified by FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), an international label ensuring that the wood used complies with sustainable forest management procedures. The ecosystems of Northern Congo, rich in biodiversity, are in good ecological condition.

However, they are threatened by the region's economic development, notably forestry and mining operations, road infrastructure, as well as population pressure and growing urbanization.

Participants and operating procedures

With funding of €7.49 million from the AFD and FFEM, the contracting authority of the PPFNC is the Congolese Ministry of Forests, supported by the technical assistance of a French consortium, bringing together the consulting firms TERE and AGRECO, as well as CIRAD (International Cooperation Centre for Agronomic Research for

Development), and by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with in-kind contributions from forestry companies in the area.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the PPFNC is to ensure the maintenance of the ecological continuum and the preservation of biodiversity in the Northern Congo territories, while supporting socio-economic development and territorial planning, providing managers and users with tools and an integrated territorial vision.

Specific objectives:

- **Improve biodiversity management** across the forest massif.
- **Reduce anthropogenic pressures** on forest ecosystems through sustainable agricultural activities.
- **Strengthen the dynamics of sustainable forest management** in different contexts.
- **Support an integrated “landscape” approach** to territorial planning in Northern Congo.

TESTED INNOVATION

The project adopts an innovative “landscape” approach, with an integrated vision of environmental, social, and economic issues and activities, aiming toward sustainable development. A landscape-level consultation platform, equipped with a monitoring and management tool, has been developed and gradually transferred to local operators.



EVALUATION RESULTS

The project underwent a mid-term evaluation in 2023, which helped to identify areas for improvement.

Relevance

The project was assessed as relevant in relation to Congo's forestry policy and the FFEM and AFD strategies. However, given certain shortcomings identified regarding the project's design and its responsiveness to beneficiaries' needs—mainly due to the five-year gap between the feasibility study conducted in 2016 and the project's launch in 2021—the project's overall relevance is considered moderately satisfactory.

Coherence

The initial project is considered moderately coherent, as evidenced by the absence of an overall project document, the time elapsed between the feasibility study and implementation, and the numerous revisions of the logical framework over time to better align activities with the situation on the ground.

Effectiveness

The analysis of the project's effectiveness involves assessing the extent to which the results have contributed to achieving the specific objectives and, ultimately, the overall goal of the project. The project was considered generally effective, although Component 3 (sustainable forest management) was rated moderately effective due to the apparent lack of ownership of the project's tools by the national administration.

ADDED VALUE OF THE FFEM

The involvement of FFEM in the PPFNC, particularly in Component 1, fully aligns with its environmental-development mandates: conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, sustainable management of forest territories, and innovation. The added value of FFEM, in partnership with WCS, was considered undeniable and satisfactory, notably through the introduction of the SMART tool and the training of stakeholders in its use.

"The added value of FFEM lies in its ability to combine financial resources, a strategic vision, and technical innovations to address the environmental and social challenges of Congo," Jean-Marie Samyn (ONF International)"

Efficiency

Given the difficulties encountered at the start of the project and the complexity of mobilizing resources from the Debt Reduction and Development Contract (C2D), efficiency is considered moderately satisfactory, despite the effective management of activities by the Project Management Unit (PMU).

Impact

The project's impact was considered overall satisfactory, with some variations across components. This positive assessment is mainly based on the benefits of adopting the SMART tool to monitor biodiversity in corridors and forest concessions, as well as sustainable agricultural practices that have led to increased yields and incomes.

Viability/sustainability

The sustainability of the project's effects was assessed as moderately satisfactory. The activities implemented involved technical assistance and close monitoring of stakeholders. However, it is not guaranteed that, at the end of the project and without external stimulation, stakeholders will maintain their changes in practices over time.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the future, project intervention logic and alignment with local expectations should be better designed. In Congo, ownership of the tools is underway. New funding would help secure the long-term impact of the PPFNC.

Strengths:

- Good project management ;
- Biodiversity component effectively implemented by WCS;
- Pilot and innovative nature of Component 2 (agricultural practices);
- Synergy between forestry companies and local development;
- Cross-sectoral mobilization of territorial stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

- Delays in the feasibility study and overly ambitious scope;
- Delays in fund mobilization due to the functioning of the C2D;
- Lack of commitment from certain forestry companies;
- Low government ownership and resource deficits.

Find details of the project sheet by scanning the QR Code

