



## SUCCESS STORIES

### INCLUDING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FOR REDD+ IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

With ongoing support from the UN-REDD Programme, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has developed social and environmental standards for REDD+ with the full and meaningful participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the country.



#### The Initiative

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has taken a participatory approach in the formulation of its national Social and Environmental (SE) standards, which cover several areas including enhancing governance and capturing the multiple benefits of REDD+. Civil society was mobilized at the beginning of the process, in coordination with the country's National REDD+ Coordination office, to design an original version of SE standards for DRC building on a review of existing national and international information and analysis.

#### The Challenge

As countries progress and develop national strategies to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the cross linkages with other sectors and themes within national development planning become apparent and this needs to be reflected strongly in institutional platforms for coordination with specific measures to account for potential impacts (positive or negative) across the board of social and environmental issues. Although initial work has been done on scenario analysis, engagement of the private sector and engagement of integrated, cross-sectoral planning in some countries, more will need to be done to demonstrate how REDD+ can contribute to national development goals and broader conservation strategies on the path to green economy development.

In keeping with the principles of transparency, participation and consultation, civil society has led discussions and consultations with key partners. The consultation process was undertaken in six provinces to collect feedback from different actors and local communities, as well as to involve and better anchor the process at the local level. In parallel, an innovative outreach process was carried out: young nationals, foreign graduates from different universities and civil society representatives participated as volunteers and visited hundreds of households in three REDD+ pilot projects representing different national contexts. They collected data to inform the development of the indicators for the standards which were adapted to local realities.

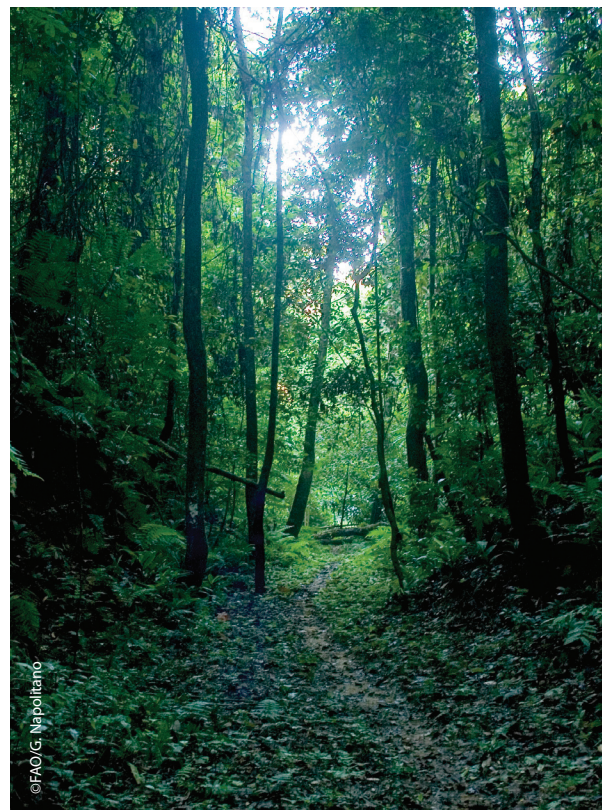
Building on inputs from the consultation and outreach processes, a workshop was organized to provide further inputs to the initial round of comments from key stakeholders. International experts working on standards, including the UN-REDD Programme, the World Bank, Community Climate Biodiversity Alliance and the REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards initiative attended the workshop to ensure international credibility and to bring perspectives from other countries. From this workshop, DRC emerged with recommendations and comments on principles, criteria, and indicators for their national SE standards. These recommendations were analyzed by DRC's civil society working group in order to create a preliminary version of the country's national SE standards.

This entire process was embedded in an official and institutionalized environment. The country created a multi-stakeholder monitoring committee for social and environmental risks and co-benefits to supervise the design of REDD+ standards. This monitoring committee includes representatives from the government, international Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, as well as technical and financial partners.

A last round of consultations, including a mission in Ecuador, which allowed for a South-South exchange on safeguards and standards and a national workshop, helped in finalizing the preliminary version of the national standards which was circulated before COP17 in Durban. More trial activities, consultations and systematic outreach are planned for 2012, as part of the REDD+ projects' accreditation process and the SE strategic assessment. This will be completed with a detailed information system with suitable indicators and streamlined reporting procedures to monitor the respect of the standards. The final version of the national SE standards and the safeguards information system will be integrated into the country's national REDD+ strategy. DRC sees these national standards as an extremely important effort to build credibility in its REDD+ implementation.

## The Impact

This work on SE standards has enhanced the confidence among Congolese stakeholders on the potential of REDD+ to deliver multiple SE benefits while minimizing risks of negative impacts under certain circumstances. For a complex process like REDD+, with potentially negative unintended consequences, when activities start being implemented in a fragile state like DRC, it has been extremely valuable to have a nationally-owned process to elaborate a system to manage social and environmental risks and benefits. The early development of social and environmental standards applied to REDD+ also has the advantage of setting clear rules of the game for all kinds of project developers and investors in landscape management in DRC, which eventually should place DRC in a position to attract and favour the type of actors that are serious about achieving REDD+ goals while contributing to DRC's development.



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