



National REDD+ Framework Strategy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Summary for
decision-makers



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



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National REDD+ Framework Strategy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

English language summary adapted from the original French version and prepared for
the UNFCCC Doha conference, December 2012

Preface

A national vision to guide REDD+ action

By His Excellency the Prime Minister

The world is entering a critical period. Living on this shrinking planet due to improving communications, with its ever increasing population and inequalities, with its finite and not always renewable resources, the international community is growing aware that anything done in one place by one set of people has repercussions elsewhere for others. The climate challenge forces us to rethink our responsibilities as well as the way in which we work together and cooperate.

The DRC is proudly entering this 21st century with its new challenges, bigger in scale and different in nature. After decades of war and instability, the Congolese people now aspire more than ever to security and development. The country is moving forward.

Climate change presents us with a serious threat. We are not responsible for it and we are not its only victims. This challenge requires a joint action. We need to tackle it together in the light of our historical responsibilities and respective capacities. Through our forest, which is the second largest tropical forest in the world and stores more than three years worth of global emissions of CO₂, the Democratic Republic of the Congo holds a unique strength in the fight against global warming. This forest is under threat: each year almost 400,000 hectares go up in smoke while making only a marginal contribution to improving the well being and living conditions of our people.

The REDD+ Framework Strategy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo gives a clear picture of our vision for the future. In this future the Congolese forest will be better managed and preserved and a sustainable pattern of use will support the rapid development process in the country. Its multiple ecological benefits will be put to good use socially and economically through the different sectors that depend on the forest: water resources, which are vital to agriculture and the generation of renewable energy; protection against erosion; the reduction of climatic variability; the supply of fuelwood and timber; resources for healthcare or recreational uses; and food resources for our forest dwellings and indigenous peoples.

There is no denying that our country's development needs are immense and that part of the forest will have to be converted to other uses. But the Congolese vision set out in this strategy foresees careful use of our land and the stabilisation by 2030 of the forest cover at 63.5% of our national territory. This would mean that by 2035 national emissions linked to deforestation would have to be cut by 56%, within a context of sustained economic development and the elimination of poverty. We invite our international partners to scale up discussions and join us in drawing up a roadmap of political, technical and financial commitments designed to put this vision into practice and build the conditions for success of this partnership for the sake of the people of the Congo, Africa and the whole world, who proudly commit themselves to battling with the uncertainties of the 21st century.

Preamble

This summary of the National REDD+ Framework Strategy gives an account of the work carried out by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in preparation for the REDD+ mechanism – aiming at Reducing greenhouse gas Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation – that is, under development and negotiations at the international level.

In accordance with the independent evaluation of its REDD+ process, and while completing its REDD+ readiness phase, the DRC intends to enter the REDD+ investment phase in 2013.

Under the objective of pooling all efforts required to deploy REDD+ on a large scale, the DRC intends to use the REDD+ Framework Strategy as the basis for discussion, sensitisation and dialogue at several levels:

- within the Government, in terms of defining its priorities, with the integration of REDD+ in sectoral policies and in informing the 2035 national development strategy;
- with development partners, by encouraging and inspiring them to tailor their interventions to the REDD+ vision and goals;
- between the Government and its development partners, by presenting and discussing the relevance of the DRC proposals for the concrete implementation of REDD+, with the objective of an increase in REDD+ investments in the DRC.

The DRC has made outstanding progress during its preparatory process. In order for REDD+ to act as a force for sustainable development in the country, the strategic axis of a REDD+ policy in the DRC must be set out to guide and involve all stakeholders.

Endorsed by a Council of Ministers, the present REDD+ Framework Strategy is based on a national consensus concerning both the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and the strategic options to address them. The strategic options have been also selected with the aim of contributing to sustainable growth based on human development, mobilising all energies to guide the DRC in its transition towards a green economy.

This document marks a critical moment for REDD+ in the DRC. An impulse is needed to move on from discussions to large-scale experimentations, exploring the various contexts of intervention. This framework strategy intends so, yet it will be enhanced over the next years on the basis of lessons from these experimentations, thus allowing to better plan and quantify the needs to fully implement and deploy a cross-cutting, integrated, efficient and pragmatic REDD+ policy.

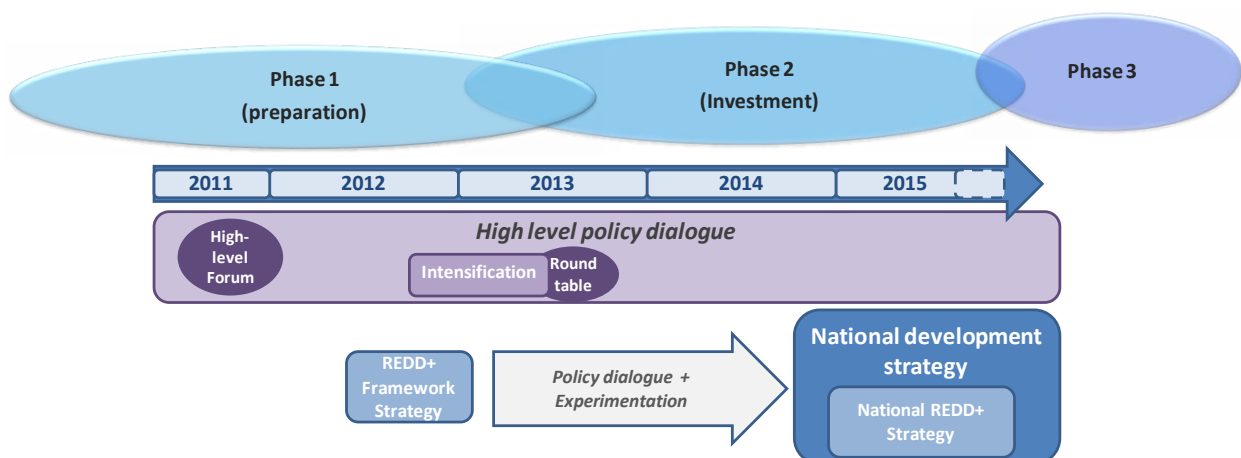


Figure 1: Entry into the investment phase of the REDD+ process in the DRC

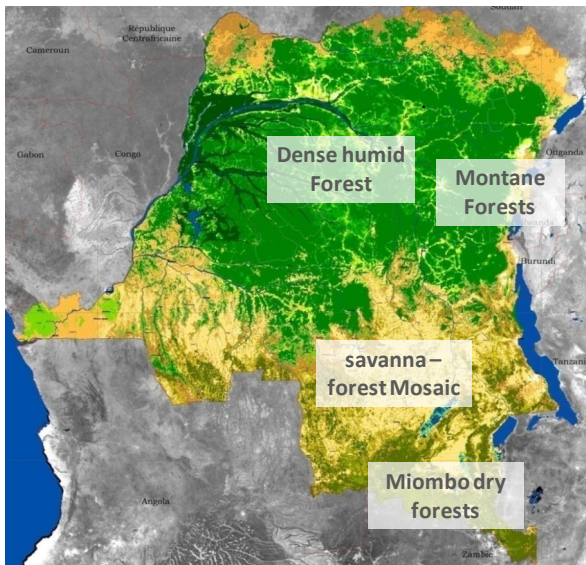
Source : MECNT

1

The Democratic Republic of the Congo at a crossroads

1.1. A giant at a crossroad

The DRC is the biggest country in sub-Saharan Africa (2.3 million km²) and, despite low population density, has the second highest population (circa 70 million inhabitants). With 155 million hectares of forest, 69% of which is dense humid forest (cf. map 1), the DRC is the second largest tropical forested country in the world and accounts for more than half of the Congo Basin forests and around 10% of the humid tropical forest of the planet.



Map 1: The forests of the DRC
Source: Catholic University of Louvain (UCL)

The DRC has considerable, but largely under-utilised, mineral resources as well as a notable agro-pastoral and hydrological potential. The drop in public and private investments since the 1970s, compounded by years of conflict and a difficult business climate, has led to the degradation of infrastructure, the decline of the formal sector and the increase of serious food insecurity and poverty levels. As a result, the DRC is currently the lowest ranking country on the Human Development Index (HDI).

In a desire to break with the past, the President of the Republic has set out his vision of a country which, by 2030, should constitute "an economic and industrial pool, an agricultural breadbasket as well as an energy & environmental power". Within this scenario, REDD+ represents a unique opportunity to

steer the country towards a green economy for the benefit of its population as well as the rest of the world.

1.2. The national REDD+ process

Supported by the UN-REDD programme and the FCPF, DRC's preparation plan for REDD+ was validated in March 2010 and recognised for its participatory and ambitious nature. Thanks to a dynamic management, the REDD+ process overcame numerous constraints and moved swiftly forward, seizing various opportunities in the way: e.g. the DRC was selected as one of eight pilot countries for the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) for US\$ 60 million, and also securing US\$ 22 million from the CBFF for integrated REDD+ pilot projects.

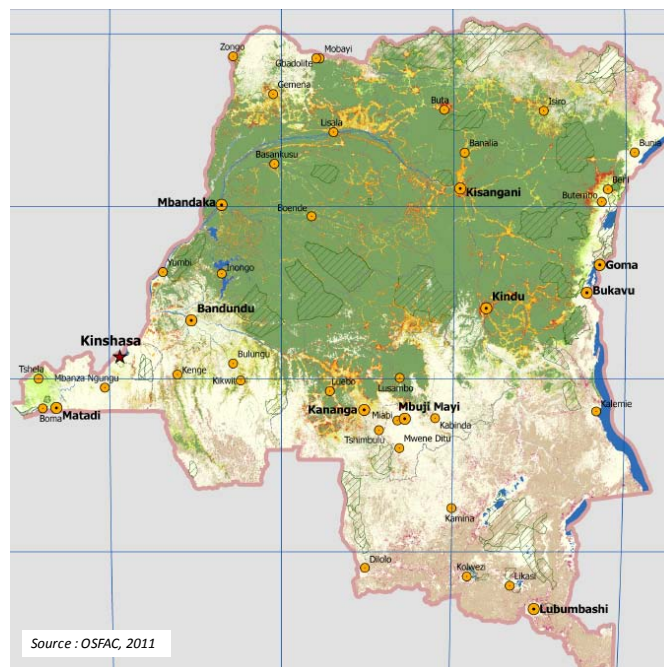
Under the guidance of the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT), the governance structure of the REDD+ process was set out in a decree of the Prime Minister, dated November 2009, establishing the following: a National REDD+ Committee (decision-making and policy guidance), an Inter-ministerial REDD+ Committee (planning and cross-sectorial engagement) and a National REDD+ Coordination (management and coordination). The congolese civil society was closely involved through its Climate & REDD Working Group (GTCR) and took part in studies, debates and consultations on the design of the implementation framework for REDD+. The private sector, whether as investors, project developers or service providers, is already involved in several REDD+ pilot projects and has been integrated in the FIP investment plan. Nearly 1,000 stakeholders, a third of whom come from the civil service, participated in the development of this REDD+ Framework Strategy, especially through 16 thematic working groups.

2

The national dynamics of deforestation and forest degradation

2.1. The historical changes of the forest cover

Two initiatives, using different but complementary and mutually compatible methodologies, while carried out by well-known international organisations, provided the DRC with data on deforestation dating back to 1990. By cross-checking their results we obtain a consolidated net annual rate of deforestation of 0.22% for the period 2000-2005, which is equivalent to a net loss of 400,000 hectares per year. The rate of forest degradation (0.12%), although comparatively lower, becomes significant as it remains over the same period. Comparative analysis with the 1990s shows that the pace of both phenomena has doubled, placing the DRC at a turning point in terms of forest transition. The preliminary data for 2005-2010, which is in the process of being put together, confirm this trend of an escalating rhythm of deforestation and forest degradation.



Map 2: Forest cover loss 2000-2010

Source: OSFAC

2.2 Synthesis of the national drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

The fact that deforestation and forest degradation are taking place in the same geographic locations is due to the key role played by local communities in these processes. At the national level, slash and burn agriculture, artisanal logging and fuelwood are the three main direct causes identified.

Unless there is an improvement in agricultural yields or alternatives are found to the consumption of fuelwood from natural forests, population needs – aggravated with population growth – will remain the main underlying cause of deforestation. Urban expansion and transport routes also have a strong impact. With infrastructure development and the improvements in the business climate, the international demand for agricultural products to meet food and energy needs is likely to become one of the main drivers of deforestation in the forthcoming future.

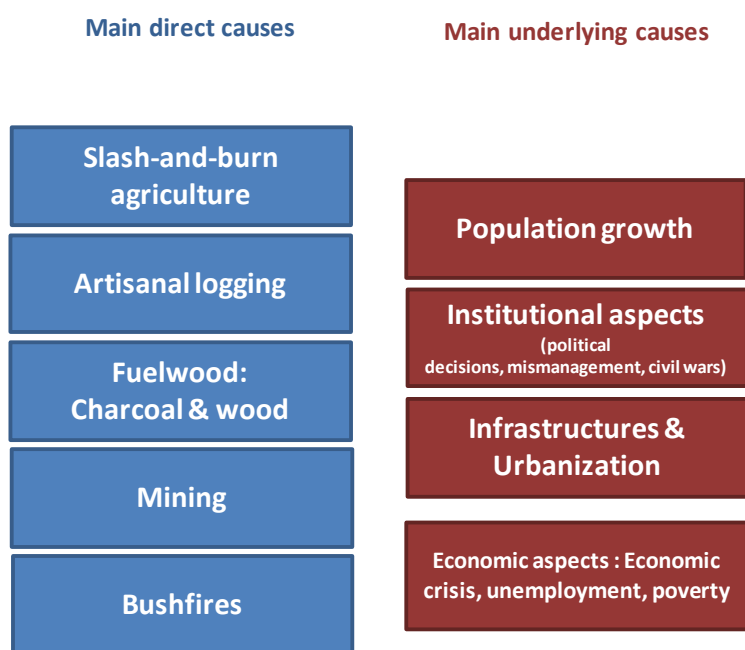


Figure 2: Current drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the DRC
Source: MECNT

2.3. Setting national Reference Levels for the DRC

A reference level of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is an indispensable instrument in crafting the REDD+ mechanism (cf. UNFCCC’s Cancun Agreements). However the reference level cannot be regarded as a scientifically perfect tool since it relies on dynamics which are too complex to fully model. A simple projecting of the historic trend may still depend on several hypotheses, while the premise that the future is a straight-line projection of past trends is still subject to debate and controversy. In the specific case of the DRC, the political, security and economic circumstances are actively changing all the time and, in any case, indicate that the country will soon be entering an accelerated phase of forest transition.

Since 2009 the DRC has undertaken a number of efforts to develop a system that would allow the production of an agreeable reference level for REDD+, in line with the UNFCCC agreements. Since this work is still ongoing, as information and data continue emerging, it will need to be fine tuned in the future. We can however propose a first reference level for deforestation in the DRC which, in spite of its technical weaknesses, can feed reflection and policy dialogue, providing a basis for a system to guiding political, technical and financial decision-making.

The 1990-2010 historical data have been consolidated and thus serve as a reference for projections and forecasts. Accordingly, different deforestation scenarios have been developed, of which four relate to projections drawing on past trends and eight correspond to forecasts that integrate both historical data and data/information from modelling (using different models and sets of hypotheses).

The following illustration shows the historical trends, forecasts and projections of forest cover in the DRC according to various scenarios, between 2010 and 2015 (in M.ha)

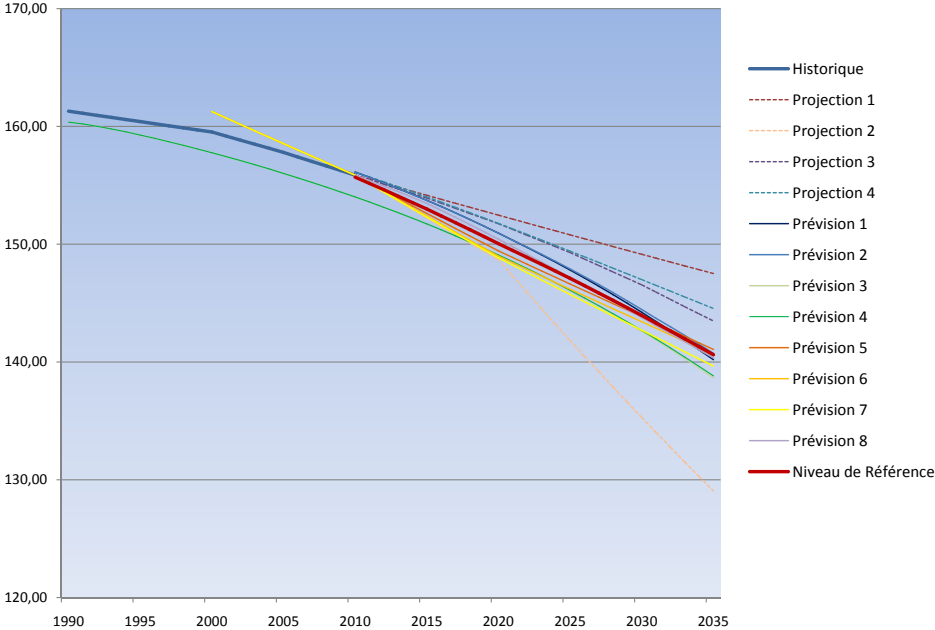


Figure 3: Historical data, projections and forecasts of the evolution of the forest cover for various scenarios
Source: MECNT

Although this work is still in an early stage, it clearly suggests a general convergence between the potential reference scenarios. In this sense, in a ‘business as usual’ scenario, the DRC would lose 15 Mha of forest cover by 2035, representing the release of 5.5 Gt CO₂ into the atmosphere (at a conservative hypothesis of 100 tC per hectare). The average annual rate of deforestation over the period would be 0,41%, with a moderate but regular increase throughout time, and the forest cover rate for the country may fall below 60% of the national territory by 2035.

3

Our vision – the DRC we wish

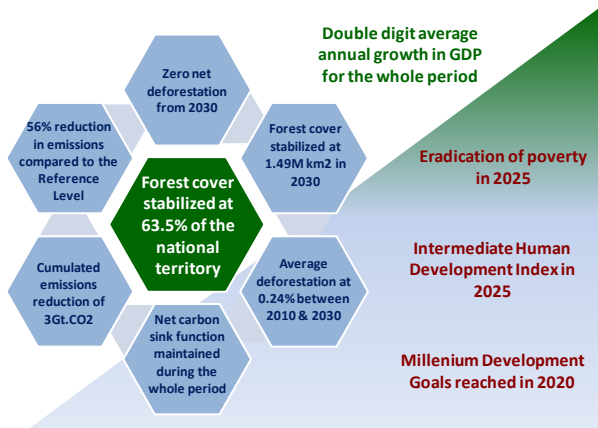


Figure 4: REDD+ objectives in the DRC by 2035
Source: MECNT

In line with the national strategic orientations (i.e. the PRSP-II and the Government Action Programme) the REDD+ political vision for the DRC aims to stabilise the forest cover by 2030, and then maintaining it thereafter, at 63.5% of the national territory. This represents a 56% reduction in the emissions foreseen for the period 2013-2030 and a cumulative emission reduction of 3 Gt CO₂, all this within a context of double-digit average annual growth in GDP and the drastic reduction of poverty. Double digit annual growth of GDP throughout period

An international partnership is indispensable to preserve the Congolese forest. National plans alone could not produce the desired results without the right financial support from international partners and without wider reforms to back up transformative developmental efforts in the DRC.

REDD+ can only operate in the DRC unless it simultaneously and directly contributes to economic growth and to human and social development. The REDD+ strategy is thus based on a systemic approach tackling the direct and underlying causes of deforestation and degradation in a cross-sectoral and integrated way that looks at the broad development challenges and context. The proposed vision is divided into three main components :

- Organising the forest domain using the concept of Permanent Heritage Forest(national forest estates), within the framework of fair and sustainable rural development
- Developing ‘self-sufficient and integrated’ economic and industrial growth poles in the urban and savannah areas;
- Supporting the ongoing revolution in favour of modern and enabling structural conditions.

The implementation of this vision relies on national commitments integrated into policies and measures essential for the transformation of the country towards a green economy and sustainable development. Far from creating rents, we must first and foremost invest in economically viable, socially equitable and ecologically responsible development models. It will also be necessary to evaluate the capacity to ‘channel’ the various traditional sources of investment towards objectives that are compliant with REDD+ and the principles of green development.

REDD will be scaled up progressively in the DRC, through three main stages:

- 2013: DRC enters the demonstration and investment phase;
- 2016: Finalisation of the REDD+ readiness phase, with a reinforced engagement in a national forest-cum-climate policy;
- 2020: Entry into a phase of full REDD+ implementation, with an acceleration of transformation towards green development.

4

Seven strategic pillars for REDD+ implementation in the DRC



Figure 5: A framework strategy integrated into the national development strategy
Source: MECNT

In order to take an active part in the sustainable development of the country, while effectively tackling the current and future drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the DRC has defined in a participatory way a set of actions, structured into seven “pillars”. In line with the second PRSP as well as with the National Action Plan of the Government, these actions are meant to being integrated into sectoral policies as well as into the cross-cutting national development strategy. The proposed actions will also serve to guide the interventions of DRC’s development partners.

The various modelling processes under way, together with the experimentations in the field, will generate in the future more accurate information on cost–benefits and feasibility, which will guide the implementation of these actions. Nevertheless, a prioritization process will be pursued within the framework of the policy dialogue from 2013 onwards.

4.1. Pillar 1: Agriculture

Context

The Government has defined agricultural development, which is a key issue for REDD+, as a major component of poverty alleviation and one of the pillars of economic growth.

The DRC has the potential to become a major global agricultural power, yet the sector has been suffering a long decline. The bulk of the current agricultural production comes from small scale slash-and–burn farming, which is currently a major cause of deforestation. Only few perennial & commercial cash-crops remain, and their revival, although desirable in different senses, will require robust policy control measures to prevent that commercial agriculture becomes a major driver of deforestation in the near future. The vast man-made savannas, which are barely farmed and very thinly populated, offer significant potential for intensive mechanised farming, particularly near urban centres.

Overall objective

To reduce the impact of agriculture on the forest while contributing actively to the objectives of achieving national food security and making the agriculture sector a pillar of national economic growth.

Expected results

1. A sustainable agricultural development policy is formulated, especially directing intensive agriculture and livestock farming, as well as new settlements, towards degraded ecosystems, while providing extension services to slash-and-burn agriculture in forest areas to be fully sustainable;

2. The legal, institutional and fiscal framework for agriculture enables the promotion of sustainable agriculture;
3. Sustainable technical approaches are developed and widely disseminated;
4. Farmers involved in sustainable agriculture are supported along the value chain.

Main strategic principles

Creating the conditions needed for the harmonious and complementary development of the three types of agriculture (small scale, intermediate, commercial), using sustainable practices minimising impact on forest cover. This should be achieved by (i) structuring communities, (ii) optimising land use through large-scale land use planning as well as microzoning, directing agriculture whenever possible towards degraded ecosystems (savannas, fallow land, former plantations, etc.), (iii) encouraging the adoption of ecologically intensive improved farming techniques and supporting the development of value chains, support conditional to the respect of a land use plan.

4.2. Pillar 2 : Energy

Context

The energy potential of the DRC is considerable and particularly diverse but vastly underexploited, with an energy deficit harmful to the development of the country. Approximately 95% of the national energy supply comes from fuelwood (wood or charcoal), used mainly for cooking but also by the productive sector. Fuelwood is one of the main direct causes of deforestation and degradation in the DRC, chiefly because of the supply needs of urban centres. Fuelwood will certainly retain a major place in the national energy pool and the energy policy should fully recognise and integrate the fuelwood sector and its actors in order to bring it into the formal sector and make it a driver of sustainable rural development. As part of the REDD+ objectives this kind of policy should be accompanied by a short, medium and long term strategy aiming at sustainable fuelwood management while insuring the development of alternative forms of energy to fuelwood.

Overall objective

To reduce the proportion of fuelwood produced in non-sustainable manners while meeting the national energy demands.

Expected results

1. Energy production that substitutes forest biomass increases;
2. Fuelwood production from natural forests is reduced and also made more sustainable;
3. Sustainable production of fuelwood outside natural forests (forest plantations) is increased without undermining national food security;
4. The consumption of fuelwood and alternative forms of energy to fuelwood is more efficient.

Main strategic principles

Improving and raising awareness about the legal, institutional and fiscal framework relating to fuelwood and alternative forms of energy to fuelwood; Developing plans for the sustainable supply of all major urban centres; Experimenting and developing national expertise on fuelwood and alternative forms of energy to fuelwood as well as techniques of energy efficiency for production and consumption; Developing and implementing a national strategy for fuelwood and alternative forms of energy to fuelwood, integrated into the country's national energy strategy (including agro forestry programmes, energy-efficient stove programmes, etc.).

4.3. Pillar 3 : Forests

General context

The 2002 Forest Code introduced the concept of forest planning (“aménagement”) as a prerequisite to any form of use or management in the forest domain. In this sense, the 2002 Forest Code divides the forest domain between (i) “Permanent Production Forests” (forêts de production permanente) for industrial logging, (ii) Gazetted forests (forêts classées), which are protected areas, and (iii) “protected” forests (forêts protégées), which are all forests not included in the two previous categories. In the REDD+ perspective the issue of forest exploitation is mainly a question of law enforcement in a sector where informal activities are overwhelming. In the “protected” forests the issue of control must be complemented by a transfer of management responsibility to local communities as either direct operators or supervisors of artisanal exploitants. The network of gazetted forests needs to be revised in the light of current issues and expanded, particularly through collaborative natural resources management models. Carbon stocks enhancement within forests and through plantations outside the forest is also a key issue for the sector.

Sustainable management of forest carbon stocks

Overall objective

to meet the demand for timber products on the national, and potentially regional and international markets through the sustainable management of forests, minimising impact on the environmental services they provide.

Expected results

1. Forest production meets national needs in a sustainable manner and contributes to the sustainable socio-economic development of the country and its people by supplying regional and international markets, while minimising impact on forest ecosystems and the environmental services they provide;
2. Forest exploitation, both at the industrial and artisanal scale, is brought to the formal sector;
3. Local and indigenous people play a direct part in the sustainable management of forests and benefit from it.

Main strategic principles

Revising and completing the legal and institutional framework, and building capacity (government, industrial and artisanal operators, and communities) so as they ensure and/or respect legal provisions; Using REDD+ projects to assist operators towards sustainable forest management in and around concessions; Encouraging more advanced processing of forest timber products to separate the economic contribution of the forestry sector from extraction, and encourage the use of plantations for the domestic market. The use and promotion of the sustainable management of non timber forest products represent an additional opportunity for the country.

Conservation of forest carbon stocks

Overall objective

To preserve forest carbon stocks through the protection of gazetted and “protected” forests of high value in terms of biodiversity, environmental services or cultural significance.

Expected results

1. The existing protected areas' network is adapted and expanded;
2. The conservation of gazetted forests is strengthened and involves local communities whenever feasible;
3. New key forest zones are incorporated in the national protected areas' network following FPIC principles and practices;
4. Threats and pressures on gazetted forests are reduced through effective control of the drivers of deforestation;
5. Direct and indirect benefits from gazetted forests are increased to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Main strategic principles

Consolidating and extending the national protected area network after completing its ongoing assessment and the evaluation of the potential (biodiversity, carbon and other ecosystemic services), the threats and pressures facing forests which are not currently gazetted. Encouraging participatory and community-based natural resources management as well as enhancing the economic value of these areas.

Increasing forest carbon stocks

Overall objective

To enhance forest carbon stocks in, and outside forests

Expected results

1. Forest carbon stocks in targeted degraded forests are enhanced through assisted natural regeneration or reforestation;
2. Suitable areas outside forests become forest carbon stocks through afforestation/reforestation.

Main strategic principles

Identifying low cost opportunities for carbon stocks enhancement inside or outside forests to supply urban centers with forest products, preserve the water resources, and protect soils.

4.4. Pillar 4: Governance

Context

In the DRC, REDD+ is an instrument aiming at mobilizing classic as well as innovative funding sources to promote the sustainable development of the country but it's also an opportunity to reinforce the monitoring of law enforcement and the actual impact of investments. The governance of REDD+ requires the implementation of ambitious and innovative mechanisms and tools to address the challenge of cross-sectoral and sustainable natural resources management.

Overall objective

To ensure an effective, cross-cutting, transparent, responsible, pragmatic, fair and sustainable implementation of REDD+, based on performance and on the consultation, engagement and participation of all stakeholders.

Expected results

1. The transparency and quality of the REDD+ process is ensured through robust and efficient monitoring and verification mechanisms, open to the various stakeholders;

2. The REDD+ process is inclusive and each stakeholder benefits from it according to its efforts and results achieved;
3. Accountability of the various stakeholders in the implementation of REDD+ is ensured through various relevant complaints and sanctions mechanisms accessible to all.
4. The conditions required to achieve REDD+ objectives are met, in particular through (i) a suitable and consistent legal and institutional framework, (ii) sectoral policies incorporating the green economy, (iii) an improved business climate, (iv) REDD+ activities designed in a pragmatic and precautionary manner, and covering the whole range of direct and indirect causes of deforestation and degradation, and (v) reliable and sustained REDD+ funding.

Main strategic principles

Ensuring the transparency, wide circulation and verification of information on REDD+ and its implementation; Promoting a transparent and relevant use of REDD+ financing (performance, economic viability and socio-environmental benefits); Encouraging the participation of all stakeholders, rewarding effort and results and compensating for restrictions on access to resources; Contributing to the reform and alignment of the legal and regulatory framework; Supporting the organisation of local actors and the implementation of tools allowing the monitoring and verification of REDD+ implementation as well as the management and handling of potential complaints.

4.5. Pillar 5 : Demography

Context

As highlighted in the second PRSP, the rapid population growth of the country generates acute needs in terms of education, job creation, and access to health care and food security to ensure a decent standard of living for the population. While 2 million Congolese are born each year, more than 70% of the current population lives below the poverty line. Population growth has been identified as the main underlying cause of deforestation in the DRC, but its control would also bring multiple benefits in terms of development and poverty alleviation.

Overall objective

To control DRC's high population growth in order to actively contribute to the economic growth and sustainable development objectives of the country, while relieving the pressure on forest ecosystems.

Expected results

1. The DRC population growth is controlled, enabling the country to better meet the basic needs of current and future generations, as well as relieving the pressure on ecosystems, particularly forest ecosystems;
2. The Congolese people has access to family planning information and services throughout the country.

Main strategic principles

Improving the understanding of demographic dynamics in the DRC; Implementing sensitisation programmes on the numerous benefits and various methods of family planning, and facilitating access to them; Supporting the access, especially to women, to education and employment; Taking into account cultural and sociological factors linked to family planning, education and employment in both rural and urban-rural environments.

4.6 Pillar 6 : Land Use Planning

Context

In order to encourage the rational and coherent use of land and resources, including forest resources, the DRC is seeking to develop a national policy on national land use planning with national and provincial land use plans. The lack of such a policy to date has led to multiple conflicts over the use of land and resources. Competition between various sectoral ministries responsible for allocation of land has grown because of the lack of consistency between sectoral legislation (land tenure, mining, forest and agriculture). There is therefore an urgent need to define strategic priorities in terms of use of the land and resources and the spatial orientation of public and private investment.

Overall objective

To promote, with a cross-sectoral and forward-looking vision, an optimal allocation of the land and the planning of people and activities, as well as infrastructure and means of communication, in order to contribute efficiently to the sustainable development objectives of the country while minimising impacts on the forest.

Expected results

1. A suitable and participatory legal and institutional framework is in place, and a national as well as provincial land use plans integrating REDD+ objectives are adopted;
2. Both subsistence and commercial activities, outside the forest or with a limited impact on the forest cover, contribute to the objectives of economic growth and sustainable development of the country and to the well being and needs of the people, particularly in the rural environment;
3. The development strategy of the extractive industries integrates REDD+ objectives and a Permanent Heritage Forest regime is established, demonstrating DRC's commitment to the fight against deforestation;
4. A micro-zoning integrating REDD+ objectives, coupled with a plan for local development, is undertaken with due clarification of community lands in areas of REDD+ investments that affect land use.

Main strategic principles

Developing and implementing the legal and institutional framework for land use planning; Building the capacity of stakeholders and developing the national and provincial land use plans in a participatory way, plans taking into account both the needs of the Congolese people and the development of the various productive sectors of the economy; Undertaking a participatory microzoning in the areas of REDD+ investment.

4.7 Pillar 7 : Land tenure

Context

In July 2012 the Government launched a major process of reform of the land law and related harmonisation of sectoral legislation; REDD+ is an opportunity to support this process by offering technical solutions to identify and secure rights over the land (customary or national law) in order to catalyse sustainable investment. In the DRC, the land is the exclusive property of the State, but the current juxtaposition of modern and customary land use regimes is a source of conflict and insecurity over land rights. Due to a lack of means the land affairs administration is barely active at the local level and legislation on land rights remains poorly known and applied in the rural environment. In practice the system of distribution of land by traditional chiefs prevails. The long and costly procedure to register concessions, the lack of a rural land register, the superimposition of land titles, the speculation over the land together with conflicts over the rights of use represent major constraints to investment and lead to a non-sustainable exploitation of natural resources, including forest resources.

Overall objective

To support land tenure harmonisation and securing rights over the land to ensure that REDD+ investments are attractive and to contribute to the permanence of greenhouse gas emissions reductions, for both project developers and other stakeholders such as rural households.

Expected results

1. The current legal framework is improved in a politically acceptable and pragmatic manner, taking into account REDD+, and widely disseminated, feeding the wider process of reform;
2. The capacity of the land affairs administration and other stakeholders is strengthened in the areas targeted for REDD+ investments; simultaneously, local structures and mechanisms for stakeholder dialogue and conflict resolution are in place;
3. Tenure rights and right holders are clearly identified in areas targeted for REDD+ investment;
4. Tenure rights of the various stakeholders in areas targeted for REDD+ investments are secured whether they reach consensus;
5. REDD+ investments are attractive to national and international investors and the permanence of emissions reductions achieved is strengthened.

Main strategic principles

Improving the legal and institutional framework; implementing various measures enabling the identification of land rights (in customary or national law) as well as securing them prior to REDD+ investments linked to land use; Strengthening the capacity of the various stakeholders and promoting the emergence of service companies.

5

Approaches to the implementation of REDD+ in the DRC

5.1. A few key principles for the implementation of REDD+ in the DRC.

REDD+ is an innovative mechanism which aims to overcome some of the known limits of more standard instruments used to fight deforestation, such as regulatory or fiscal tools (requiring effective means of control) or programmes of alternatives to deforestation (rebound effect). These various tools, still relevant for REDD+, have to be combined and supplemented to achieve the desired results.

REDD+ is an incentive-based mechanism, combining effectiveness and equity, incentives and conditionality. With its system of remuneration based on performance, it involves a freely negotiated contractual framework in a long term perspective. The payment of investment subsidies by instalment (ex-ante) is linked to the agreement of defined objectives, while the ex-post payments are delivered on the basis of verified results (direct accounting of carbon emissions and absorption or indirect accounting on the basis of number of hectares reforested, not burned, etc). The principle is thus to remunerate an active contribution to climate change mitigation, not to provide an income for the simple conservation of the carbon stock.

The question of 'benefit sharing' only arises therefore for the 'carbon revenues' ('rente carbone') of REDD+ projects, that is, what remains once all the costs of credit generation have been deducted, including especially costs relating to compensation for restrictions on rights of use as well as investment costs for incentivizing and supporting the improvement of negative practices (an essential share of REDD+ benefits for local communities). The potential variability of both these costs and the expected benefits makes it hard to estimate the carbon revenues and hence to provide an a priori definition of a benefit sharing key. The pilot projects and programmes will provide experience to feed the reflection on the status of carbon and on benefit sharing prior to their integration into the legal system.

5.2 Typology of REDD+ investment in the DRC

REDD+ financing alone will not be sufficient to achieve REDD+ objectives. In order to ensure a significant impact it will be necessary to bring the various interventions funded by the Government, development partners or the private sector into line with REDD+ objectives. This is about either limiting their impact on the forest cover (location of activities and infrastructure, mitigation measures, etc) or stimulating investment in the green economy.

Various levels of REDD+ involvement can thus be defined, according to the degree to which investments meet REDD+ requirements, particularly in terms of monitoring carbon performance and socio-environmental obligations. In order to encourage traditional investment to be brought into line with REDD+ objectives and to develop the national capacity to monitor and evaluate the impact of this investment, approval procedures are going to be set up for each type of investment, following the example set by the authorisation procedure for REDD+ projects laid down by ministerial decree. The national REDD+ registry is going to centralise all this information.

5.3. Advance support for investment linked to land use

In order to frame REDD+ investment linked to land use in a suitable way and thus ensure effective and sustainable emission reductions, the DRC is going to define, experiment and implement one or more methodologies designed to identify and involve on the long-term the various managers and users of a given area and its resources, whether these are managers and users have rights under customary or national law.

A preliminary five-step generic methodology is proposed which will have to be adapted to a variety of contexts (forest or non-forest environment, type of investment, type of legal claim, etc).

The first step consists of a preliminary identification of the stakeholders in the area of interest, whether they are part of or outside the local community. It also aims at an assessment of community-based and professional organisations and existing stakeholder consultation mechanisms. Local governance platforms (i.e. Local Development Committees, Consultative Agricultural Councils in decentralised territorial entities) should allow an increased accountability from the traditional chief in the management of the common heritage, ensure the representation of traditionally marginalised groups (youth, women, migrants, indigenous peoples), and should be involved in the implementation and monitoring of activities. Capacity building and stakeholders identification will continue throughout the process.

The second step involves the use of participatory mapping to identify customary rights for different land uses, according to the type of environment (also mapped out). The delimitation of the extent of village lands will be mapped more or less precisely according to its importance in the local customary system. The various existing legal claims are then superimposed on the map, whether or not these are based on national law (forest concessions, protected areas, farm leases, etc.). Tools to register the customary rights identified will be discussed and tested with the Ministry for land affairs.

In the third step, the maps produced will provide the basis for a participatory microzoning process aiming at defining with the various stakeholders the location of various activities in accordance with REDD+. Every effort must be made to ensure that these zoning plans are consistent with those produced at higher levels of governance as well as those from neighbouring communities. This microzoning process should be partly conducted jointly with the fourth step, in which support activities required to ensure that stakeholders will be able to respect the freely agreed land use plan are being agreed upon. It could be activities aiming at the improvement of agricultural yields or the modification of cultural techniques, or activities alternative to the use of the forest, etc. The resulting zoning and development plans will together constitute the area management plan.

The fifth step is the formalisation of commitments through PES-type contracts, which include a component of support to the investment and a component providing an additional incentive tied to the respect of the land use plan. This formalisation process is set out in the following section.

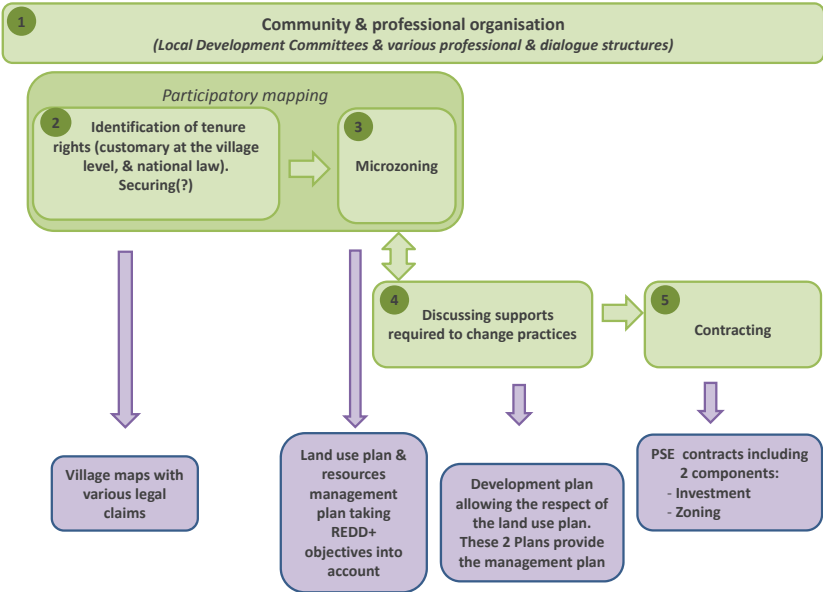


Figure 6 : Methodology to supervise REDD+ investments in land use
Source: MECNT

5.4 A national programme of Payments for Environmental Services (PES)

The complexity and costs associated with forest carbon projects (REDD+ projects), as well as the fluctuations in the carbon market, limit their scope. PES share with REDD+ projects the principle of payment conditional on performance and the need for a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation, but they can accommodate less costly methodologies and monitoring processes (indirect indicators may be sufficient), which makes them more accessible and easier to introduce on a large scale. The DRC therefore intends to make a national PES Programme as the central pillar of its arrangements for the formal implementation of REDD+.

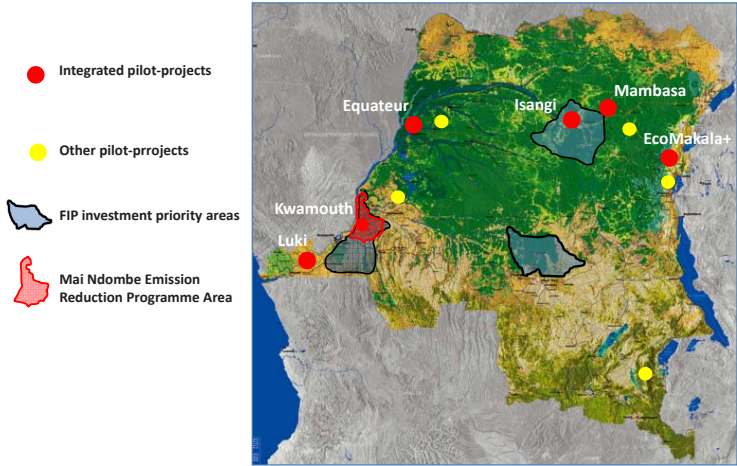
PES are voluntary while contractual instruments. They allow to build, together with the rural communities, sustainable and remunerative alternatives to practices which lead to the destruction of the forest cover. PES contracts include two distinct components, linked to the process of participatory microzoning, which must be combined: (i) An Investment PES component, which aims at supporting households in changing their practices;(ii) A Zoning PES component, which consists of a collective negotiated payment conditioned to the respect of the land use plan, as an incentive compensating for voluntarily renouncing certain customary rights.

The location of the PES activities will be mainly guided by different maps under development (map of the risks of deforestation, opportunity costs, co-benefits). The definition of a spatially explicit Permanent Forest Domain is also being considered as a way to direct investment from the productive sectors of the economy.

5.5 Piloting the implementation of REDD+ in the diverse contexts of the DRC

To ensure that the REDD+ mechanism is consistent with the various geographical contexts of the country, the DRC wishes to capitalise on concrete experiences of REDD+ implementation in the field. Various pilot projects are now under way in different parts of the country (cf. map 3), implemented mostly by the private sector and international conservation NGOs. Six of these projects were initiated by the MECNT and funded by the Congo Basin Forest Fund. In order to supervise them and prevent problems, a National REDD+ Registry is being developed and an approval procedure for REDD+ projects has been adopted (and will be gradually extended to other types of REDD+ funding).

Larger scale programmes are also under development. The investment plan of the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) proposes to focus investment on three ‘hot spots’ of deforestation corresponding to the supply basins of major cities. Part of the funding is dedicated to the private sector to co finance the design and implementation of projects. A large scale Emissions Reduction Programme (close to 2 million hectares) is also being drawn up in the Mai-Ndombe region, linked to the FIP which shall constitute one of its funding sources.



Map 3: REDD+ Pilot projects and investment zones
Source: MECNT (adapted from UCL)

Mechanisms for the implementation of REDD+ in DRC

6.1 Financial flows

The DRC sees the main sources of future REDD+ financing as (i) public funding (national and international) consistent with REDD+ objectives, which calls for a good coordination of international aid and the definition of clear guidelines to integrate political priorities into programmes; (ii) private investment which require the confirmation of the economic viability of sectoral REDD+ business plans; and with very uncertain amounts, (iii) international funding linked to markets (associated with the financing of the Green Fund) and (iv) market based funding (dependent on the implementation of regulated markets guided by strong political objectives to complement an insufficient voluntary market).

To finance the launch of REDD+ over the period 2013-2016, the DRC hopes to mobilise 1 billion dollars, which would raise the implementation of the REDD+ strategy to more than 2% of the GDP over the period, and thus produce some early results whose significance would make it possible to cross a new threshold of confidence and mobilization. Half of this would correspond to traditional investment brought into line with REDD+ objectives. The DRC is hoping to mobilise 200 M\$ over this period through the National REDD+ Fund, a tool designed to channel funding towards priority REDD+ activities. Part of this funding could be used to leverage additional investment or to bring sectoral funding into closer alignment with REDD+ objectives.

6.2 The National REDD+ Fund and the DRC

Though aware that numerous REDD+ investments will not go through a national financial mechanism, the DRC still considered necessary to establish a National REDD+ Fund. The Fund aims at ensuring a coordinated, optimal and transparent allocation of funding towards priority REDD+ activities. The DRC also intends to use this Fund to develop its capacity to mobilise funding and make performance-based payments, and thus in the long term to have direct access to climate finance (particularly the Green Climate Fund).

The Government is concerned to ensure an adequate balance between full national ownership and compatibility with the strictest international standards of fiduciary management, and has asked UNDP through its Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office to provide fiduciary management services over an interim period. The governance structures of the Fund will be managed by the country, namely the Steering Committee and the Technical Secretariat. In addition, national entities may have direct access to the Fund, following a positive assessment of their programmatic and fiduciary capacities.

The National REDD+ Fund was set up in November 2012 upon signature of an agreement between the Minister of Finance and the MPTF Office of UNDP. It will be operational once the first financial agreement signed.

The DRC intends to pay special attention to the development of the Operations Manual of the National REDD+ Fund in order to study and respond to the challenges associated with the implementation of such a mechanism: ensuring the quality-control of REDD+ funded projects and programmes and the full implementation of socio-environmental standards, reducing the risks linked to fiduciary management, guaranteeing strict and rigorous selection of national entities being granted direct access, etc.

The Fund shall operate through three funding windows (cf. table 1) which differ according to the terms of payment and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of results. The first window is dedicated to REDD+ investments and capacity building and should concentrate most investments at an early stage. The two

other windows, respectively for payments for environmental services and REDD+ projects (both performance-based), will allow to experiment and build the national capacity for the country to be able to access and disburse performance-based payments, but also to implement effective and efficient MRV systems adapted to the various REDD+ activities financed by the Fund.

	Activities supported	MRV	Payments	Terms of payment
Window 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Sectoral investments • Enabling & integrated programmes 	Usual monitoring (technical & financial reports), based on a monitoring in line with the R-PP & the REDD+ strategy	Not based on direct carbon performance, but on tangible progress in the REDD+ national process	Classic/ Grants allocated by installment
Window 2	Payments for Environmental Services	MRV based on "proxies" (indicators measuring carbon performance indirectly)	Performance-based	Ex-post payments based on the <i>verified</i> delivery of the environmental service agreed upon
Window 3	REDD+ Projects	Carbon MRV	Performance-based	Co-funding to support a carbon project validated by international standards

Table 1: Features of the finance windows of the National REDD+ Fund of the DRC
Source: MECNT

The governance of the Fund (cf. figure 7) is described in the Terms of Reference of the National REDD+ Fund, as an annex to the Memorandum of Understanding establishing it. The Technical Secretariat, steered by the MECNT, is in charge of evaluating proposals for programmes and projects submitted through the National REDD+ Registry. The Secretariat’s recommendations are sent for approval to the Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Finance (with representatives from the Government, civil society, private sector, donors and the United Nations) which then instructs the Administrative Agent (MPTF Office of UNDP) to transfer funds to the implementation partners (national entities and international organisations). The links between management structure of the Fund and the future institutional arrangements for the REDD+ investment phase will be specified during 2013.

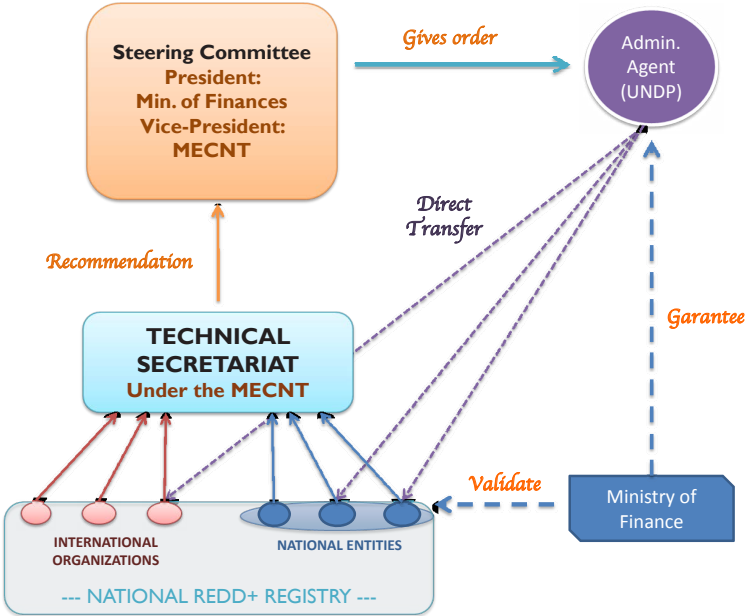


Figure 7: Management and governance structure of the Fund
Source: MECNT

6.3 National REDD+ social and environmental standards in the DRC

Considering the importance of growth and poverty alleviation for DRC, guaranteeing REDD+ cobenefits was deemed essential and ensured by developing its own national prescriptive framework. This framework must therefore ensure the incorporation of environmental and social considerations in the implementation of REDD+, in full compliance with the Cancun Agreements and associated international standards. The current version of these national standards, which were designed in a participatory manner, include 7 principles, 25 criteria and 43 indicators as well as means of verification with requirement thresholds tailored to specific circumstances. They apply to all REDD+ activities.

To guarantee proper management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the implementation of these standards, a Safeguards/standards information system (SIS) is being developed through a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). By generating adequate (general or specific) management frameworks, this study will allow the proper consideration of the social and environmental dimensions in the strategic guidelines proposed for REDD+ in the DRC. In order to centralise information and to simplify implementation by project developers, it is foreseen that the SIS will be fully integrated into the National REDD+ Registry.

6.4 Monitoring-Evaluation of the implementation and impact of REDD+ investments

The DRC intends to meet to the requirements of results based payments of the REDD+ mechanism by developing robust and transparent systems allow a strict monitoring of : (i) the implementation of REDD+ activities, (project monitoring & evaluation and information on safeguards); and (ii) forest carbon through a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system.

Three innovative and complementary tools are under development. They are all freely available on the internet and capitalise on new technologies and Open Source applications to ensure quality monitoring while minimising transaction costs:

The National Forest Monitoring System is an institutional tool designed to generate and share statistics and the location of deforestation as well as record forest carbon emissions and absorptions. Already partially up and running, it will gather data from the satellite land monitoring system (TerraCongo), the national forest inventory and the greenhouse gas inventory, and will be linked to the National REDD+ Registry.

The National REDD+ Registry is an institutional tool aiming at centralising and sharing information (encoded by project developers) on the funding flows and implementation of REDD+ (including the generation of carbon credits). It will encourage transparency, monitoring & evaluation and allow the supervision of REDD+ projects and initiatives. It is also be the key tool in the approval procedure for REDD+ projects, as well as other types of REDD+ investment in the future, to ensure the respect of eligibility criteria and social and environmental safeguards.

Moabi is an independent and complementary tool which will allow, through a network of international, national and local partners, whether institutional or from the civil society : (i) the independent monitoring of REDD+ implementation (verification of data from the national REDD+ registry) and illegal activities; and (ii) the collection and consolidation of information on drivers of deforestation.

By guaranteeing the harmonisation and automatic transfer of information between the various levels of REDD+ implementation and governance, these tools represent a major asset for a successful implementation of a nested approach of REDD+. They will be supplemented by a grievance mechanism currently under development, incorporating verification mechanisms such as an Independent Observer, and conflict resolution mechanism through amicable settlement or, if necessary, through the judiciary system.

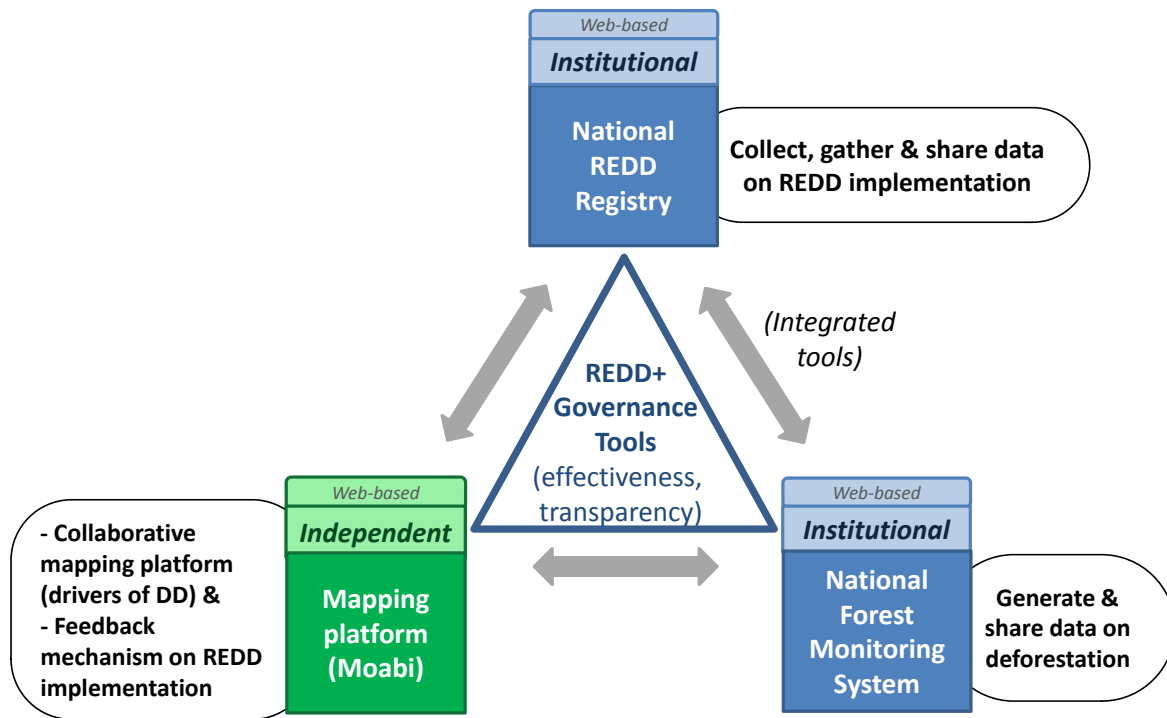


Figure 8: The REDD+ monitoring and evaluation tools in DRC

Source: MECNT

6.5 Organisation of the REDD process in the DRC over the period 2013 - 2016

New institutional arrangements are being discussed to meet the specific needs of the REDD+ investment phase. These arrangements must facilitate consistent implementation and full ownership of REDD+ by the numerous relevant sectors, and allow adequate technical and political reporting to the international financial partners on the progress made.

