



**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE "ECOMAKALA" REFORESTATION PROJECT FOR ENERGETIC PURPOSES, IMPLEMENTED BY WWF BELGIUM IN NORTH KIVU**

**Ref.**  
60

Expert(s)	Country	Volume (md)	Amount* (€)	Beneficiary	Funding	Start date	End date	Partner(s)	Reference
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Detailed description of the project	Services provided
<p>EcoMakala is a large scale reforestation project (5000 ha between 2007 and 2012) implemented on the lands of and in collaboration with small local landowners (in fields ranging from 0.5 to 5 ha) in Masisi, Nyiaragongo, Rutshuru, Beni and Lubero, in the North Kivu Province in the eastern DRC. The main objective of the project is to supply the charcoal and woodfuel markets of Goma, Beni and surrounding cities with sustainable wood-energy, to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction, and to promote an alternative to illegal logging in Virunga National Park, one of the last refuges for mountain gorillas in the Albertine Rift region.</p> <p>The EcoMakala project also intends to develop a new model of community-based reforestation allowing not only the fast reforestation of a region facing a significant energy crisis, but also close control of the project's activities, deep technical and organisational support for the growers and the associated organisations (local reforestation actors) as well as the implementation of a system of rotating capital that should sustain the reforestation activities after the project's end.</p> <p>The environmental and socio-economic impact study was carried out within the framework of the elaboration of the Project Design Document (PDD) with a view to its inclusion in the Clean Development Mechanism. The project area is for the most part inhabited. As a result, one of the specific objectives was to document the situation of the area and to anticipate the potential impacts of the project in order to propose a balanced development of the territory, respectful of the environmental, social, cultural and economic situation.</p>	<p>The socio-economic study involved the conception of a sampling scheme and the elaboration and test of a questionnaire in the field (5 territories, 16 interviewers, 1856 interviews) in order to assess both rural and urban households' wood-energy demands/requirements in the region, to study their living conditions in order to establish the project's baseline scenario, to identify the relevant actors and describe their economic, social and cultural way of life (habits), to identify specific problems related to gender, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, and to obtain information on the use of space, resources and the land tenure system. The interviewers were recruited in the field and trained in the use of the questionnaire by the national consultant, under the supervision of J. Maurice, in charge of the coordination of the global survey. Restitution workshops were held in all territories with the exception of Masisi (due to social and political unrest).</p> <p>The environmental study involved the conception and implementation of a system for the inventorying of flora and the observation of fauna in order to describe the biophysical environment, the initial natural conditions and their potential evolution in relation to the project's potential positive and negative impacts. The WWF technicians were given in the field training in the use of the inventory guide (inventory sheets, protocol, use of GPS, Suunto and forest ribbons) by J. Maurice during a training course in Masisi. The data analysis (89 plots over a total distance of about 88 km as the crow flies) allowed for the observation of the high level of anthropization in the environment in which the project operates (a mosaic of rural landscapes with very low biodiversity). The study also helped to highlight the principal environmental risks of the project (erosion, acidification, chemical depletion, and phytosanitary risks) and the appropriate compensation measures that must be or have already been undertaken.</p>