

South-South cooperation opportunities for tropical forest countries on REDD+ and forest governance

A case study in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Brazil

Highlights

- A rigorous and participative assessment of opportunities for South-South cooperation between potential partner countries encourages ownership and improves the likelihood that joint projects will be realised.
- Win-win partnerships that capitalise on best practices and successful approaches to addressing bottlenecks in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) compensate for the high transaction costs of South-South cooperation.
- Political backing is necessary but it is technical opportunities that lead to concrete partnerships.
- Brazil's experience and expertise could support the Democratic Republic of the Congo in tackling key challenges in implementing REDD+, and particularly in implementing the first jurisdictional emissions reduction programme in Africa in the Mai Ndombe region.

1 Summary

The National REDD+ Coordination of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) requested technical support from the EU REDD Facility to identify activities to be proposed in the context of the ongoing cooperation between the federal governments of Brazil and DRC. A consortium comprising the National REDD+ Coordination, the EU REDD Facility, the Sustainable Amazonas Foundation (Fundação Amazonas Sustentável, FAS) and SalvaTerra identified and prioritised opportunities for Brazil and DRC to collaborate on implementing components of the DRC National REDD+ Framework Strategy.

The case study describes the exchanges between the two countries, the methods used, and the results of the interactions. The experience provides valuable input to future cooperation between Brazil and DRC by both government and non-governmental organisations.

2 Adapting solutions to common challenges

Developing countries began exchanging experiences in the forestry sector long before REDD+ emerged as an international response to reducing emissions from land use and unsustainable natural resource management. However, REDD+ drew attention to the lessons learnt from these years of work, and countries at the forefront of sustainable forest management, such as Brazil, have inspired and informed the management of tropical forests in other countries around the world.

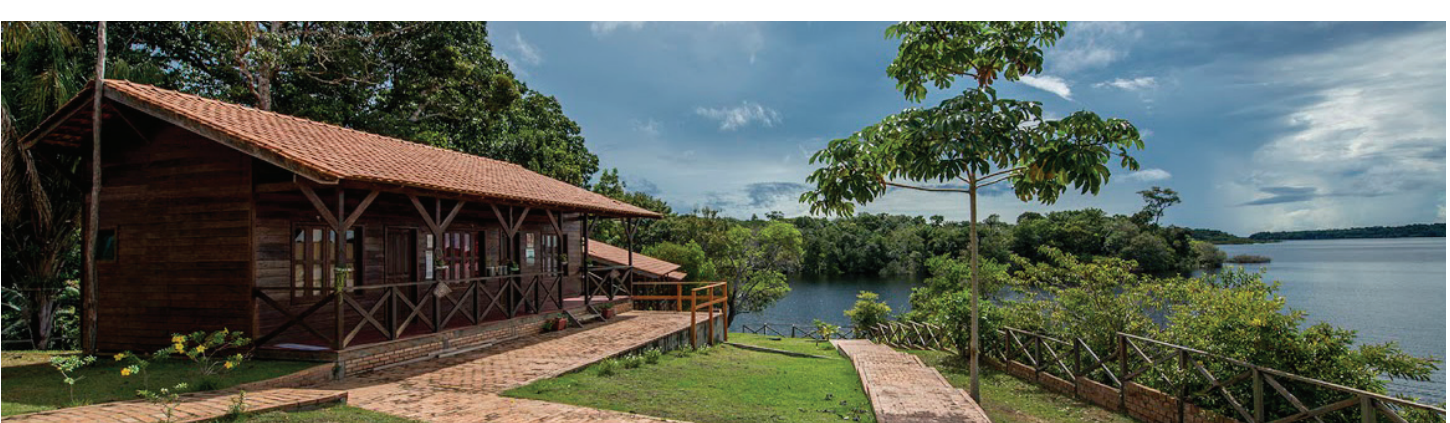
Today, the exchange of experiences and good practices between REDD+ countries are increasingly organised and promoted at the global level. Nonetheless, the challenges are considerable and, to date, few technical or political cooperation initiatives have materialised. Brazil, with its dynamic research community and active civil society, leads most South-South REDD+ technical projects.

When developing and implementing its National REDD+ Framework Strategy and, in particular its forest monitoring system, DRC seized the opportunity to learn from Brazilian experiences. Since 2011, with technical support from the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais, INPE), DRC has been developing a satellite monitoring system, TerraCongo, modelled on the Brazilian TerraAmazon system.

In September 2013, DRC and Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding to ‘promote cooperation between the Parties in the field of environment, nature conservation, climate change and sustainable use of forest resources’, in particular:

- REDD+ processes, including financial aspects,
- forest cover monitoring systems, and
- sustainable management and use of forests.

Photo: FAS



Brazil and DRC are among the largest and most forested countries in the world. Both countries face significant issues in controlling forested areas, ensuring sustainable land use and securing the social and economic well-being of forest-dependent communities. Brazil has learned many lessons which it can share with DRC. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the rate of deforestation in Brazil was the highest in the world. Thanks to targeted policies, incentives and appropriate surveillance, the rate of deforestation has fallen significantly (Box 1).

DRC embraces more than 60% of the forest in the Congo Basin. In 2014, DRC moved from preparing for REDD+ to investing in REDD+. In the last four years, DRC has made major advances in validating a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) in March 2010 and a Forest

Box 1. Brazil's fight against deforestation

Between 2004 and 2013, Brazil cut illegal deforestation by 79%¹. In 2004, Brazil lost almost 20 000 square kilometres of forest but, by 2013, losses had fallen to 5 000 square kilometres². The cut in illegal deforestation reduces global carbon emissions by 1.5%³. Brazil's achievement stems from the combination of effective command-and-control policies with incentives, financial and technical support, and strong leadership at sub-national level. Although Brazil has no specific laws relating to REDD+, a strong legal framework on climate change and reducing deforestation is in place both at federal level and more specifically in the Amazon. Brazil has pledged to reduce deforestation in the Amazon by 80% to 3 800 square kilometres a year, by 2020.

- 1 Highlights of ADP Technical Expert Meeting on Land Use, 11 June 2014. Available at https://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_jun_2014/items/8408txt.php.
- 2 Taxas anuais do desmatamento - 1988 até 2013. Available at http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes/prodes_1988_2013.htm.
- 3 Slowing Amazon deforestation through public policy and interventions in beef and soy supply chains. D Nepstad et al., Science 6 June 2014: Vol. 344 no. 6188 pp. 1118-1123. DOI: 10.1126/science.1248525 Available at <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6188/1118.abstract>.

Investment Plan in June 2011, achieving consensus on the drivers of deforestation, and validating a National REDD+ Framework Strategy in November 2012 and a REDD+ investment plan in August 2013. (Box 2)

From the beginning, DRC took a multi-sector approach that considered provincial differences and realities on the ground, and involved ongoing consultations with civil society. However, implementing reforms and field activities in DRC is challenging. Brazil provides examples of how some of the challenges can be overcome for Congolese to reflect on.

Box 2. Democratic Republic of the Congo National REDD+ Framework Strategy and Investment Plan

The DRC National REDD+ Framework Strategy, adopted in November 2012, sets the strategic vision and orientation of the country's government towards a green economy, marking entry into the REDD+ investment phase. Based on a national consensus on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, it identifies seven pillars for REDD+ implementation: agriculture, energy, forestry, governance, land-use planning, land tenure and demography. Key reforms in land use planning and land tenure and pilot projects are determinant for implementing the National REDD+ Framework Strategy. Funding for REDD+ activities is expected to come from many sources and will be channelled through a National REDD+ Fund which is being developed. The first REDD+ investment plan 2013–2016 promotes REDD+ investment in local and national priority activities in three complementary areas: tools for REDD+ governance, land-use reform, and integrated REDD+ programmes.

3 Methods for catalysing change through South-South cooperation

The cooperation agreement between DRC and Brazil on REDD+ and forestry created momentum for pursuing common interests. Identifying relevant cooperation opportunities required a thorough analysis. This analysis was undertaken in three steps to ensure that participants, both technical and political, took ownership and identified opportunities to cooperate that will provide real added value for both parties (Figure 1), and provided the opportunity for face-to-face interactions during two exchange missions and a field trip of Congolese stakeholders to Brazil.

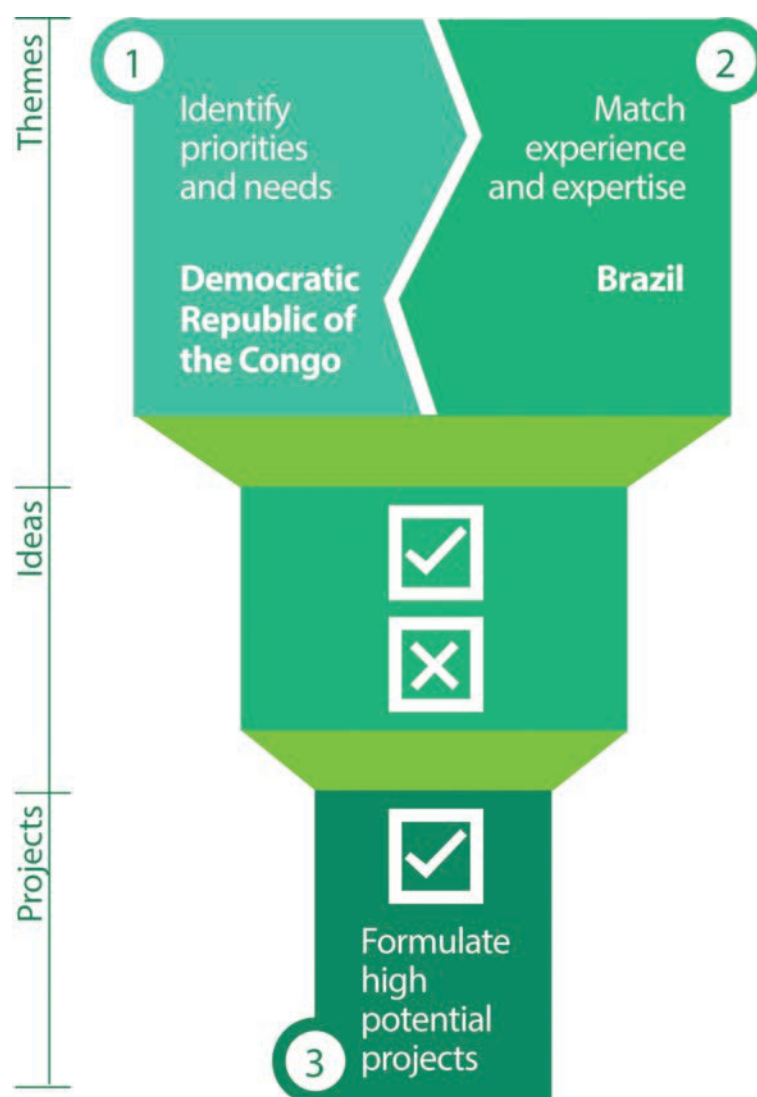


Figure 1. Assessing opportunities for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Brazil to cooperate on REDD+

Step 1. Identify priorities and needs

The first step was to assess DRC priorities and needs to indicate where there could be opportunities to cooperate. The assessment considered the findings of previous exchanges with Brazil, and analysed needs and gaps relating to the DRC National REDD+ Framework Strategy. This step included an analysis of the DRC REDD+ Investment Plan and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (Annex 2).

Step 2. Match experience and expertise

Once partners had identified sectoral opportunities for cooperation, they compared contexts and experiences in the two countries in order to match DRC needs with Brazilian expertise and solutions. This involved assessing the costs and benefits of Brazilian best practices, pinpointing success factors and drawing lessons from policy and project implementation.

Project partners screened federal and state policies and programmes, undertook desk reviews, and consulted and interviewed partners in Brazil. A DRC delegation gathered further insights and details from field visits during a study tour of Brazil (Annexes 1 and 3).

Step 3. Formulate high potential projects

The final step was to apply best practices, and programme and project approaches to the specific institutional, cultural, political and economic context of DRC in order to prepare tailored project proposals. The feasibility of applying Brazilian approaches in DRC was assessed taking into account the required scale of implementation (policy as compared to a project approach), the existence of Brazilian technical partners to work with and potential sources of funding.

Engaging DRC REDD+ practitioners (Annex 2), making consultations transparent and building the capacity of key individuals ensured ownership of the method and results. DRC partners were mobilised during two missions to DRC (Figure 2) and a study tour of Brazil's key federal and sub-national programmes and projects (Annex 3).



Figure 2. South-South fact-finding missions

4 Drawing on Brazilian experiences to meet REDD+ challenges in DRC

In Step 1, partners identified the key priorities for the development of REDD+ in DRC and, in particular, for the move towards jurisdictional investment in the Mai Ndombe emissions reduction programme (Box 3). The Mai Ndombe programme will be a laboratory for designing and testing REDD+ mechanisms, and could benefit from Brazil's experience in implementing REDD+ sub-nationally.

During this first step, DRC identified the following priorities relating to REDD+:

- Elaborate a REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanism that will distribute carbon and non-carbon benefits and revenues resulting from REDD+ activities transparently and fairly, and testing the mechanism in the Mai Ndombe emissions reduction programme.
- Clarify and define grievance and conflict resolution mechanisms in REDD+ implementation.
- Operationalise the DRC MRV system, in particular by enhancing the development of the satellite monitoring system and supporting national forest inventories.
- Develop standardised procedures for land-use planning to address the absence of national and provincial land-use zoning, and integrate local, small-scale mapping initiatives with mapping at territorial and provincial levels.
- Strengthen measures to prevent and fight against illegal logging in small-scale/artisanal concessions where there are no management plans.
- Provide secure access to land and land tenure for rural communities and indigenous peoples; which is a major constraint to the development of agriculture and community forestry.
- Improve agricultural efficiency and organise smallholder producers in order to reduce slash-and-burn agricultural practices that put pressure on forests.
- Supply households with sustainable energy; wood accounts for 95% of energy consumption in rural households.

Partners examined Brazil's experience in addressing the issues relating to REDD+ identified by DRC as priorities. They identified five areas where Brazil's experience matches DRC needs and where cooperation would be valuable (Table 1).

Box 3. The Mai Ndombe emissions reduction programme

DRC and partners are currently developing the Mai Ndombe region emissions reduction programme, the first jurisdictional-scale REDD+ programme in Africa. The programme will cover 12.3 million hectares, approximately 9.8 million hectares of forest and 2.5 million hectares of mixed agricultural land and savannah. The programme, a first step in implementing the DRC REDD+ Framework Strategy at jurisdictional level, will be a model for Green Development in the Congo Basin and a key test of action on climate change in highly forested low deforestation countries. As the first jurisdictional REDD+ programme in Africa, Mai Ndombe will set a precedent for performance-based programmes on the continent. This means that the highest possible standards in programme design and implementation must apply.

The approach to the Mai Ndombe programme is participatory and involves institutional partners, national and local civil society, private promoters in the region and international donors. In May 2014, the programme made the shortlist of countries aiming to benefit from emissions-reduction payments of up to USD 60 million from the World Bank-managed Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Emissions reductions from the area are estimated at 29 MtCO₂ (metric ton carbon dioxide equivalent) to 2020.



Table 1. Opportunities for Brazil-DRC cooperation on REDD+ and forests

Benefit-sharing	
Observed Brazilian initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolsa Floresta, an incentive-based forest conservation initiative of the State of Amazonas • Juma Sustainable Development Reserve REDD+ Project (Fundação Amazonas Sustentável, FAS) • System of Incentives for Environmental Services (SISA), Acre State • Proposal for a REDD+ nested approach in the State of Amazonas (FAS and Instituto de Conservação e Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Amazonas, IDESAM)
Lessons for DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdictional approaches are a successful way of significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions • Payments based on results can be tailored to compensate the opportunity costs of all stakeholders. In the case of Acre State this involved both rewarding efforts to reduce GHG emissions and efforts to conserve forests (stock-and-flow approach). • Successful jurisdictional approaches are embedded in legislation and regulatory frameworks. They make use of existing institutions and channels (such as local funds), and support ongoing programmes and established government priorities coherently. Legal frameworks that provide a mechanism for sharing benefits facilitate implementation. • Project management by public-private partnerships that involves communities and civil society allows for greater transparency, efficiency and accountability to stakeholders. • Methods for social engagement need to be established and clear, and beneficiaries need to be directly involved in developing local projects. • Participatory clarification of land tenure rights and coherent land-use planning are essential prerequisites for distribution of benefits.
Opportunities for cooperation	<p>Brazil's experience provides technical insights for developing a benefit-sharing mechanism for the Mai Ndombe Emissions Reduction Programme, in particular with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the relevance and feasibility of a stock-and-flow approach • Integrating existing benefit-sharing arrangements at project level with jurisdictional programmes and frameworks • Testing conflict resolution mechanisms, such as an ombudsman at jurisdictional level, and clarifying institutional arrangements for community conflict resolution.
Forest monitoring	
Brazilian initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plano de Ação para Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal (PPCDAm) • Measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) participatory mapping of the Bolsa Floresta Programme (Programa de Monitoramento Participativo do Desmatamento e Degradação Florestal, PPDUC)
Lessons for DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources and technology are at the heart of a functional monitoring system. Operationalising an MRV system takes time. National capacity in research centres and universities needs to be built early on. Ensuring young people at community level participate and receive training is a good approach. • Data transparency, making all data available on the internet and by other means, is a powerful accountability tool. • Finance at scale is necessary to ensure the credibility and long-term sustainability of a monitoring system. Developing solid partnerships with the private sector can help fill the funding gap.
Opportunities for cooperation	<p>In the context of operationalising the DRC national forest monitoring system (2015-18), Brazilian technical assistance could support the finalisation of the TerraCongo platform, a showcase of Brazil's technical know-how, and progress on the other key pillars of the system.</p>

Land use planning	
Brazilian initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological and economic zoning experiences in Acre and Amazonas States (Zoneamento Econômico e Ecológico, ZEE) • Rural environmental registry (Cadastro Ambiental Rural, CAR)
Lessons for DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing a law on land use and a national land-use plan for large countries, such as Brazil and DRC, is feasible. A clear legal and regulatory framework for land-use planning can be integrated in a broad incentive system to reduce deforestation. • Ecological and economic zoning in Brazil proved to be an efficient tool for reducing deforestation thanks to a cross-sectoral approach. A permanent institution for inter-ministerial collaboration ensures high-level leadership and coordination.
Opportunities for cooperation	The Brazilian approach to economic and ecological zoning could be adapted and tested in DRC, and could help determine local, provincial and national land-use plans.
Securing tenure rights	
Brazilian initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolsa Floresta Programme • Rural environmental registry (Cadastro Ambiental Rural, CAR) • Sustainable settlements in the Amazon (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia, IPAM)
Lessons for DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the rights of communities and indigenous peoples to access and use land means taking into account the specifics of their livelihoods. • Independent institutions, such as the National Indian Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio, FUNAI), can play an important role in defending the rights of vulnerable people.
Opportunities for cooperation	Brazilian expertise could support current work on land tenure reform in DRC; in particular in defining property and resource rights, and resource use, for indigenous peoples and communities that take account of cultural, social and economic characteristics.
Climate-smart agriculture	
Brazilian initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Innovation Marketplace (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, EMBRAPA) • Sustainable settlements in the Amazon (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia, IPAM) • Sustainable Landscape Fund for São Felix do Xingu municipality (The Nature Conservancy, TNC)
Lessons for DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no need to deforest pristine forests to raise agricultural yields. Technical solutions exist to provide alternatives to slash-and-burn practices when these are unsustainable. This means supporting research institutes and universities. • Attempts at zoning must take into account agricultural production trade flows. • Partnerships with financial institutions can provide isolated communities with access to credit through simple technologies. • Structuring communities (for example by setting up cooperatives) and giving women a central role in decision-making are success factors in developing value chains for local commodities.
Opportunities for cooperation	DRC partners could test Brazilian cowpea varieties in agroforestry/farming systems in the Mai Ndombe region through the EMBRAPA (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária) Agricultural Innovation Marketplace initiative. Disseminated on a large scale, the most promising cowpea varieties could increase production for human and animal consumption; diversify diets (currently based mainly on cassava); increase fixation of atmospheric nitrogen to accelerate restoration of soil fertility; and reduce pressure on forests.



Photo: EFI

5 Learning lessons from South-South cooperation

South-South exchanges provide opportunities for policy makers, land-use managers and other stakeholders to examine how other Southern countries have tackled challenges similar to their own, and to discover new ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emerging REDD+ strategies. Extending South-South cooperation beyond immediate exchanges of knowledge to building practical technical collaboration is challenging yet rewarding. Sustained technical cooperation requires strong political support and relies on well-defined, trusting partnerships.

South-South cooperation has significant transaction costs; both for benefiting countries and for organisations that could potentially provide support. In a context of limited resources, a major challenge is therefore to build win-win situations that provide partners with opportunities to learn and gain from each other's experiences, and that deliver tailored solutions to unlock bottlenecks. Collaboration can focus on challenges that have not been addressed through local means and may require innovative thinking. At the same time, merely replicating third-party policies or projects is not the solution. A balance must be struck between workable solutions and partners' interests. It is therefore essential to prioritise needs, assess political and technical feasibility, identify financing and demonstrate the added value of proposed cooperation activities.

In considering South-South collaboration, partners need to take their scale of intervention into account. Brazil's success in fighting deforestation stems from an overall framework and programmatic tools that target several sectors simultaneously (for example, land use planning, secure land tenure and control of illegal logging). Brazil's multi-sector framework makes drawing stand-alone technical recommendations for DRC challenging. Circumventing that difficulty meant isolating success factors for policy implementation. The study therefore specifically identified best practices at the sub-national level from which lessons could be learnt. Similarly, testing technical solutions at project or programme level (for example, the Mai Ndombe programme in DRC) offers a better chance of success than attempting to influence reform at the national level.

Nurturing relationships between partners and securing sustainable financing for joint activities are major challenges to South-South cooperation. International partners can help countries to establish relationships and develop joint action plans. Nevertheless, cooperation only works in the long term when Southern countries take the lead in supporting and encouraging partnerships. The aim of this study was to fast-track Brazilian–DRC cooperation by proposing concrete project ideas to implement the Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries. The project ideas developed through this study provide a basis for interested partners to take this bilateral South-South partnership beyond political commitments.

Annexes

Annex 1. Projects, programmes and policies studied or visited in Brazil

Programme/project	Partners
Sustainable settlements in the Amazon	Institute of Environmental Research in the Amazon (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia, IPAM)
Sustainable Landscape Fund for São Felix do Xingu municipality	The Nature Conservancy, Brazil
Agricultural Innovation Marketplace	EMBRAPA
Bolsa Floresta Programme	Sustainable Amazonas Foundation; State Government of Amazonas
Juma REDD+ Project	Sustainable Amazonas Foundation; State Government of Amazonas
Amazonas State Plan for Controlling and Preventing Deforestation (Plano de Ação para prevenção e controle do desmatamento na Amazônia Legal, PPCDAM-Amazonas)	Government of Amazonas
Rural Environmental Registry (Cadastro Ambiental Rural, CAR)	Brazilian Government; Government of Amazonas
REDD+ System of the State of Acre	Government of Acre
Proposal of a REDD+ nested approach in the State of Amazonas	FAS; Instituto de Conservação e Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Amazonas (IDESAM)

Annex 2. Partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Brazil

	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Brazil
Administration	Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Land Tenure; Ministry of Land-use Planning; Commission Nationale de la Réforme Foncière (CONAREF); Embassy of Brazil to DRC	Ministério do Meio Ambiente (MMA), Brazil Strategic Affairs Secretary (Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos, SAE); Amazonas State Secretary of Sustainable Development and Environment (SDS-AM); Amazonas State Institute for Environmental Protection (Instituto de Proteção Ambiental do Amazonas, IPAAM); Acre State Climate Change Institute (IMC-AC); Brazilian Enterprise for Agricultural Research (EMBRAPA)
Civil society	REDD+ civil society platform (Groupe de Travail Climat REDD, GTCR), Council for Environmental Defense by legality and traceability (Conseil pour la Défense Environnementale par la Légalité et la Traçabilité, CODELT), Agricultural producers' association (Confederation of Agricultural Producers of the Congo, CONAPAC), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF DRC), the Pygmies Rights Association (OSAPY), GI Agro	Sustainable Amazonas Foundation (FAS); Institute for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of Amazonas (IDESAM); The Nature Conservancy Brazil (TNC); Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM);
Communities	Ibi village	Communities of the Rio Negro State Reserves

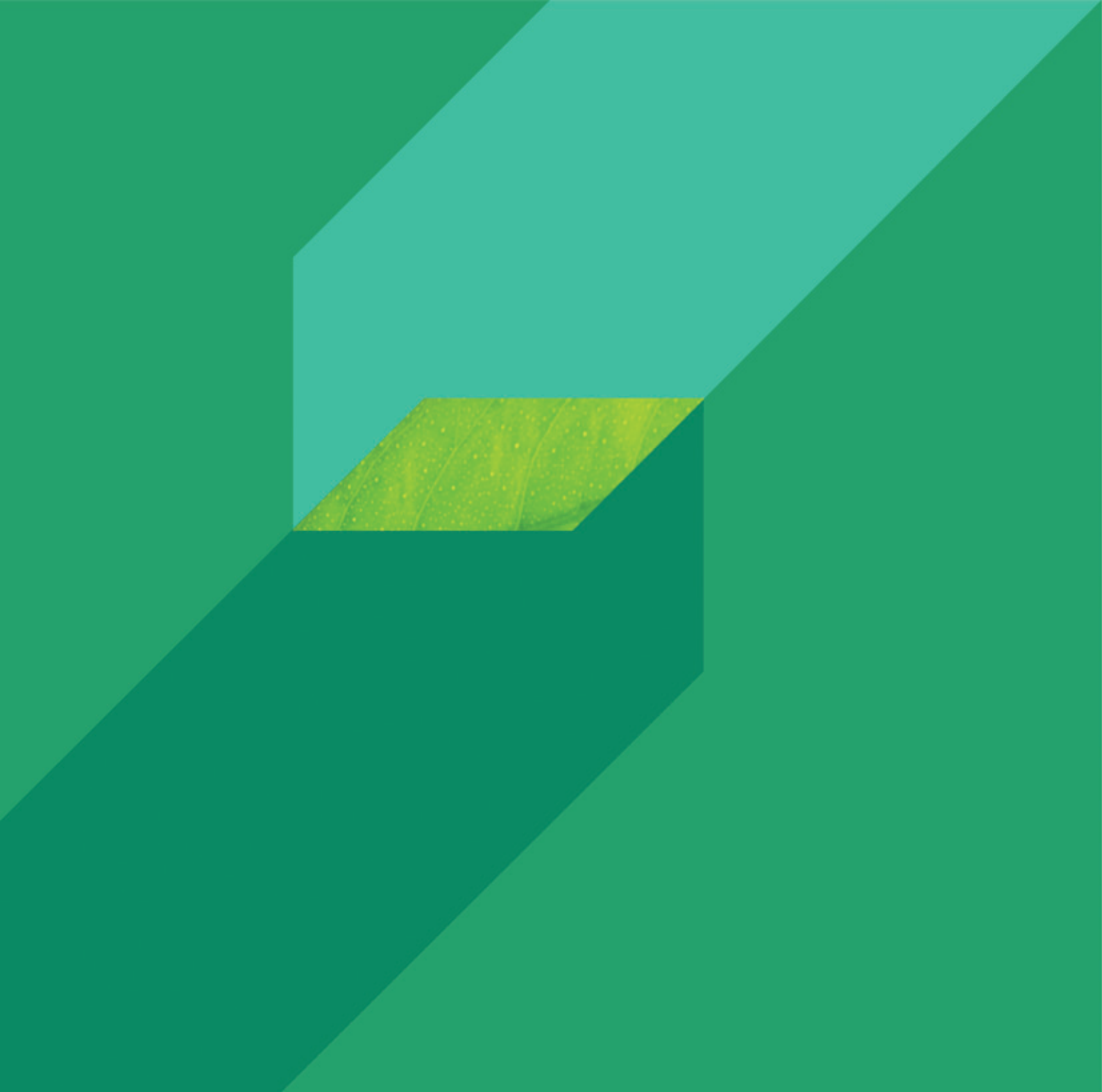
Donors	World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), German technical cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ), Netherlands development cooperation (SNV), European Union (EU)	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), European Union
Private sector	Wildlife Works Carbon, Novacel	

Annex 3. Participants in the study trip to Brazil of May 2014

	Name	Function
DRC delegation	Victor Kabengele Wa Kadilu	National REDD+ Coordinator
	Christophe Musampa	Head, Division of Inventory and Forest Management, Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism
	Kamathe Katsongo	Land use and tenure expert, National REDD+ Coordination
	Rubin Rashidi	Environmental and social safeguards expert, National REDD+ Coordination
	Willy Loyombo	President, Organisation d'Accompagnement et d'Appui aux Pygmées (OSAPY)
Supporting team	Virgilio Viana	Director General, Fundação Amazonas Sustentável (FAS)
	Eduardo Taveira	Technical Director, FAS
	Valcleia Soledade	Bolsa Floresta Programme Manager, FAS
	Victor Salviati	Project manager, FAS
	Adeline Dontenville	EU REDD Facility
	Jérôme Maurice	Consultant, SalvaTerra
	Fernanda Carvalho Viana	Consultant, SalvaTerra

Photo: EFI





Authors: EU REDD Facility, Sustainable Amazonas Foundation

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