

WELCOME!

ISSUE 1 – JAN. 2014

Welcome to our first newsletter! In this edition, we provide a brief overview of the project aim and its partners, and the project activities.

Project Introduction

Improving Forest Governance through Independent Monitoring

The “Improving Forest Governance through Independent Monitoring” Project began in July 2013. It is funded by the Norwegian Government Forest and Climate Initiative and the Project implementation was developed by the IIASA (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) – a research Institute based in Austria. Its activities are implemented by two Congolese NGOs, OSFAC and OGF.

This project is built on the results of the Moabi Project that took place between June 2011 to June 2013.

The aim of this new project is to establish an independent monitoring system to support the REDD+ implementation at national and project scales. As part of these objectives, in July 2013, the first consortium meeting agreed on three pilot activities:

- The design of an Independent Monitoring REDD + methodology (IM-REDD) in Mai Ndombe district, where a REDD+ project is being implemented by Wildlife Works;
- Release of an annual and national REDD + risks map;
- Mapping land use by the local communities through a participatory approach.

IM-REDD

OGF build up its expertise in Mai Ndombe

At the first consortium meeting held in July 16, 2013, the Project stakeholders decided to implement the REDD+ independent monitoring activities in the district of Mai Ndombe (located in Bandundu Province), where a REDD+



Community mapping event (Serge Bondo Kayembe/OGF)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Community mapping workshop in Kisantu:**
- **January 27th to January 31th, 2014**
- **Community mapping test in Equateur Province:**
- **February 2nd to February 11th, 2014**
- **2nd Consortium meeting in Kinshasa:**
- **February 13th, 2014**

project is led by Wildlife Works – a US based forest carbon company.

An OGF team composed by Serge Bondo Kayembe (Deputy Coordinator at OGF) and Christelle Lushule Amani (Lawyer, Programme Officer at OGF) conducted a first field trip between September 14 and September 28, 2013. This scoping mission had the following objectives:

- Identify the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples that may eventually be part of a network of local observers;
- Identify their needs (training, equipment, informations, etc.) in order to establish an operational network for

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independent REDD+ reporting.

OGF conducted its investigation in 11 villages and also met the Wildlife Works staff. OGF identified a number of challenges to overcome. The poverty of the area was reflected in the lack of electricity, absence of mobile networks, and very limited livelihood opportunities in several villages. Moreover, when interviewed by the monitoring team, the local population knew little about the REDD+.

To support further monitoring, three CSOs and 11 people were identified as potential participants in the development of an IM-REDD methodology.

In 2014, four field missions in Mai Ndombe have already been planned:

- Two other scoping missions will extend the local network of REDD+ observers on the WWC project area. They will be completed during the second quarter of 2014.
- Then, a training mission for local observers will be organized by OGF in the third quarter of 2014. The goal will be to train the participants to the REDD+ data collection.
- Finally, a verification mission will be undertaken in the fourth quarter of 2014, in order to check the good operation of the observers' network and the data collection.



Bonobo, DRC (Leo Bottrill)

IM REDD Methodology Development

A collaboration between EFI, FLAG and OGF begins

On December 3-4th, 2013, EFI (European Forest Institute) organized a meeting in Kinshasa, with the technical partners of the IM REDD. Several objectives were assigned to the workshop:

- Assess the progress realized by the Independent Monitoring since the end of the REM project (Resource Extraction Monitoring)
- discuss the prospects for the development of an IMREDD.

Following the meeting, Cameroon-based NGO FLAG (Forest Legacy Advisory Group) proposed a project to support the design of an IM REDD methodology. This work is expected to last 18 months and will be informed by the field experience acquired in OGF's monitoring work in Mai Ndombe.

CSO registry

Towards a partnership agreement between OGF, GTCR and RFN

As part of its activities, the Project will

- establish a registry of CSO working on REDD+ issues
- make it publicly available through the Moabi platform.

On November the 27th 2013, OGF organized a first meeting with environmental CSOs to discuss the establishment of a civil society registry for the Moabi platform. The meeting identified 15 CSOs who could support this endeavor.

Then, a second meeting was held on February 20, 2014 with GTCR (Groupe de Travail Climat REDD) and Rainforest Foundation Norway. The aim was to discuss a potential collaboration allowing an efficient implementation of the CSO database and the enhancement of the GTCR NGO.

At the end of the meeting, the stakeholders agreed to sign MOU to formalize the collaboration. The registry should be established by the end of the second quarter of 2014.

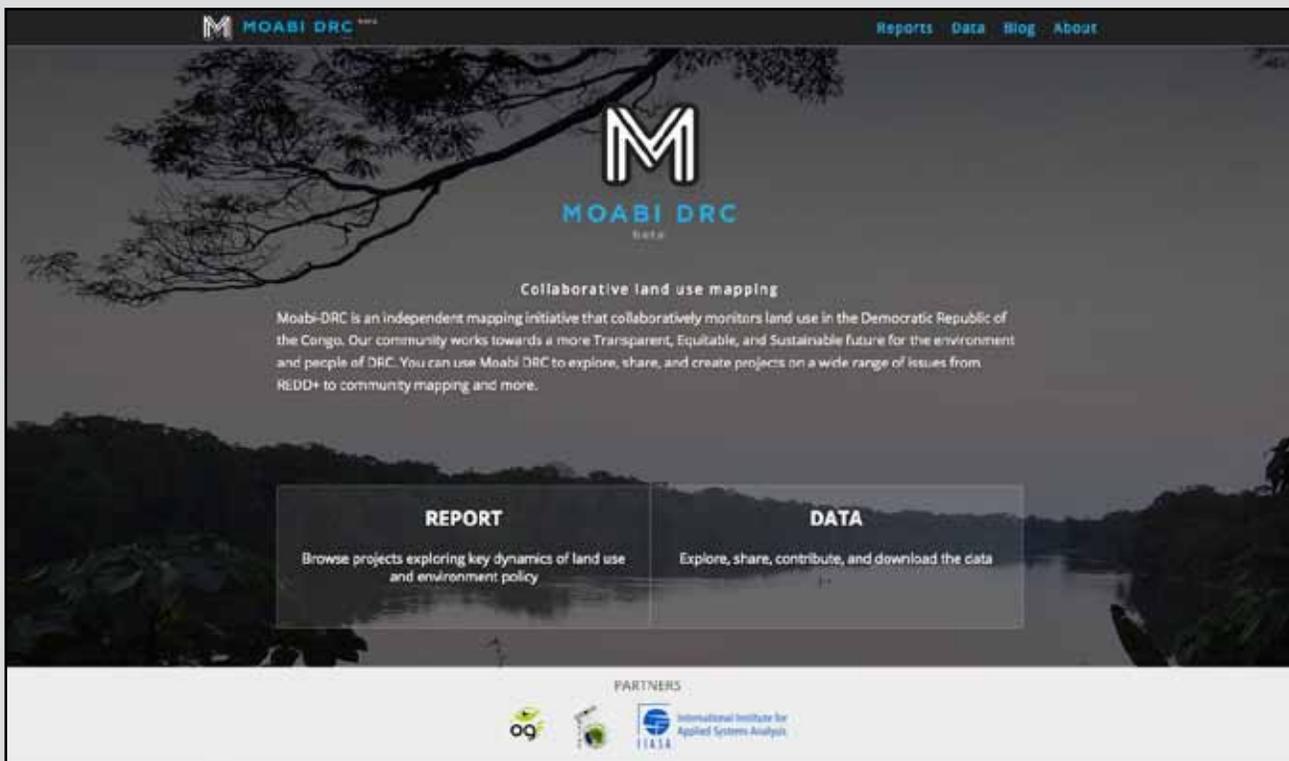
REDD + Risk

A tool to map REDD + and Resource Competition

The first Consortium meeting decided to release an annual DRC REDD+ risk map, which would identify economic activities that could compete with pilot REDD+ projects.

On November the 13th 2013, OSFAC held a meeting with the Agriculture Ministry, the Oil Ministry, the Mining Registry, SNEL (National Electricity Company), Infrastructure Coordination Unit, Congo Geographic Institute, and World Resources Institute in order to strengthen its databases. Preliminary analysis by OSFAC identified 206 activities such as mining permits, infrastructure projects and palm oil concessions that directly overlap with the 10 existing REDD+ projects.

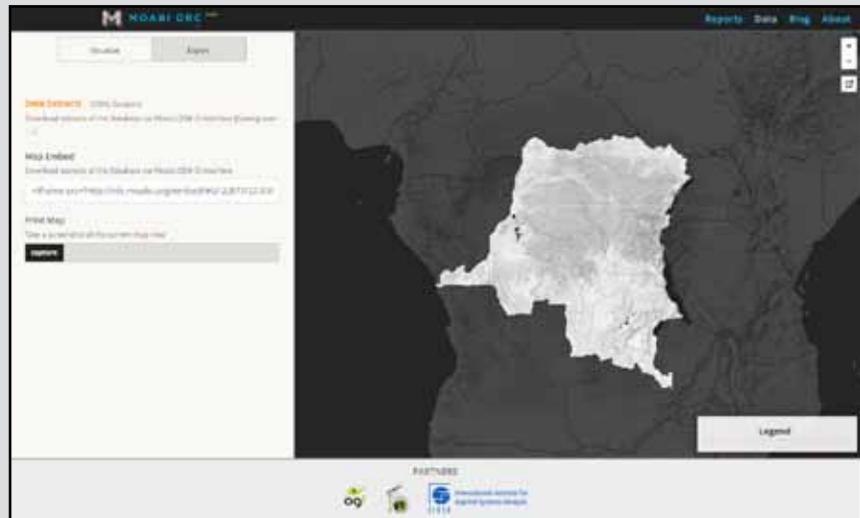
Then, as part of the second consortium meeting held on February 13, 2014, an updated version of the map was presented. Comments made by the partners will allow to publish a final version in April 2014 on the new Moabi platform and in a poster format. If you are interested in receiving this map please email [Herve Kashongwe](mailto:Herve.Kashongwe) <hkashongwe@gmail.com>.



rdc.moabi.org *New website features pilot projects*

The existing Moabi RDC website is being completely redesigned with new features and content. The new platform is being built on OpenStreetMap (OSM) – the world’s largest and most successful collaborative mapping application. We will launch a beta version site on Earth Day and will add new features over the course of the year.

The future Moabi platform will allow users share, edit, and disseminate spatial information on natural resource issues in DRC with a particular focus on REDD+. It will feature a grievance mechanism, IM REDD monitoring reports, and a civil society registry. These features are designed in close consultation with the consortium working groups. By using open source technology, we



will ensure that the platform is simple to replicate as well as regularly updated by the OSM developer community. Moabi RDC will also feature a smartphone app to support independent forest monitoring and a simple SMS messaging system to gather responses from communities with cellphone access.

Website : <http://www.rdc.moabi.org>



IIASA

Project Leader

IIASA (International Institute for Applied System Analysis) is a scientific institute based in Austria that researches on complex environmental and resource issues such as climate change and deforestation. IIASA has a multidisciplinary team of researchers who use the latest technology to provide innovative solutions to overcome the challenges of the 21st Century.

IIASA is represented by Leo Bottrill, the Project Leader and Benoît Thuaire, the Field Manager based in DRC.

Website: www.iiasa.ac.at

OSFAC

Forest Observatory working at the Central Africa scale

“L’Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale” (OSFAC) was created in Libreville (Gabon) in 2000. Since 2005, OSFAC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) and is now a well established training center for GIS and remote sensing, based in Kinshasa. Its main objective is to support the management of natural resources by i) producing reliable land cover products, ii) distributing satellite data, iii) building capacity and iv) providing technical assistance to implementing partners, including government institutions, projects, universities, NGOs, the civil society, etc.

As part of our project, Herve Kashongwe, our new GIS coordinator will be responsible for the technical component of the project, specifically managing the GIS databases and technical activities in the consortium such as the REDD+ Risk Map.

Website : www.osfac.net

OGF partnership

An NGO putting governance at the center of its focus

OGF (“Observatoire de la Gouvernance Forestière”) is a Congolese organization that has been created in September 2012, following an IM-FLEG project implemented by REM (Resource Extraction Monitoring). The goal of OGF is to develop an Independent Monitoring related to the forest activities through the participation of the civil society.

Composed by two lawyers, two foresters and an accountant, OGF assess the effective implementation of existing legislation and regulation. In 2013, OGF has been recognized as an Independent Observer as part of the FLEG process. In this framework, OGF conducts monitoring missions on logging activities and supports the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA).

In 2014, OGF will design an independent monitoring methodology at the REDD + Project scale, in in the prospect of becoming a mandated Independent Observer for the REDD+ process.

Website: <http://www.ogfrdc.cd>



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The views expressed herein are not intended to reflect the policy views of either of these entities or their affiliates.

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