

# MAI NDOMBE REDD+ PROJECT

## PROJECT SUMMARY

One of the world's most important forests in the fight against climate change, the Congo Basin Rainforest is also one of the least-developed places on Earth. The Wildlife Works Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project protects 300,000 hectares of critical bonobo and forest elephant habitat within the world's second-largest intact rainforest and some of the most important wetlands on the planet, the Congo Basin.

This project reduces the principal drivers of forest and biodiversity loss and is charting a new pathway for community prosperity through comprehensive investments into the surrounding local communities, which are among the most under-served in the world. Such investments include building and renovating schools, providing healthcare services (such as access to immunizations), supporting food security and nutrition (such as through agricultural diversification), and providing capacity building activities that empower local communities.



## ORIGINS

Illegalities and corruption are prevalent in DRC's industrial logging industry, largely due to the lack of government oversight and management on-the-ground. Without law enforcement presence and regular site inspections, forest concessions are home to illegal timber harvesting as well as violations of social, fiscal and environmental commitments.

1990s  
-2000s



2002

A moratorium was established to prevent new logging concessions from being granted by the government across most of the Congo Basin rainforest. It put a stop to 143 logging permits, canceling 23 million ha of operations.

In principle, this moratorium provides the opportunity for local communities to own rights to their lands and resources. However, environmental campaigners have repeatedly accused the government of violating this suspension, which would ultimately limit the communities from exercising their land rights and prospering from their resources.

Following a revision by the government of the DRC National Forest Code, and in an effort to address corruption in the sector, 91 of the 156 logging contracts then in effect in the DRC were suspended. This included concessions along western shore of Lake Mai Ndombe.

2008

Ecosystem Restoration Associates (ERA) Congo submitted a formal request to the DRC government to manage these concessions for the purpose of protecting the area from destructive logging practices, legal and illegal - using carbon revenues to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development. This was accepted by the Ministry of Environment in 2011.

2010



2012

Former timber concession of >300,000ha now managed as a conservation concession - the **Wildlife Works Mai Ndombe REDD+ project**. Wood extraction reduced through the halting of largescale logging practices (e.g road building). Activities begin to provide the highly vulnerable people living in the project area with basic needs.

## THREATS

Prior to the project, logging companies had severely damaged the environment in the region and had largely ignored the rights and health of the wildlife and community. Logging drove already threatened wildlife populations further down and brought little to no economic benefit to the local people. In the western part of the DRC, along the west side of Lake Mai Ndombe, almost 250,000 hectares of rainforest, highly valued by logging companies, had been zoned for commercial timber extraction.

At the same time, the people living in the project area had little access to basic social services, and remain highly vulnerable.



## INTERVENTION MODEL



Since the project launch in 2011, logging has halted and with the aid of reforestation programs, the deforested areas have had a chance to regenerate, bringing back biodiversity and the ability for wildlife to thrive.

Wildlife Works robust benefit-sharing program ensures over 75% of project operating costs are invested in programs of work benefiting the community key among them is building schools and health clinics.

Wildlife Works has numerous programs in place in villages throughout the project zone to reduce the drivers of deforestation and improve livelihoods and well-being including: providing training on sustainable agriculture & fishing practices, helping build and stock fish ponds, planting high yield cassava and other cash crops in demonstration farms, and hiring and training villagers as full-time employees so they have sustainable livelihoods.