

Rights and Resources Initiative

Tenure Baseline Study in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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RRI is facilitating a multi-stakeholder baseline analysis of land and forest tenure in the Democratic Republic of Congo with a wide set of Congolese and international partner organizations. The project began in 2012 and will be completed by the end of 2013 to inform national tenure reform processes and related initiatives.

Objective

The objective of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Tenure Baseline Study (DRC-TBS) is to build on emerging dynamics within the DRC to support stronger pro-poor, rights-based land and forest tenure reform. Several initiatives already exist that deal with different aspects of such an approach but they remain somewhat isolated in different projects and are scattered in different parts of the country. A comprehensive study joining a wide set of practitioners, policy-makers and researchers may act as a catalyst for establishing a common platform of knowledge and understanding for better informed reform

Progress to Date

In 2012 RRI began a process to conduct a “baseline study” assembling key actors in civil society and the UN system working on land/forest rights to establish a common analysis of the variety of land/forest tenure situations in DRC. The established aim is to use the study results as a basis for advocacy and to contribute to various processes currently underway in DRC, such as the development of a REDD strategy, reforms of the forest sector and the 1973 Land Code, and the implementation of the 2002 Forest Code which creates a framework for statutory recognition of customary rights over forests and forest lands, but lacks the decree necessary to operationalize the rights of communities to their lands.

The baseline study process began with a consultative workshop in Kinshasa in late May 2012 to refine the conceptual approach and methodology. The workshop created an opportunity to construct a coalition of interested organizations who have pledged to participate in the research and analysis for the baseline (UN-Habitat, Forest Peoples Programme, Tropenbos International, CODELT, Réseau de Ressources Naturelles, Rainforest Foundation Norway, WWF, WRI, Agir pour le Développement (ADEV), Centre d'accompagnement des Autochtones Pygmées et Minoritaires Vulnérables (CAMV), Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DGPA), Cercle pour la Défense de l'Environnement (CEDEN), Réseau Cref, Coordination Nationale REDD, CIRAD and others).

Through inputs from Congolese researchers, international consultants and coalition partners, a comprehensive methodology has been prepared to conduct the baseline in very complex environments. Field researchers will conduct research in 6 provinces in 2012. Additionally, a set of international and Congolese experts will use the field reports and additional literature and interviews to develop thematic studies on: a) customary tenure rights, b) tenure and livelihoods, c) threats and challenges to tenure security, d) maps and zoning processes, and e) institutions and decentralization. The results of the field reports and thematic reports will feed into a consolidated baseline study that will be validated by national and provincial workshops over the course of 2013.

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