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Congo community to use carbon payments to put kids through school

Reforestation project is DRC's first registered under Kyoto Protocol

Washington/Kinshasa, March 8, 2011 –A small community in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that decided to replant its degraded forest is ensuring education for hundreds of children and providing basic health care services – in part thanks to carbon revenue that their reforestation project is expected to generate.

Ibi village, located on the Batéké Plateau approximately 150 kilometers from the capital Kinshasa, is now finding itself in the spotlight as it boasts the DRC's first Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project approved and registered under the Kyoto Protocol. In addition to fighting climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide, the *Ibi Batéké* Carbon Sink Plantation Project is helping surrounding communities improve the livelihoods of its people through job creation and provision of health and education while promoting other environmental benefits such as the regeneration of patches of savannah and sheltering wildlife.

The project is seen as a successful model for the rest of the country and indeed the continent. Through the planting of different types of acacia, eucalyptus and pine trees, the project is directly absorbing carbon from the atmosphere. Part of the reforestation will be used as a sustainable source of charcoal for urban areas, such as Kinshasa, which will reduce the pressure of deforestation on native forests. By dealing preemptively with the effects of climate change including a focus on employment and better health care, this project is aligned with the World Bank's newly approved strategy for Africa.

NOVACEL, a private company founded and managed by local people from the Batéké Plateau, is reforesting over 4,200 hectares of degraded land, which will employ around 400 part- and full-time staff and absorb an estimated 2.4 million tons of carbon dioxide over the next 30 years. This allows the project to generate carbon credits which are purchased by the World Bank's BioCarbon Fund and private sector firms such as the French company ORBEO. The carbon revenue will be invested in reforestation and local development activities - a primary school is providing over 200 children with an education and a clinic is providing basic health care to the local population. Local farmers are also receiving support from GI-

Agro, an NGO linked to NOVACEL, to adopt more productive agriculture techniques, contributing to food security in the area.

According to **Olivier Mushiete, head of NOVACEL**, *“What makes Ibi Batéké so unique is that it adopts an integrated vision of truly sustainable local development. The project has three sources of revenue: income from cassava intercropped with acacias; fuelwood, produced from the wood of these acacias and sold in Kinshasa; and finally, carbon credits, sold on the global carbon market.”*

As a local firm, NOVACEL attaches primary importance to providing its community with development opportunities. In addition, it supports an important element of research, including the development of more productive acacia varieties, promoting a better understanding of the natural regeneration process of local flora, and testing new agricultural techniques, such as biochar.

The *Ibi Batéké* Project is the first of its kind to be registered by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the DRC, and is only the third CDM forestry project to be registered in Africa. Reforestation and avoided deforestation are areas where African countries see an opportunity to take part in climate change mitigation and a chance to generate important revenues. The project developer has signed an emission reduction purchase agreement (ERPA) with the World Bank’s BioCarbon Fund for the purchase of 500,000 certified emission reductions (CERs) to be generated by 2017.

“We believe that Ibi Batéké is a concrete example of the capacity of the private sector to help transform the national economy,” said **Ms. Marie Françoise Marie-Nelly, Country Director for the World Bank in DRC and the Republic of Congo**. *“Given the suitable conditions, such initiatives can be scaled up, creating thousands of jobs while reducing the pressure on native ecosystems. The World Bank is looking forward to working with NOVACEL and other private sector actors in the DRC in creating the conditions for replication - like access to affordable credit, security over land tenure and access to reliable technical assistance.”*

The *Ibi Batéké* model has been identified by DRC’s Ministry of Environment as a building block for the national REDD+ (reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) strategy, under preparation with support from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the UN-REDD program.

“REDD+ is about sustainable forest management. It is a tool for countries to support successful initiatives that reduce pressure on forests. The Ibi Batéké does exactly that. By providing a sustainable source of charcoal to a large urban market, the project reduces pressure on native forests and by promoting tree planting, the project results in carbon absorption from the atmosphere”, says **Ms. Idah Pswarayi-Riddihough, Sector Manager for the Africa Environment Department of the World Bank**.

Scaling up has already begun. NOVACEL is partnering with the government to implement an agroforestry project in the Sud-Kwamouth territory where there has been severe deforestation of primary forests. It has also recently signed a contract with Danone for the sale of carbon credits generated by the reforestation of an additional 2,500 hectares of land.

Ibi Batéké is the latest in a series of ground-breaking carbon finance forestry projects across Africa. With the support of the BioCarbon Fund, the continent’s first large scale reforestation project located on the Humbo mountain in Ethiopia’s Great Rift Valley is looking to be scaled up further. While, in nearby Kenya, the fund is supporting the continent’s first soil carbon project, where local small-holders are changing their farming practices and lowering greenhouse gas emissions that will generate carbon credits.

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With 194 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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For more information on the **World Bank's Carbon Finance Unit**, please see:

www.carbonfinance.org

For more information on the **BioCarbon Fund** visit:

<http://wbcarbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=BioCF&ItemID=9708&FID=9708>

For more information on the **Forest Carbon Partnership Facility** please see

<http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp>

On the World Bank's activities in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, please see:

<http://go.worldbank.org/ZNBNXQVJB0>