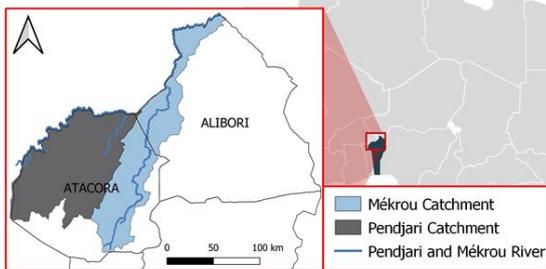# Forests4Future Benin:

Giving forests a future

The aim of the project is for international, national and local actors to increasingly implement measures for forest landscape restoration (FLR) in the catchment areas of the headwaters of the Pendjari and Mékrou rivers in northern Benin.

Context

The economic, ecological and social functions of forest ecosystems play an important role in the livelihoods of Benin's rural population, over 80% of whom live in financial poverty. Wood is the most important source of energy for about 80% of the rural population. Wood fuel and charcoal for cooking provide almost half of the country's energy needs. The production of firewood and charcoal contributes 2.4% to the national economy, but is predominantly informal.

Since 1990, almost one third of the forest area has been lost; Benin no longer has any untouched primary forest. At 2.5%, the country has one of the highest annual deforestation rates in the world.

Mékrou Catchment
Pendjari Catchment
Pendjari and Mékrou River

0   50   100 km

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Description	Global project on forest landscape restoration and good governance in the forest sector in Benin
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing organisation	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Region	Mostly in Atacora and partly in Alibori department (northern Benin)
Political partner	Benin Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD)
Term	January 2022 to April 2024

There are multiple reasons that impede or prevent the restoration of forest landscapes:

➢ Illegal logging and weak forest management

➢ A population growth rate of 3.3% per year

➢ Increasing demand for wood energy and agricultural land; almost half of the country's energy needs are met by firewood and charcoal for cooking

➢ The wood energy value chain employs around 200,000 people across the country, almost 2% of the total population

Left: GIZ demonstration field in the commune of Kérou
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Right: Tree seedlings for reforestation near the village of Fetekou
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Left: CLE meeting in Manta district
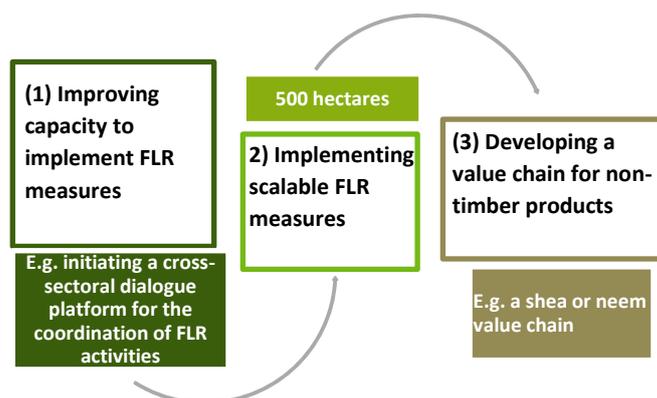*© F4F GIZ*

Project goals and approaches

The institutional framework for implementing forest landscape restoration (FLR) strategies is largely in place in Benin's environmental sector. However, restoration strategies are often not adapted to the reality on the ground, and government agencies at the decentralised level do not have sufficient operating budgets.

This is where GIZ's global project on forest landscape restoration and good governance in the forest sector (Forests4Future) comes in. The country package contributes to the commitment made by Benin under the *African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative* (AFR100).

Forests4Future in Benin supports partners in the implementation of integrated land use planning for FLR in selected areas in the north of the country. This will contribute to the national FLR goal of restoring 500,000 hectares of degraded forest landscapes by 2030. The focus is on strengthening the capacity of key actors for the development of FLR guidelines and strategies, for the concrete implementation of FLR measures at local level within the framework of development and water management plans (*Schémas d'Aménagement et de Gestion de l'Eau*, SAGE), and for the valorisation and development of value chains for non-timber products in selected intervention areas. By compiling and disseminating positive experiences, particularly in the context of the AFR100 initiative, the country package contributes to achieving the objectives of the AFR100 initiative and the global project.

The project in Benin also contributes to the development and piloting of concepts, the implementation of national strategies, the evaluation and dissemination of FLR experience, and the design and implementation of forest governance measures (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, FLEGT).

The concrete outputs of the project in Benin cover the following thematic areas:

(1) Improving capacity to implement FLR measures

E.g. initiating a cross-sectoral dialogue platform for the coordination of FLR activities

500 hectares

2) Implementing scalable FLR measures

(3) Developing a value chain for non-timber products

E.g. a shea or neem value chain

Expected results of the measures...

To improve the general conditions for implementing the FLR strategy, the project adopts a number of approaches, including:

➢ Integrating FLR into the national reforestation and environmental management strategy with MCVDD
➢ Strengthening the strategic capacity of technical staff at national and local level on FLR, sustainable land use and integrated natural resource management
➢ Piloting FLR measures on 60 ha in the context of adaptation to climate change
➢ Providing training in production and marketing of non-timber products for the target groups