

Forests4Future country package Benin

Project name	Global project on forest landscape restoration and good governance in the forest sector" (Forests4Future) Territorial Programme for Northern Benin: Youth, Employment, Resilience and Security-Resilience of Eco-systems (PRONORD)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	Mainly in Atakora and partly in Ali-bori (northern Benin)
Duration	01.2022 – 12.2026

The Challenge

The formerly forested landscapes in northern Benin are increasingly affected by deforestation. The population is growing rapidly (approx. 2.7%/year) and with it the demand for firewood, timber and extensively used arable and pastureland. State authorities do not have sufficient resources and opportunities to advise the population on an alternative, sustainable use of forests and to prevent illegal deforestation. Laws to control migratory grazing with the aim of better protecting regrowing trees exist, but a lack of framework conditions prevents their enforcement. The annual deforestation rate in Benin is around 2.4%, with a higher number in the north of the country. The original alluvial forests, which have an important ecological function, are greatly reduced, or no longer exist at all, as they are increasingly cleared and the areas are used

for agriculture. While Benin is committed to restoring 500,000 hectares of forested landscapes under the *African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100)*, there is a lack of strategies and capacities at the national level to meet this commitment.

The consequences of deforestation for the population are serious:

- Erosion increases, which reduces the fertility of the soil, and the rivers silt up.
- Through agricultural use of the floodplain forests, pesticides and artificial fertilizers are increasingly entering the rivers.
- Landscapes are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as extreme droughts, high temperatures and floods.
- Economically important forest products (wood, fruits, medicinal plants, etc.) are becoming less and less available.
- Conflicts between farmers and livestock farmers over increasingly scarce resources are intensifying, and unclear land and use rights are exacerbating the situation.

Project objectives and approach

Forests4Future (F4F) Benin is committed to ensuring that international, national and local actors in the catchment areas of the headwaters of the Pendjari and Mékrou rivers in northern Benin increasingly implement measures to restore forests and tree-rich, productive landscapes.



Left Picture: Forest landscape in the Mékrou catchment area

Right Picture: Production of shea butter in the water catchment area of Mékrou

©GIZ

At the national level, F4F supports the Beninese Ministry of the Environment (MCVT) in the development of a national Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) strategy and the coordination of the various line ministries. In the Atakora region in northern Benin, F4F-RES supports the local population, the forest service, other relevant authorities and civil society organisations in the inclusive and participatory planning and implementation of ecologically and economically sustainable measures for the restoration of forest landscapes in two particularly degraded watersheds. F4F-RES also supports the development of value chains for high-quality honey and shea butter to identify ways in which trees and forests can contribute sustainably to household income. To reduce the causes of degradation in the longer term, F4F is working to: negotiate pastures and corridors for transhumant grazing and make them visible; formalize land and use rights for restored land; promote the use of energy-efficient cookstoves and reduce conflicts between user groups. The local forestry service is involved in the activities alongside other authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations and is strengthened in its advisory and regulatory role.

Since March 2024, F4F has been contributing to the implementation of the EU PRONORD programme (see overview) through co-financing with its local activities, and to the objective of strengthening the resilience of production systems and ecosystems. There is close cooperation with the bilateral project AGIR-Eau on the topic of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), particularly the restoration of floodplain forests.

Preliminary results

- At the national level, an inter-ministerial coordination platform for FLR has been launched and the first foundations for the development of a national FLR strategy have been achieved.
- An inclusive, participatory FLR plan has been drawn up for the upper reaches of the Mékrou River catchment area. On 30.9 hectares so far, floodplain forest has been restored, trees have been integrated into agricultural cultivation systems and individual areas have been reforested. Negotiations for pasture areas and corridors have begun.
- To support a value chain for high-quality honey, a concept was developed together with honey producers, authorities, civil society and small and medium-sized enterprises. 712 producers, with a special focus on women and young people, received training and production equipment to increase the quality and quantity of honey and shea butter.
- In the two partner municipalities, work has begun to strengthen the committees and institutions that can implement the formalisation of land and use rights.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Ltd
Headquarters in Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Global project Forests4Future
Friedrich-Ebert- Allee 32+36
53115 Bonn, Germany
E info@giz.de
E forests4future@giz.de
I www.giz.de

www.giz.de/de/weltweit/85060.html

Photo credits @ GIZ
GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.
On behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Stand July 2024
Layout GIZ
Authors Hanitra Markolf, Ute Nuber