Management of gallery forests in the lower valley of the river Ouémé in the Republic of Benin: The quest for sustainability and lessons learnt

Louis Bernard CHETEU

International Knowledge-Sharing Workshop: “Forest Landscape Restoration and Global Change: From Policy to Practice”
Convention Centre Kigali, Rwanda, 26 July 2016
From 1978 to 2010, Benin has lost nearly 85% of its dense forests and over 30% of its vegetation cover with high deforestation rates in the African sub-region [FAO 2010].

FAO has estimated that about 75,000 hectares of forest were destroyed each year between 1990 and 2010.

Slash and burn Agriculture, collecting fuelwood and charcoal production for local and regional markets have impacts on the gallery forests.

Moreover, in the lower valley of the Ouémé in the republic of Benin, rains at the beginning of the season are more violent causing floods.
II. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF GALLERY FORESTS IN BENIN and link with some Principles used for Forest and Landscape Restoration

1. Elaboration of jurdicial tools oriented towards reinforcing and protecting gallery forests in Benin (**Principle 7: Clarification of Rights and Responsibilities**).


3. Identification and elaboration of simplified management plans of gallery forests (**Principle 4: Multi-Functionality**; **Principle 8: Participatory and User-Friendly Monitoring**).
II. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF GALLERY FORESTS IN BENIN and link with some Principles used for Forest and Landscape Restoration

4. Development of reforestation activities (*Principle 2: Common Concern Entry-Point; Principle 4: Multi-Functionality*)

5. Implementation of income generating activities as alternative to reduce the destruction of gallery forests by the local communities (*Principle 3: Multiple Scale; Principle 8: Participatory and User-Friendly Monitoring*)

6. Adaptive measures taken against the effects of floods and actions to ameliorate food security in the areas concerned (*Principle 9: Resilience; Principle 1: Continual Learning and Adaptive Management*)
III. KEY MESSAGES FROM LESSONS LEARNT

1. **Promotion of national ownership:** The involvement of all actors (supervisory authorities, government structures, local authorities, local authorities / municipalities, projects / programs, NGOs and associations, private sector, technical and financial partners) involved in a forest landscape management program or restoration of degraded forest landscape contributes to a better understanding and ownership of it by those actors. Also, the involvement of grassroots actors helps to lay the foundations of this ownership and ensure sustainability of the program actions.

2. **Influences on policies:** Harmonization of actions in different areas (conservation of plant and animal biodiversity, agriculture methods, etc.) increases the coverage of forests under control.

3. **Equity and Promotion of Gender:** The involvement of women in the local management communities is important for an effective management and restoration of degraded forest landscapes.