Project Update: July 2014

Activities and results

The main activities completed in the framework of this project during June 2014 are as follows:

- Distribution of *Bequaertiodendron oblanceolatum*

Ten circular plots (50 m radius) were constructed and Goshawks points introduced in the GPS, based on the Ewe-Adapklamey Semi Deciduous Remnant Forest (ESDRF) map. The different points were prospected using the GPS and with the help of local people. The presence/absence and the abundance of *Bequaertiodendron oblanceolatum* were recorded in order to update its occupancy areas.

Also, gap areas and potential areas of conservation within the forest were tracked down and listed in the GPS to assess their total area and their location within the forest. Samples of plant species that characterise the gap areas recorded have been collected and preserved for identification at the National Herbarium of Benin.

B. oblanceolatum is well represented. It was present in 8/10 plots. In the most of gap areas covered, the dominant species identified were are *Chromolaena odorata, Clerodendron capitatum, Zehneria capillacea,Ritchiea caparides, Hoslundia opposita.*

- Distribution map and current status assessment

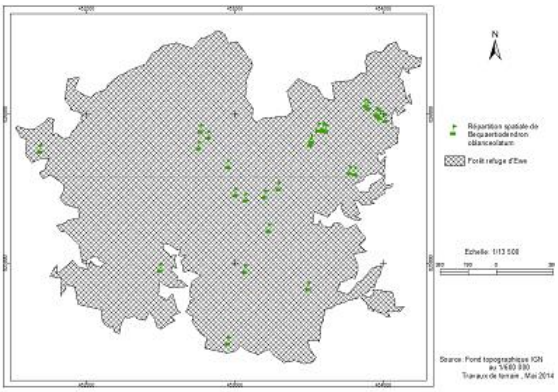
The distribution map (*Fond topographique IGN au 1/600000*, Field work Rufford SG May 2014) shows preliminary data distribution of our targeted species. The map was obtained by projecting the GPS points on a sheet map derived from Landsat ETM + 2007 CENATEL and topographic background of IGN: 1/600 000 (completed by Daniel Bocossa, team member and GIS specialist).

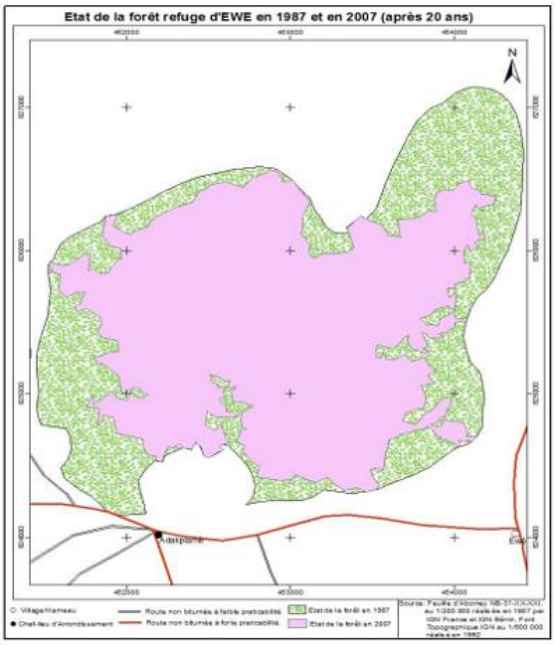
A diachronic study initiated showed a decrease of 36.24% of the forest cover from 1987 to 2007 (20 years period). Indeed, the ESDRF was 571,876 ha in 1987 (*Feuille d'Abomey NB-31-XX-XXI au 1/200000* made by IGN France and IGN Benin in 1992). Nowadays, ERSDF is about 364,641 ha (Landsat ETM + 2007 CENATEL to 1/600000).

This recent map that served as a basis for the study of the distribution will also be updated because we recorded a new conversion of ESDRF areas. The assessment of the current gaps will change the distribution and the size of the forest. The forest resources were used by local population to meet multiple purposes (firewood, construction wood, forage, poaching, food, medicine and worship). The analysis of the main causes of this downward trend such as anarchic urbanization, uncontrolled agriculture and logging, and climate change etc. will also be deepened.

Chromolaena odorata within the gap area in natural regeneration

B. oblanceolatum within the gap area in natural regeneration





Habitat loss between 1987 and 2007 (20 years) = 207.248 ha. (Green color)

- Tree planting

The first campaign of tree planting started on 21st June 2014. As scheduled in our past report of May 2014, local populations of ESDRF under the direction of a Chief of Village (Mr Nestor Atchassou) and a head of secondary school of Ewe village (Mr Bernard Akan) had collected seeds of *Triplochiton scleroxylon, Mansonia altissima* (both on the IUCN Red List) and *B. oblanceolatum* for the nursery establishment. The nursery provided 202 plants of *B. oblanceolatum* (with a success rate of 91%), 250 plants of *M. altissima* (with a success rate of 83%) and 600 plants of *T. scleroxylon* for 100% of success.

Planting was done in some degraded areas and on a community space allocated by the chief of village. The field school for pupils will begin during the coming school holidays. For the time being, the tree planting is still ongoing with the ESDRF conservation committee.

Acknowledgements

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ESDRF selected tree nurseries for restoration (through tree planting)

Women team involved in tree planting

Chief of village (Nestor Atchassou) is handing trees of nurseries

Hunters during the planting activities

B. oblanceolatum, *T. scleroxylon and M. altissima* tree planting by local communities