



Scientific research in the Sankuru landscape and capacity building for local partner institutions

A scientific research campaign, led by doctoral student Mutwedu Eli from ERAIFT and the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA - Tervuren, Belgium), was carried out in November and December 2023 in the Sankuru landscape. This activity is part of a doctoral thesis entitled: Plantations inherited from the past, cutting-edge technologies and adapted silvicultural techniques: a winning trio for Central Africa in the fight against climate change? The case of Hevea cultivation in Sankuru Province (DRC). This research is part of the DeSIRA agro-forestry programme, implemented by ENABEL in partnership with ERAIFT, ULiège and MRAC. The field campaign had the following objectives:

(i) to help build the capacity of researchers from ERAIFT's local partner institutions (University of Lodja UNILOD, University of Science and Technology of Lodja USTL, Higher Institute of Agronomic Sciences of Lodja ISEA/Lodja) on different topics according to the needs expressed by the beneficiaries,
(ii) to carry out a prospective analysis of the study area within the old Hevea plantations in the province of Sankuru. At the end of this campaign, the following results were recorded:

1. two capacity-building sessions on "Collecting survey data using certain modern tools, Focus: Google Forms" and "Getting to grips with R software" were organised in Lodja,
2. A prospective study was carried out on the rubber plantations in the Lomela area, mainly those belonging to INERA/Mukumari, Vango and Kutu Songo, as well as on the private plantations scattered around Ahambamange,
3. lastly, contacts were initiated and consents obtained from various stakeholders at the study sites to facilitate future research and development missions there.

ERAIFT thank ENABEL and European Union for the financial and logistical support. We are also grateful to the local universities for their welcome and hospitality, and above all for the fruitful discussions during the debates.

