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Shifting Cultivation, Gender and REDD+ in DR-Congo

Will adaptation and mitigation turn maladaptive?

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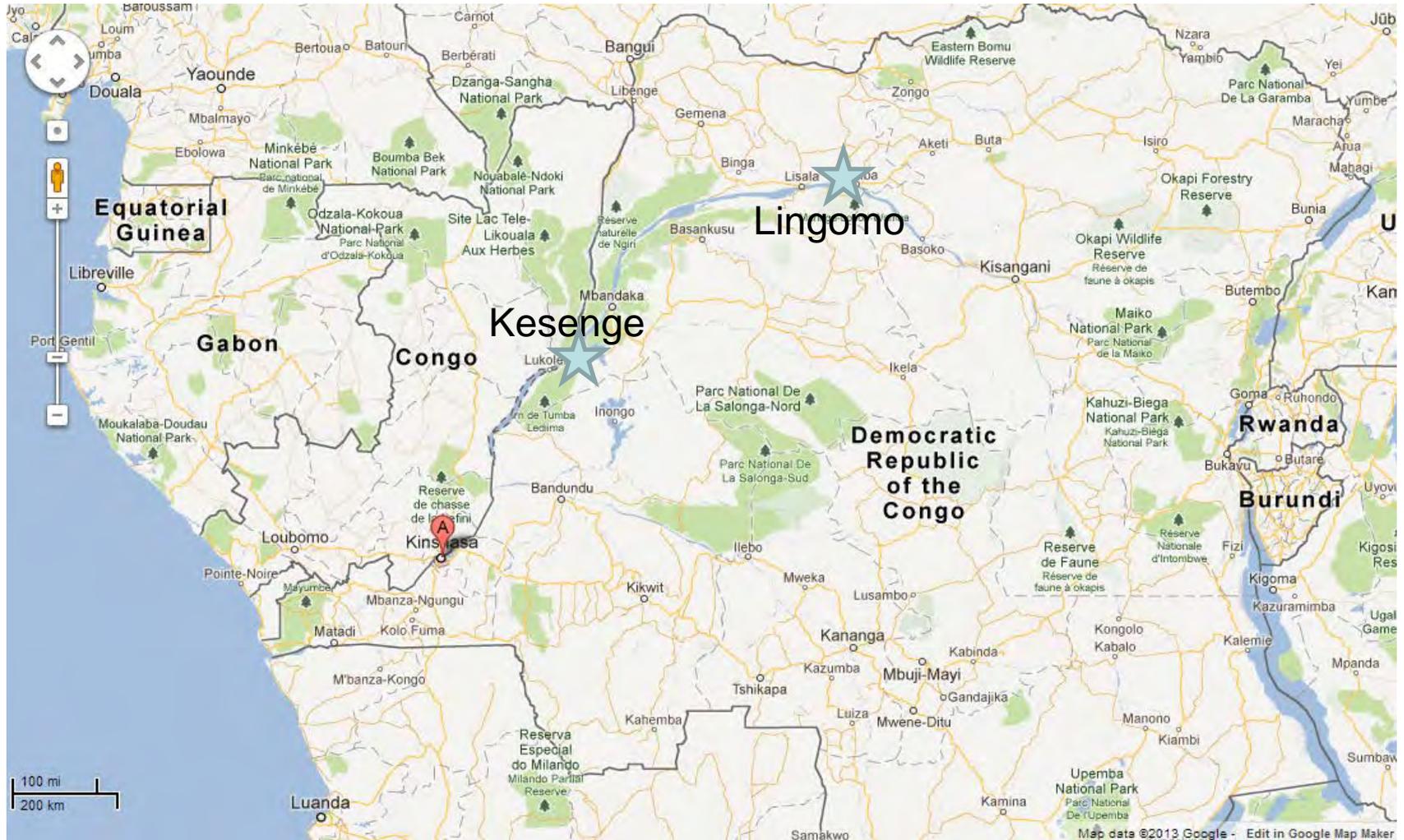
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Location of study sites





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Two contrasting views of “development”

- **Farmers’ perspective:**

shifting cultivation landscapes will eventually evolve through a progressive reduction of the fallow period, the establishment of perennials and crop rotation, and permanent settlement around roads
- **Mainstream REDD+ narrative:**

shifting cultivation landscapes will evolve through the substitution of land uses (agroforestry, conservation agriculture, perennial crops, alternative income-generating activities) for slash-and-burn based cropping systems



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Apparent causes of this contrast

- Alternative land uses are selected according to inappropriate criteria: high yield and permanent resources stock instead of high labor productivity and low risk
- Fire and erosion are demonized
- Processes occurring at large temporal and geographical scales are overlooked, such as: migration, shift to new resources, domino effects, and colonization of the savanna frontier
- Farmers are not trusted as rational economic agents; training, sensitization and capacity building, rather than credit, subsidies or other financial services, are proposed for farmers
- Politics and reductionist science favor reification and discourage reflexivity



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REDD+ increases its chance of success if it

- Supports a broad range of options
- Leaves farmers to choose among these options
- Values women's labor and active participation
- Creates incentives instead of focusing on planning
- Stops demonizing or romanticizing local land-uses
- Sees beyond science and data sets and considers all parties' common sense and experience



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This is a work in progress...



Thanks for your attention

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