

# POLICY BRIEF

Lophira cuttings for charcoal burning in Mabambu site - All photo credits: Author

## SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF *LOPHIRA LANCEOLATA* EXPLOITATION IN THE NORTHERN SAVANNAS OF SIERRA LEONE

*Lophira lanceolata*, commonly known as 'Kanaka' or 'Bellendeh', is a valuable tree species primarily used for charcoal production in the northern savannas of Sierra Leone. However, its exploitation is uncontrolled and unsustainable. This policy brief highlights the importance of the sustainable management of *L. lanceolata* and provides recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to ensure its long-term preservation and responsible use.



Engaging the rancher who used local fencing to save *Lophira* in Barry site

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Raise awareness on the ecological significance of *L. lanceolata*.
  2. Invest in research and monitoring for evidence-based policies and regulatory frameworks.
  3. Promote community-based forest management and support alternative livelihood initiatives.
1. Conduct awareness campaigns targeting local communities, businesses, consumers and school pupils to highlight the crucial role of *L. lanceolata* in ecosystem function, including soil conservation, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration, and the importance of managing this resource sustainably.
  2. Investing in ecological research and long-term monitoring provides the data needed to design and adjust policies such as harvesting quotas, licensing requirements, and penalties for illegal activities.
  3. Engaging local communities in the management of *L. lanceolata* resources empowers them to implement sustainable practices and share in the benefits. By supporting income diversification through training in sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, eco-tourism, and non-timber forest products, communities can reduce their dependence on *L. lanceolata*, contributing to its conservation and the resilience of local economies.

## KEY FINDINGS

To describe the determinants of exploitation of *L. lanceolata* by businesses and suggest possible management strategies for its conservation in the Northern savannas in Sierra Leone, the following were identified:

- **Factors of exploitation:** The study identified several factors contributing to the exploitation of *L. lanceolata*. These factors include socio-economic conditions, anthropogenic activities, improper management practices and eco-physical factors.
- **Lack of management strategies:** The research revealed that 70% of respondents reported needing more current management strategies for *L. lanceolata*. This policy option suggests a need for proper planning and regulation for the sustainable use of the species.
- **Overexploitation concerns:** While *L. lanceolata* is not considered as overexploited as other species like *Pterocarpus* and *Parkia*, the study warns against its overuse. The uncontrolled and unregulated exploitation of the species raises concerns about its long-term sustainability.



Author with one of the *Lophira* trees in Barry site

## NOTE

The sustainable management of *L. lanceolata* exploitation in the northern savannas of Sierra Leone aligns with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including:

- **SDG 15: Life on Land:** Properly managing *L. lanceolata* resources helps conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem services and restore degraded lands.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action:** Sustainable management practices for *L. lanceolata* forests play a role in carbon sequestration, helping to mitigate climate change impacts.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** The importance of collaboration and partnerships between various stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

Sustainable management of *Lophira lanceolata* in the northern savannas of Sierra Leone is crucial for preserving biodiversity, ecosystem services and the well-being of local communities. If successful, this could serve as a baseline in other African regions.

## REFERENCES

Fanny Katumu Massally (2023). Determinants of exploitation of *Lophira lanceolata* Tiegh. Ex Keay (Ochnaceae) by businesses in the northern savannas of Sierra Leone (West Africa). Master's thesis at Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB).

