



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

U.S. FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. Forest Service is providing targeted technical assistance to the government of DRC in the areas of forest zoning, land-use planning, and forest carbon inventories and monitoring.

DRC government partners include the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, its Department of Forest Inventory and Zoning, Department of Sustainable Development, and National Zoning Steering Committee. The U.S. Forest Service also collaborates in DRC with World Wildlife Fund, African Wildlife Foundation, World Resources Institute, Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale, Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The U. S. Forest Service sponsors DRC ministry staff to continue their education through scholarships for master's degree programs and seminars in the US focusing on climate change and protected area management.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At over 900,000 square miles and with over 65 million people, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in the Congo Basin of Central Africa. The Congo Basin rainforest is the second largest rainforest in the world and includes the largest undisturbed or intact forest areas globally. With over 200 ethnic groups, DRC has a rich traditional and popular culture. DRC also holds diverse ecosystems: from active volcanoes and glaciers, to savannah grasslands and rainforests. It is the last and only home of the charismatic mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) and the bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), the humans' closest genetic relative. Widely regarded as one of the richest countries in the world for minerals, diamonds, and other natural resources, DRC's GDP is growing at a steady 6% annually, with great potential for large-scale development and growth.

Given the immense importance of Congo Basin forests for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and sustainable development, the U.S. Forest Service has provided technical assistance since 2007 to DRC in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State. As part of the USAID Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), the U.S. Forest Service supports the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and its Forest Inventory and Management Department through the provision of technical advisors and training courses. National forest carbon monitoring systems are a global priority in forested countries like the DRC with the rise of climate change issues, and the U.S. Forest Service draws on its extensive expertise to support DRC in the design, execution, and monitoring of its national forest carbon inventory. The U.S. Forest Service has also worked with USAID and local partners to advance implementation of field management plans in the areas of forest zoning and planning, fire management, and rangeland ecology. The U.S. Forest Service also provides support to the ministry and its partners to implement the seven pillars of the national climate change strategy, which aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.

