



REPUBLIC OF CONGO

US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

US Forest Service is providing targeted technical assistance to governmental and NGO partners in areas such as fire research and management, institutional capacity building, and carbon measurement and monitoring

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

ROC government partners include the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development, the ROC protected area agency, the ROC national forest management agency, and the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Republic of the Congo (ROC) is one of six Central African countries that include part of the Congo Basin forest, the second largest area of contiguous tropical forest in the world. The ROC's forests cover much of its landscape, and play a major economic and ecological role for the country. Furthermore, the northern forests in ROC harbor the highest known western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) densities, which are critically endangered. Congo is also home to more than 400 mammal species, 1,000 bird species, and nearly 10,000 plant species, of which 3,000 are found nowhere else. A number of threats pose risks to the extent and integrity of the forests of the ROC, including the unsustainable extraction of timber and mineral resources, agricultural expansion, an active bush meat trade, and increasing development pressures due to population growth.

In 2014, the US Forest Service began working in the ROC as part of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), an initiative funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), with complementary funding from the US Department of State. The US Forest Service provides capacity building for key national and regional institutions, with a focus on assisting the government to address climate change through the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the conservation and sustainable management of forests, and the monitoring and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The Forest Service seeks to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the country's National Forest Inventory and Forest Management Agency as well as the Protected Area Agency, both located within the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development. The Forest Service also collaborates with the Wildlife Conservation Society to provide targeted technical assistance in fire research and management, forest ecology, mangrove and peat swamp mapping, and forest carbon measurement and monitoring.

