



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

## **FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS**

---

The Central Africa Regional (CAR) program, based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was established in 2003 to support the United States-led regional initiative called the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). After a one-year start-up phase and five years of field implementation, a strong framework has been established, and results are rapidly accumulating for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded program. CBFP partners, including the Congo Basin governments, civil society, and a wide range of scientific research and conservation organizations are working together to conserve the forest and its biodiversity. Other benefits, such as mitigating local conflict over natural resources, cross-border collaboration among and between regional countries, and an increasingly focused approach by the subregional treaty organization called the Commission on Forests for Central Africa, are creating synergy and a unity of purpose and approach.

USAID's goal in the region is to decrease the loss of biodiversity and tropical forest in nine countries that comprise the second largest contiguous tropical forest in the world after the Amazon basin. The strategy includes the creation of landscape-scale tropical forest management systems linked with new natural resource monitoring systems while building governance capacity at local, subregional, and national levels. A "people-centered" local conservation strategy emphasizes comprehensive stakeholder participation in deciding resource use priorities while creating an institutional structure to manage these large forest tracts. Governance is simultaneously strengthened by increasing the capacity of local civil society, communities, and national governments to manage natural resources more effectively. Reform of legislation, policies, and regulations creates a stronger overall enabling framework for reaching these conservation goals.

Working through multiple partners at many levels, the program is making important progress in all three integrated components: increasing the area of tropical forest under improved management; improving the legal, regulatory, and policy framework at national and regional levels for improved forest governance; and creating, deploying, and institutionalizing natural resource monitoring tools.

---

Programs discussed in this publication are funded through the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Department of State does not provide assistance to the Central Africa Regional.

Multiple environmental monitoring tools are increasingly being used in the region: tropical forest land use planning systems, deforestation mapping of the entire Congo Basin, biological surveys across millions of hectares of tropical forest areas, and an Internet-enabled forest information system designed to empower African resource managers and policymakers at regional, national, and community levels to make informed resource management decisions. Nearly 5,100 people were trained in how to use these tools.

During 2009, USAID updated its methodology for measuring the region's forest cover change using archived Landsat remote sensing imagery. Now this technology has been transferred to a regional nonprofit organization based in the DRC. This major step directly gives access to all stakeholders to the most modern and up-to-date information on measuring forest change. In addition to helping assess progress toward tropical forest conservation objectives, this information will be used by partners, including national governments, to pinpoint trouble spots and respond with appropriate conservation strategies. It will also serve as a measurement tool with which to develop the emerging tropical forest carbon markets. In addition to deforestation monitoring, partners have adopted standard biodiversity measurement indicators and methodologies, which allows comparable measurement systems for monitoring flagship biodiversity species, such as forest elephants, great apes, and forest giraffes.

Among other notable achievements is the documentation of the bonobo (pygmy chimpanzee) range across the DRC, which added substantial scientific knowledge useful for managing this important primate, a keystone species indicator for many of the landscape programs. The legal framework and the capacity to enforce environmental legislation and policy were substantially strengthened by the adoption of the State of the Forest Report by the Central African Forestry Commission as their official system to monitor forest indicators for forest management. The updated report, issued in 2009, presents in a single comprehensive document all information generated by partners toward agreed-upon conservation and governance objectives. These achievements have created great excitement in the region and interest by the international community, a principal U.S. goal in establishing the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. Success can be measured through the indicators in the State of the Forest Report, but also in the ever-increasing financial commitments from both public and private sources to the goals of the partnership. New donor commitments in FY 2009 have again exceeded \$200 million and private funding from logging companies, private foundations, and individuals is increasing as well. Substantial advances in monitoring of logging concessions were realized in the DRC with the culmination of a two-year process of converting logging titles to a transparent system.

Substantial progress implementing the USAID's central Africa efforts through the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment was recorded in FY 2009. The total biologically sensitive area under improved management exceeded 52 million hectares, which includes over 22 million hectares with fully designed management plans. This is nearly double the amount reported the previous year. Substantial progress was made in capacity-building through the training of 5,100 people (4,129 men, 963 women) in methods and techniques related to forest and biodiversity conservation. Integration of women into landscape planning has been particularly effective, tapping women's-association networks to add their voices to issues on landscape zoning. The first-ever automated methodology for analyzing forest cover change using satellite remote sensing was enhanced by adding and processing 7,000 satellite images from the U.S. Landsat archives and the technology transferred to a regionally based organization. This allows up-to-date and timely deforestation monitoring of the entire Congo Basin. The central African states, through the Central African Commission on Forestry (COMIFAC), used this information to develop their position on

forest carbon in the context of global climate change negotiations with a particular focus on the concept called Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation.

COMIFAC adopted the State of the Forest Report as its official publication for monitoring and reporting on forest information, and it published an updated and comprehensive State of the Forest Report 2008 with detailed information on specific physical, natural, and institutional indicators to measure regional conservation status. USAID's natural resources governance program is now fully on schedule, as the DRC approved policies originally targeted for last year but carried over for parliamentary review. Fourteen important new laws, policies, and regulations have been enacted in the region. Cameroon and the Republic of Congo approved a voluntary agreement with the European Union (EU) to define the legal standards for importing tropical wood into the EU. The DRC created an additional new large protected area, the Kokolopori Community Reserve, bringing the total to five such government and community co-managed reserves, while expanding the total national protected area to over 11 percent of DRC territory. U.S. leadership in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership leveraged substantial funding from both public and private partners. The African Development Bank approved a \$65 million grant targeting six of the 12 CBFP landscapes, the Global Environment Facility advanced \$45 million worth of regional projects, the World Bank approved a \$56 million project for the DRC, and numerous private foundations and private logging companies committed to new partnerships.

The emphasis on establishing use rights through multi-stakeholder large-scale land use plans is showing signs of being an effective tool to mitigate conflict and promote democratic governance. Aggressive support of civil society advocacy for improved forest governance has promoted national and regional legal, policy, and regulatory reform. Unfortunately, violence continued to affect the eastern DRC. After the successful Virunga Ministerial Summit organized by the CAR in July 2008, which brought together top regional political leaders from the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda to develop solutions to protecting the park, a Transboundary Secretariat was legalized through a trilateral treaty to coordinate activities in the Greater Virunga Landscape. To date, the rare mountain gorillas appear to have been protected. This protracted regional conflict coupled with increased interest in mining, oil, and other extractive industries throughout the region keeps intense pressure on natural resources and fragile governance institutions.