

Protected Areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Project title:	Rehabilitation of Protected Areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo
Lead organisations:	Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT), Congolese Nature Conservation Institute (ICCN)
Budget to date:	\$7,017,000 (2005-2009)
UNOPS services:	Project management

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the most important countries in the world in terms of biodiversity, shows a wide range of ecosystems. The country wished to protect all samples of this diversity, which represents an important network of protected areas covering up to 11% of its present territory.

The Protected Areas Rehabilitation Project was launched in 2005 and involves 16 protected areas in DRC, five of which are pilot areas. It is funded jointly by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by UNOPS.



Training in ecotourism on the Congo River for the ICCN park wardens



National workshop to ratify the new conservation of nature act which is being adopted by parliament

Updating national legislation

Several actions have been taken in order to create a political, legislative and institutional environment favourable to the conservation of protected areas. Interprovincial consultation workshops have led to a National Ratification Workshop for the new law on the conservation of nature in DRC. This law is currently in the process of being adopted at the National Parliament.

Rehabilitation of infrastructure

In order to ensure essential conservation functions in the protected areas, the project has equipped five sites with new basic infrastructure, including three residences, five administrative offices, a guest house, a housing for the park wardens and a school building.

This rehabilitation process raises enthusiasm and professional pride among the wardens. It also conveys to the surrounding population the park's role in the improvement of conditions.

Strengthening capacity

In order to encourage the return of fauna by providing material support to the wardens, the project has guaranteed the procurement of equipment including: 11 jeeps, 22 motorbikes, 11 outboard motors, 340 bicycles, 580 guard uniforms, 50 binoculars, 30 GPS units, 80 tents and five weather stations for the Congolese Nature Conservation Institute. Additionally, 30 park wardens received operational training.

Environmental education

An information kit about the protected areas for the general public and decision-makers has been created and distributed by the project in an attempt to raise awareness about the richness of biodiversity.

Also as part of this initiative the ICCN website, www.iccn.cd, and a network of communicators on environmental issues has been created. The network is active in the field of environmental awareness, training and information circulation and it contributed to the Copenhagen Summit in December 2009 through its representatives.



The new ICCN building in Mangroves Marine Park (Bas-Congo)



Consignment of mobile equipment for surveillance and patrols in the protected areas

Promotion of ecotourism

In total, 40 people have been trained in ecotourism, including several wardens coming from 13 protected areas in the country. Training was based on tour development and exploration techniques based on existing capacities in DRC.

UNOPS advantages

UNOPS operates as a fully self-financed provider of implementation services. This prompts efficiency and financial discipline. As a not-for-profit organization it is motivated only to meet the expectations of partners

During periods of conflict or crisis UNOPS maintains a physical presence on the ground and promotes the ownership and engagement of governments and local communities.

While partners may need a public profile for fundraising or advocacy, UNOPS does not and takes a low-key position as a service provider.

UNOPS extensive experience and proven track record in its focus areas allows partners to enjoy the benefits of specialization, shared knowledge and economies of scale.

UNOPS transparent, accountable management services meet the highest international standards. Partners are assured consistent performance to agreed standards of quality, timeliness and cost, and safeguards against implementation risk.