The Republic of the Congo and FAO

Strengthening capacities for sustainable agricultural development and food security and nutrition

The Congo and FAO have enjoyed ongoing cooperation since the Representation opened in 1977. Country-level cooperation is aligned with FAO’s global policies and strategies, and involves both development and emergency interventions in areas such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable management of forests, and climate change adaptation. The first Country Programming Framework, aligned with the country’s national priorities, was adopted for the period 2013-2017.

Matching FAO’s expertise to the Congo’s development priorities

FAO assistance in Congo is defined by the Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2013-2017. It focuses on the following three priorities:

■ Modernizing small-scale agriculture, livestock breeding and aquaculture
■ Strengthening support for sustainable development and mitigation of the effects of climate change
■ Promoting civil society organizations and producer organizations

The CPF is aligned with the Congo’s National Development Plan, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Country Programming Framework achievements

■ Cooperation under the Country Programming Framework has helped to institutionalize the Farmer Field School concept by promoting the cassava value chain in 12 municipalities. This very popular approach has strengthened the organizational and technical capacities of more than 280 producers. As a result, production yields have been substantially increased.

■ With regard to sustainable development and the fight against climate change, with FAO’s support, the Congo was the first Francophone country to report its greenhouse gas emission level to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

■ Aiming to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the UN-REDD Programme has enabled Congo to develop two strategic tools: its national Monitoring, Measurement, Reporting and Verification system (M & MRV) as well as its Reference Emission Level.

■ FAO, at the request of the Government, has brought together institutions and technical and financial partners to create an agency for the agriculture and rural sector, highlighting South-South Cooperation between the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal.

Key FAO projects in the Congo

General Agricultural Census

The last national agriculture census was in 1985. Since 2014, therefore, the Congolese Government, with FAO’s support, has been conducting a new general agriculture census, to give a detailed picture of the agriculture sector. To date, well over a million people, including more than 500 000 agricultural workers and 3 200 villages have been surveyed. The data are online in “CountrySTAT Congo”.

Urban and peri-urban horticulture

The Congo’s potential for agricultural production contrasts with its increased dependence on food imports, which is aggravated by strong population growth and massive rural exodus. In this context, a sub-regional urban and peri-urban horticulture project is working to increase and diversify production and strengthen productivity so as to combat food insecurity and poverty as well as the harmful effects of global warming. Some 200 participants have benefited from training on good practices, market gardening techniques, and fruit and vegetable farming and processing.

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Integrated mangrove management
While once the main cause of mangrove depletion, Congolese coastal communities have now become lead mangrove advocates thanks to awareness-raising intervention designed to preserve and protect the biodiversity of these fragile ecosystems. The project has also enabled local communities to engage in activities that can improve their livelihoods. Significant progress has been made, including: i) the development of a biodiversity monitoring plan; (ii) the establishment of a coastal observatory to monitor the status of the mangroves; (iii) the setting up of a multi-stakeholder platform; (iv) the establishment of community area management committees and; (v) the development of participatory and community-based management plan.

Partnerships and resource mobilization
Synergies have been developed around:
- Capacity-building for producers in the districts of Nzambi and Madingo-Kayes in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, beekeeping and basket weaving, in partnership with UNDP and the Ministry of Hydrocarbons.
- Capacity-building in horticultural production for 253 women in the Department of Bouenza, in collaboration with UNDP.
- Support to small bean producers in the Department of Bouenza, in cooperation with the European Union, WFP and IFAD.

Looking ahead
FAO has developed a number of new projects to support the implementation of the Government’s Priority Actions Programme (2017-2019):
- Support to the development of an irrigation master plan linked to a priority investment programme, the aim of which is to contribute to the integrated use of water resources for agriculture, livestock and fisheries.
- Technical Assistance for Statistics, Protected Areas and Biological Studies for the Development of Fisheries and Inland Aquaculture. Implemented in partnership with IFAD, this project aims to (i) conduct a fisheries sector survey; (ii) study commercial species habitats; (iii) carry out participatory mapping of designated protected fishing areas; and; (iv) produce studies on biological rest.
- Support to the formulation of the national seeds policy. The aim of this project is to support the Government in setting up a national system for the production, conservation, control and distribution of quality seeds.
- Implementing the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions in the area of land use and forestry, a project proposal to be submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This joint project is organized around six components that will contribute to reducing emissions and increasing forest carbon stocks. It will bring together six ministries, national institutions and technical and financial partners, and will enable the National Land Use Plan to be updated and the National Plan of Land Allocation to be formulated. It will also support implementation of the national REDD+ strategy and the National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (Pronar).

“The Zero Hunger Challenge means making sure that all food systems are sustainable and that smallholders – especially women – are able to increase their productivity and incomes.”
José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General