The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is characterized by significant social vulnerability, political instability, food insecurity, and high rates of poverty. Projected increases in temperature, more extreme weather events, and changes in total precipitation and rainfall variability are likely to exacerbate these challenges, particularly since agriculture, the majority of which is rainfed, is a central engine of the DRC’s economy and the primary source of livelihood for most Congolese.

Land-use change and forestry are the primary contributors to the DRC’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (86 percent), followed by waste (11 percent), agriculture (0.86 percent), and energy (0.61 percent). The 2018 emissions are 36 percent lower than previously reported emissions levels over the 2010–2014 period due to investments supported by various REDD+ initiatives and programs, including structural changes in forest management in DRC. The National Program of Action for Adaptation to Climate Change (NAPA, 2006) identified urgent and priority actions for adaptation to climate change in the water resources, forestry, agriculture, and coastal zone sectors. Fifty-two (52) priority adaptation actions are proposed in the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO CLIMATE PRIORITIES

The DRC ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, and the Paris Agreement in 2015. The DRC’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is a commitment to a 21 percent reduction in emissions from 2021 to 2030, with 19 percent to be achieved with external support while 2 percent based on national efforts. The DRC’s NDC budget is estimated at USD 48.68 billion, of which USD 25.60 billion is for the implementation of pledged mitigation initiatives and USD 23.08 billion for priority adaptation actions.
USAID’S CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM: OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

USAID supports the Government of the DRC’s development and climate priorities through a series of programs and partnerships across the renewable energy and natural climate solutions sectors.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

USAID, through Power Africa, is working to engage reform-minded leaders and host regular discussions on sectoral planning, improved business-friendly policies, and ambitious initiatives to increase electricity access. Through partnerships with private sector actors, USAID supports household access to renewable energy from hydropower, to shift communities away from the use of fossil fuels.

KEY RESULTS

Key results from USAID’s support to the DRC government to improve access to renewable energy include:

- Established two new energy regulatory agencies, which provide essential oversight to the sector.
- Supported the government to implement a 2014 electricity law by drafting over two dozen decrees, orders, and regulations, of which 14 have already been adopted.
- Provided 1,434 households and 44 businesses access to clean and renewable electricity in Fiscal Year 2020 from a hydropower plant.
- Leveraged over $77 million of funding to provide reliable, affordable energy to the city of Goma.
- Enabled the establishment of 15,612 new grid and off-grid direct connections to date (10,386 in FY 2020).
- Mobilized a $2.25 million investment for clean energy projects, which will continue to demonstrate the opportunities for off-grid companies in the DRC.

NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

USAID’s Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), SilvaCarbon, and Sustainable Wetlands Adaptation and Mitigation Program (SWAMP) programs support sustainable land use practices in the DRC by improving management of primary and secondary forests, establishing sustainable financing models for community forest concessions through private sector partnerships, and developing and promoting alternatives to charcoal. Additionally, USAID provides technical assistance and capacity building to government agencies for improved data and analytical tools, MRV systems, and implementation of best practices and new approaches for effective policy development and data-driven decision-making.
KEY RESULTS

Key results from USAID’s support to the DRC Government to reduce land-based emissions include:

- Reduced, sequestered, or avoided the emission of 53 million tons of GHG over the previous five years.

- Improved management of over 17.1 million hectares of biologically sensitive forests.

- Supported the establishment of 1,372,799 hectares of community forest concessions dedicated to improved forest management led by local communities.

- Produced and distributed 13,891 improved stationary and mobile stoves, which reduce household energy consumption by 60 percent and generate an estimated savings of approximately $30 per household per month.

- Supporting access to clean and affordable cooking gas, to reduce the use of charcoal for cooking, the main driver of deforestation in DRC.

- Built the capacity of 27,600 individuals from state institutions and non-governmental organizations, including through training on climate change mitigation or natural climate solutions issues.