



IGC

**Marie-Thérèse
SOMBO** opens a
workshop on the
digitization of
cartography in the
DRC

**Odon NDAMBU
MWALANGA**
the choice that reflects
excellence and
continuity at the helm of
the General Secretariat
at RSI

Plan numérique
The DRC Invests \$8.7
Billion



Call for publication in the
Congolese Review of Science and Technology
ISSN (Online) : 2959-202X
ISSN (Print) 2960-2629
DOI prefix : 10.59228/rcst
www.csnrdc.net



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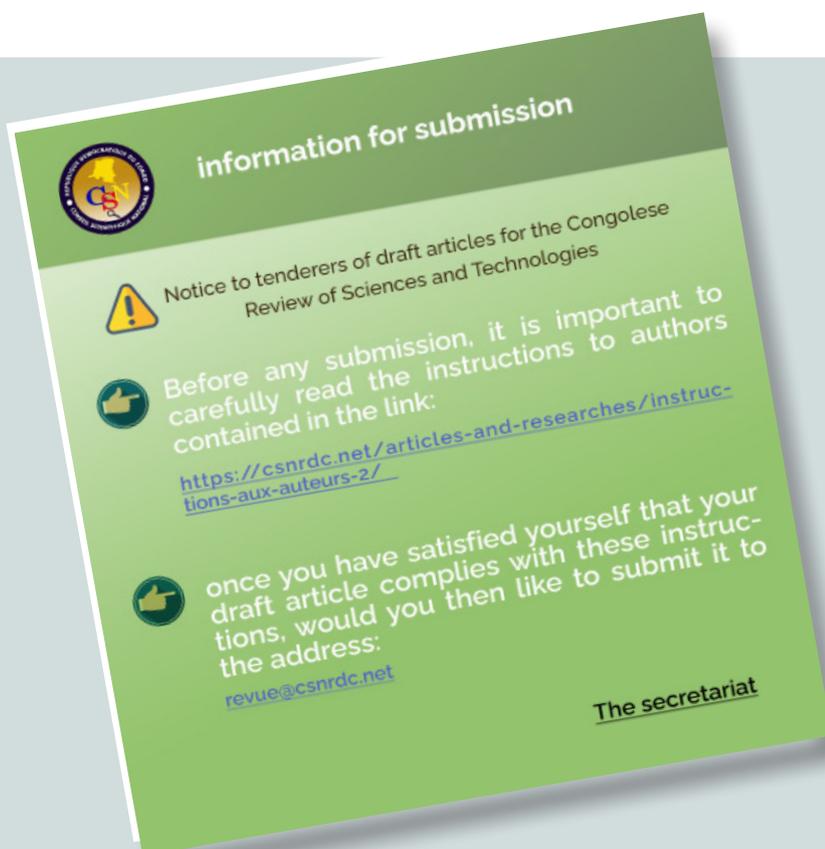
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Digital Momentum

A *In the digital age, the world is being reshaped by digitalization, which has become an indispensable path to development. Tangible realities are increasingly being transformed into binary data, marking the shift from a model based on the ownership of physical assets to one based on the control of information.*

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is not on the sidelines of this paradigm shift in the production and management of scientific knowledge. As it enters the 2025–2027 cycle of the National Digital Plan, the country is committed to building on the achievements of this strategic vision. The work presented in this fiftieth issue of the Bulletin of Science and Technological Innovations demonstrates that modernization ambitions are no longer merely projects but are becoming operational realities within our research centers and institutions.

The digitization of maps by the Geographic Institute of Congo (IGC) illustrates this transition very well. By gradually integrating Geographic Information Systems into national research, we are aligning ourselves with global standards for spatial data management. This momentum now enables us to model natural hazards, particularly urban erosion, and to transform fundamental research into a high-precision tool for civil protection and territorial planning. By actively supporting this process, H.E. Marie-Thérèse SOMBO, under the leadership of H.E. SUMINWA TULUKA, Prime Minister and Head of Government, and guided by the enlightened vision of the Head of State, H.E. Felix-Antoine TSHISEKEDI THILOMBO, is facilitating the shift from archival cartography to a real-

time strategic modeling tool.

This digital momentum is also poised to invigorate our socio-economic fabric. The integration of artificial intelligence into financing mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises, via the Bokeli platform, demonstrates that the DRC is harnessing emerging technologies to overcome structural barriers. By automating the structuring of bankable dossiers, digital technology is on its way to becoming a driver of equity and growth. At the same time, on the environmental and academic fronts, this issue highlights our researchers' determination to take control of their own destiny. The first conference of the Science for the Congo Basin Initiative in Brazzaville marks a methodological shift, as our scientists are now collaborating directly with one another, strengthening the DRC's leadership in protecting this global lung, supported by balanced partnerships.

The digital momentum is a necessary tension that requires cultivating a new vigilance so that, in the race toward the virtual, we do not lose sight of the real anchors and humanist values that constitute the essence of collective resilience. In this momentum, we must respect both speed and direction. Information and knowledge are levers. In this dynamic, humanity must remain the pilot of this digital accelerator. Thus, administrative continuity, embodied by the reappointment of the Secretary General for Scientific Research and Innovation, Mr. NDAMBU Odon, is a guarantee of stability for pursuing the reforms undertaken with this vision.

Finally, this momentum is the guarantor of our sovereignty. Whether it concerns monitoring the ecosystems of the



**Professor
Pius MPIANA
TSHIMANKINDA**
NSC President

Congo Basin or managing scientific careers, mastery of digital flows enables national research to free itself from external dependencies. It fosters direct collaboration among African peers, where science is no longer merely consumed but produced and governed locally.

By reaching this milestone of the 50th issue, the National Scientific Council reaffirms that the digital momentum is a necessary tension, requiring us to cultivate a new vigilance so that, on this path toward the virtual, we do not lose sight of the real anchors and humanist values that constitute the essence of our resilience. This is what will make scientific research in our country an indispensable catalyst for a science resolutely committed to the sustainable development of our nation.

Activities of the Minister of ESURSI



IGC: MARIE-THÉRÈSE SOMBO OPENS THE WORKSHOP ON THE DIGITIZATION OF CARTOGRAPHY IN THE DRC

The Minister of Higher Education, Universities, Scientific Research, and Innovation, Professor Marie-Thérèse SOMBO, opened a high-level workshop organized by the Geographic Institute of the Congo (IGC) dedicated to presenting the results of Phase I of the HARISSA project and officially launching its second phase, as well as the SUGAR and CO-URGENT projects, on February 4, 2026, in Room III Henri at Boboto College in the Gombe district of Kinshasa.

This strategic meeting, opened by Minister Professor Marie-Thérèse SOMBO, marks a decisive step in the modernization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's geospatial infrastructure.

The Geographic Institute of Congo (IGC), a century-old institution dating back to the colonial era and playing a crucial role in land-use planning and risk management, is now making a major technological leap forward thanks to the acquisition of a Geographic Information System (GIS). This digitization now enables the IGC to transition from a mere archive custodian to a dynamic

player, capable of providing real-time data for land management and risk prevention.

As the Minister emphasized in her opening remarks, this historic transition from static paper-based cartography to dynamic digital data enables the IGC to become the true guardian of the national heritage while aligning with the development objective driven by the enlightened vision of His Excellency Félix-Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO, Head of State, focused on the development of human capital, as well as on the pragmatic leadership of Prime Minister Judith SUMINWA TULUKA, which is increasingly reflected in government action serving our people.

The achievements of Phase I of the HARISSA project (Hazards, African Risk and Institutions for Sustainable Settlement and Agriculture), carried out in partnership with the Royal Museum for Central Africa and Belgian Development Cooperation, already include the production of updated administrative maps reflecting the country's new territorial subdivisions, as well as a massive inventory for the digitization of historical archives.

The major innovation lies in the acquisition and integration of the Geographic Information System (GIS). This technological leap enables the IGC to transition from static paper-based mapping to the management of dynamic digital data. In practical terms, this means that geographic information is no longer fixed on a physical medium but stored in computer databases, enabling real-time updates and complex cross-analyses.

In terms of production, this digitization has already resulted in the creation of updated administrative maps. These digital documents now incorporate the DRC's new territorial subdivisions in accordance with rigorous technical protocols that ensure the consistency and quality of the data produced. Another essential technical aspect concerns the preservation of heritage. A systematic inventory project has been launched to enable the digitization of thousands of historical documents. This digital transition not only ensures the long-term preservation of the national cartographic archives but also facilitates their access and use by researchers and public policymakers.

Finally, this transition to digital technology strengthens the IGC's role as a geostrategic body. By mastering digital tools, the Institute is now able to provide modern technical support for spatial planning, land and cadastral management, and the monitoring of natural hazards. This technological capability is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and current demographic pressures in the DRC.

At the same time, the workshop highlighted the results of the SUGAR (Stabilization of Urban Gullies by Managing

rainwater management at the individual plot level. The technical objective is to stabilize ravines upstream by controlling runoff directly at the household level, thereby transforming each plot into a retention point to limit the erosive force of water.

Meanwhile, the CO-URGENT project, led by the Official University of Bukavu to create a ravine observatory including an early warning system, is laying the groundwork for environmental governance through the creation of a Congolese Ravine Observatory. Its initial achievements include the establishment of a collaborative framework

By bringing together political and administrative stakeholders, scientific and academic experts, and international partners, this event—which began at 10:43 a.m. and ended at 4:30 p.m.—laid the groundwork for scientific research firmly focused on public action and disaster risk reduction to serve the Congolese population.

Jean-Luc BALOGIJE SELENGE

CRMD/Bunia



Rainwater at Parcel Scale) and CO-URGENT (Towards a Congolese Observatory of Urban Gullies for Research, Governance, and Early Warning System Development), which, although in their official launch phase, build on the solid scientific achievements of the PREMITURG project (2018–2024). These two initiatives stem directly from the detailed mapping of gullies carried out in several cities across the DRC and the identification of urban erosion factors. This knowledge base has been consolidated through the defense of two doctoral theses, enabling the transition from fundamental research to technical application.

The SUGAR project, led by the University of Kinshasa to stabilize ravines through rainwater management at the plot level, has already begun demonstrating the effectiveness of solutions based on

combining scientific research and "citizen science." This technical initiative aims to deploy an Early Warning System to monitor the evolution of ravine heads and prevent disasters before they displace populations.

In fact, in 2023, approximately 3,000 urban ravines were identified in the DR Congo, stretching over nearly 740 km and putting 32 million people at risk. 98% of these gullies form near roads due to inadequate drainage systems and the lack of rainwater retention structures, and a large portion of these gullies are located in Kinshasa.

These projects aim, ultimately, to reduce major socio-environmental impacts, particularly the displacement of people or those at risk due to urban erosion. Stabilizing a gully can cost over one million U.S. dollars: acting early can reduce this cost.

Activities of the Minister of ESURSI

MARIE-THÉRÈSE SOMBO nomme les responsables de trois institutions du Kongo Central

On February 2, 2026, the Minister of Higher Education, Universities, Scientific Research, and Innovation (ESURSI), Professor Marie-Thérèse SOMBO, appointed the members of the Management Committees for three institutions in Kongo Central Province, as part of efforts to strengthen the academic, administrative, and financial governance of these institutions.

These decisions are part of the Government's commitment to improving university governance, enhancing the quality of academic and administrative management, and effectively addressing the structural and organizational challenges facing the higher education sub-sector.

They also underscore the urgent need to provide a strong institutional framework to enable these institutions to better fulfill their missions of education, research, and community service.

Institutions concerned and designated officials

Kasangulu Institute of Applied Technology

1. Head of the Institution: Director General:
 - MBUNGU MUTU
2. Academic Secretary General:
 - TSHIBANGU LUENDU
3. Administrative and Financial Secretary General:
 - BAKADISA NSIMBA Eugénie

President Joseph Kasa-Vubu University (UKV)

1. Head of the institution: Rector:
 - BAMUEN SOLO Darius
2. Academic Secretary General:



- MATUNDU LELO Joachim
3. Secretary General for Research:
 - DIANSAMBU MAKANU Isaac
 4. Administrative Secretary:
 - ZIAMA ZUMISA Arthémuse
 5. Budget Administrator:
 - TSUETE NKONGO Verdace

Luizi Higher Institute of Rural Development

1. General Director:
 - BUNGIENA KIMEMBE
2. Interim Academic Secretary General:
 - ZITISA KUYIMPA Justin.
3. Interim Administrative and Financial Secretary General:
 - MAME N'ZITA Blandine

It should be noted that through these appointments, the Minister has reaffirmed her commitment to a more efficient

university administration, improved academic coordination, transparent resource management, and better-structured research and innovation.

With these appointments, Kongo Central is thus receiving a new institutional impetus that will benefit students, faculty, and national scientific development

**Communications Office of the Minister
of ESURSI**

Activities of the Secretary-General at the RSI

ODON NDAMBU MWALANGA

Reappointed Secretary General of the RSI by Jean-Pierre Lihau



The Secretary General for Scientific Research and Innovation (RSI), Odon NDAMBU MWALANGA, has been reappointed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Civil Service, Administrative Modernization, and Public Service Innovation, Jean-Pierre Lihau, pursuant to Ministerial Order No. 008/CAB. VPMIN/FP-MA-ISP/JPL/2026 of January 28, 2026, concerning the general appointment of Secretaries General of the Public Administration.

This decision, announced in an official statement from the Ministry of Public Service, falls within the scope of the powers granted to the Deputy Prime

Minister under current laws and regulations. It aims to inject new vitality into the operations of the state's public services, in line with current requirements for governance, performance, and accountability.

This broad-based restructuring follows efforts to streamline administrative frameworks and structures and addresses the need to leverage the skills available within the public administration. The goal is to ensure more efficient and transparent operations that adhere to the principles of integrity and good governance.

In total, 69 senior officials have been appointed and assigned as Secretaries-General in various public institutions and administrations. The new

appointments include the Office of the President of the Republic, Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, as well as key ministries such as the Interior and Security, Finance, Budget, Economy, Justice, National Defense, Public Health, Education, Agriculture, Mines, Infrastructure, Digital Affairs, Environment, Gender, Youth, Scientific Research and Innovation, as well as several judicial and administrative departments and jurisdictions.

Christian MAZONO/NSC

ODON NDAMBU MWALANGA : a choice that ensures excellence and continuity at the helm of the General Secretariat for CSR

The Department of Scientific Research and Innovation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its stability through competence.

By Ministerial Order No. 008/CAB. VPMIN/FP-MA-ISP/JPL/2026 of January 28, 2026, as part of the general restructuring of the General Secretariats of the public administration, Mr. Odon NDAMBU MWALANGA has been officially reappointed as head of the General Secretariat for Scientific Research and Innovation. This decision, far from being a matter of chance, resonates rather as a fitting recognition of the merit and rigor he has consistently demonstrated since assuming this high administrative post, in a career marked by a clear vision.

A senior official with proven capabilities, Odon NDAMBU embodies this new generation of managers capable of reconciling the bureaucratic demands of the state with the

technological ambitions of a nation in the midst of transformation. His mastery of the issues, his unifying leadership, and his pragmatic vision of innovation have enabled the sector to maintain an ambitious course. His technical expertise, coupled with a deep understanding of the workings of the civil service, makes him the ideal pillar to support the ambitious reforms expected in the scientific research and innovation subsector.

Under his leadership, the sub-sector has made significant strides, notably including streamlined management of researchers' careers and improved coordination between research centers and the central administration, consistent support for initiatives aimed at transforming research outcomes into concrete solutions for national development, as well as his ability to maintain a constructive dialogue among social partners, research institutes, and the overseeing authority. By retaining him in this position, the leadership is relying on a technocrat who understands the intricacies

of research as well as the urgent needs of researchers in the field.

The Bulletin of Science and Technological Innovations would like to extend its most sincere congratulations to him for this renewed vote of confidence. His reappointment is a promise to continue the reforms already underway and a guarantee of professionalism for the entire Congolese scientific ecosystem.

We wish him every success and all the best for this new term, with the hope that, under his leadership, science and innovation will become, more than ever, the driving force behind our country's sustainable development.

BALOGIJE SELENJE Jean-Luc
STIB Central Editorial Office.

**Message from the President of the NSC
 Prof. Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA
 on the occasion of the presentation of Phase I of the
 Harissa Project on February 4, 2026, in Kinshasa**

Your Excellency, the Minister of
 Higher Education, Universities,
 Scientific Research, and
 Innovation;

Mr. Secretary General for Scientific
 Research and Innovation;

Members of the Management
 Committee of the Geographical
 Institute of the Congo;

Ladies and gentlemen,
 representatives of partner
 institutions;

Ladies and gentlemen,
 distinguished guests in your
 respective capacities ;

As Chair of the National Scientific Council,
 I am particularly honored to speak at this
 ceremony, which is of major scientific,
 institutional, and strategic importance to the
 Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are gathered here today to mark three
 key milestones :

- **the presentation of Phase I of the HARISSA project,**
- **the official launch of HARISSA II,**
- **the start of activities for the first year of the SUGAR and CO-URGENT projects,**

As you know, the world is currently
 experiencing a period marked by an
 acceleration of environmental crises.

The effects of climate change, combined with

rapid and often uncontrolled urbanization,
 are leading to a significant increase in natural
 hazards and their impact on communities.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
 these challenges are particularly visible and
 concerning. Our cities face recurring floods,
 landslides, accelerated soil erosion, and
 above all, the proliferation of urban ravines,
 which directly threaten homes, infrastructure,
 and sometimes human life.

These phenomena are hitting Congolese
 cities hard, including Kinshasa and Bukavu.
 They remind us of an inescapable reality:
 without foresight, disasters become
 inevitable.

In the face of these challenges, precise
 knowledge of the territory is the foundation
 of any effective action. This is why the role
 of the Geographic Institute of the Congo is
 fundamental.

Mapping is not merely a technical exercise.
 It is a strategic tool for decision-making, an
 instrument for risk prevention, an essential
 support for urban planning, and a lever for
 territorial governance.

We believe that the projects we are
 celebrating today will help strengthen the
 capacities of the Geographic Institute of
 Congo, integrate Geographic Information
 Systems, and restore cartography to the
 center of environmental and urban policies.

We will witness the scientific and institutional
 presentation of Phase I of the HARISSA I
 project, which, we believe, constituted a
 decisive step in structuring research and



action around natural hazards and associated
 risks.

Among other things, it has undoubtedly
 enabled: the production of reliable, spatially

referenced scientific data; the strengthening of national expertise in cartography and spatial analysis; and exemplary cooperation between Congolese institutions and international partners.

HARISSA I laid the groundwork for an integrated approach, linking science, institutions, and communities.



The SUGAR project will focus on a major challenge: stabilizing urban ravines through stormwater management at the plot level.

The cities of Kinshasa and Bukavu were

selected as target cities due to their high vulnerability and the severity of the observed phenomena.

This project will undoubtedly demonstrate that: well-designed local solutions can significantly reduce erosion; small-scale water management can have a major cumulative impact; and science can produce concrete solutions tailored to Congolese socio-urban realities.

The CO-URGENT project, also focused on Kinshasa and Bukavu, will mark a decisive strategic step forward. It will not only involve studying ravines but also structuring a sustainable national response through the creation of a Congolese Observatory of Urban Ravines.

It will undoubtedly enable the collection and analysis of real-time data, the mapping of ravine evolution, support for decision-making by local and national authorities, and, above all, contribute to the establishment of an early warning system.

The early warning system is an essential tool: it enables a shift from reactive to preventive risk management, allows for the anticipation of critical situations, and protects populations before disasters occur.

We are confident that HARISSA II will build on the achievements of HARISSA I, foster synergies with initiatives such as SUGAR and CO-URGENT, and fully contribute to the development of integrated early warning systems based on mapping and scientific data. This will enable the DRC to become a regional leader in the scientific management of environmental risks.

The National Scientific Council, which I have the honor of chairing, considers these projects emblematic of the kind of science our country must promote:

rigorous, useful science, oriented toward prevention, governance, and the well-being of the population.

We will continue to support any initiative that makes research a tool for anticipation and resilience.

Your Excellency, Madam Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests,

The Democratic Republic of the Congo lacks neither challenges nor talent.

Through science, mapping, early warning systems, and strong partnerships, we can transform our vulnerabilities into collective resilience.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our technical and financial partners and congratulate the management committee of the Geographic Institute of the Congo and all its staff for organizing this workshop.

It is my hope that the results of these projects will be adopted, institutionalized, and sustained, so that they may contribute to the long-term security and development of our country.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I wish you fruitful work.

**Thank you for your kind attention,
and I wish you every success in
your work.**

Echoes of our research institutions

The General Director of CRSAT is leading a scientific seminar for the staff of his institution

The Director General of the Center for Applied and Technological Sciences Research (CRSAT), Professor Jean-Noël MPUTU KANYINDA, led a scientific seminar on the topic: "Health, Safety, and the Environment in the Workplace" for the staff of his institution on January 21, 2026, in the conference room of the Center for Geological and Mining Research (CRGM) in the Gombe district of Kinshasa.

The purpose of this scientific and educational meeting was to inform CRSAT's scientific, technical, and administrative staff about the risks to which they may be exposed in the course of their duties as research personnel, while emphasizing prevention to avoid the dangers of exposure.

The Director General began his presentation by reminding the audience that the right to protection, safety, and hygiene in the workplace is guaranteed by the laws and regulations of the DRC. He then explained several key concepts related to safety and hygiene. He further described a hazard as a physical situation representing a potential threat of harm to people's physical well-being, property, or the environment. The head of CRSAT also explained risk, which results directly from exposure to a hazard.

Finally, he emphasized the relationship between Hazard, Risk, and Harm, which implies that harm can only occur when the following three elements are present: a hazard, a person, and exposure.

The speaker also discussed the need to assess risks in the workplace using a matrix that cross-references the severity of exposure to a risk and the probability of its occurrence. This tool can help workers estimate their level of exposure to a hazard and take measures to prevent any harm they may suffer.

The Director General of CRSAT then listed the various risks to which research staff may be exposed while performing their duties. These include:

- **Biological hazards:** these are risks of infection, allergy, or poisoning associated with the presence of microorganisms in the workplace;

- **Chemical hazards:** these are risks of poisoning, allergy, or burns resulting from inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with chemicals used or emitted in the form of gases, solid particles, or liquids;
- **Physical hazards:** these include all forms of danger associated with exposure to noise (noise pollution), vibrations, radiation, electricity, and extreme temperatures;
- **Radiological hazards:** exposure to artificial and natural radiation;
- **Mechanical hazards:** related to damage that mechanical equipment can cause, such as cuts, injuries, etc.
- **Psychosocial risks:** relate to work situations such as stress, internal violence (including psychological and sexual harassment) and external violence (assaults, conflicts, tensions with the public or customers);
- **Office-related risks:** anything related to the use of computer equipment: posture,

lighting, other consequences, etc..

The Director of CRSAT finally urged researchers, technicians, and administrative staff to strictly adhere to occupational health, safety, and environmental standards in the workplace, with the aim of ensuring high productivity, minimizing damage, and providing maximum occupational protection.

He concluded this inaugural seminar by reiterating that "prevention is better than cure" and that "safety comes first."

ATITUNGU SANGOL Dieudonné/ CRSAT



Thoughts of our researchers

Digital Strategy: The DRC Invests \$8.7 Billion



DR Congo's €8B Digital & Infrastructure Plan

Opportunities for Telecoms, Fintech, and Tech Builders

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has invested \$8.7 billion to transform its digital infrastructure, expand connectivity, and boost its economy. This ambitious plan, spanning the period from 2026 to 2030, aims to improve internet access, modernize public services, and develop local tech talent.

This is a bold initiative to position the DRC as a regional technology hub while leveraging its rich mineral resources to support global energy transitions.

By 2029, these efforts could add \$4.1 billion to the DRC's GDP, create 700,000 jobs, and bring mobile internet access to 9.7 million new users.

For telecoms, fintech, and technology developers, the DRC offers untapped opportunities in rural broadband, mobile money, and AI-based solutions for key sectors such as mining and agriculture.

Infrastructure Upgrades and Connectivity Expansion (Expansion of Bandwidth and Mobile Networks)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

is making progress toward providing mobile internet access to the 55% of its population currently without coverage.

In January 2025, Vodacom and Orange partnered to deploy up to 2,000 solar-powered base stations over the next six years.

The initial phase targets 1,000 sites equipped with 2G and 4G technology, with the first stations expected to go live in 2025. This rural-focused initiative operates under a 20-year agreement in which the two companies share infrastructure to reduce costs and efficiently expand their networks.

This project aims to provide essential services—such as voice communication, data access, and mobile money—to 19 million people in underserved rural areas.

By sharing network resources, the partnership reduces operational costs, thereby making it possible to cover regions with low financial returns.

Financial support includes \$400 million from the World Bank's IDEA program, as well as an additional €100 million from the French Development Agency, to attract private

investment in expanding broadband in underserved areas.

The Digital Transformation Project will be essential for improving internet access and usage. These improvements will contribute to economic and human development, and help achieve climate goals and address key drivers of fragility. Albert Zeufack, World Bank Country Director for the DRC

Regulatory reforms are also underway to further expand connectivity.

Efforts to modernize fiscal policies and streamline sector-specific taxes are expected to reduce costs for consumers and attract greater private-sector participation. These changes could connect an additional 9.7 million unique mobile internet users by 2029.

Integration of Renewable Energy into Infrastructure.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of its digital infrastructure, the DRC is incorporating renewable energy into its expansion plans. Solar energy plays a central role, particularly in rural areas where the national power grid is either unreliable or nonexistent.

This approach addresses one of the biggest challenges to digital adoption in the country. Globally, over 90% of new energy capacity added in 2024 came from clean energy sources, a trend expected to continue through 2026 as the DRC develops its connectivity infrastructure.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has an opportunity to take a leap forward toward a digital economy. But to fully realize this potential, reforms in fiscal policy, spectrum management, and energy infrastructure must be prioritized.

The use of renewable energy not only ensures the viability of telecom operations in rural areas but also supports the DRC's climate goals.

By aligning digital transformation with environmental goals, the country is positioning itself to attract investment in the technology and sustainable energy sectors. With an abundance of critical minerals needed for global energy transitions, the DRC holds a unique advantage.

Policy makers are working to align energy and telecommunications strategies, ensuring that new towers have the necessary electrical infrastructure for long-term success.

This opens the door to collaborations between technology companies and energy providers to create integrated solutions.

Government-Led Digital Programs

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has developed an ambitious digital transformation plan through its National Digital Plan 2026–2030.

With a total investment of \$1 billion and annual funding of \$250 million, the plan focuses on key areas such as infrastructure development, digital public services, cybersecurity, and the promotion of human inclusion.

President Félix TSHISEKEDI has committed these resources to drive the country's digital evolution over the coming years.

A major aspect of this initiative is the integration of platforms such as the national digital ID and the "DRC Pass" with e-government services. These services include an online tax portal, a one-stop customs service, and a digitized civil registry system.

By March 2026, the government aims to deploy a National Interbank Payment Platform, which will enable seamless financial transactions between banks and mobile money providers.

This interconnected system is designed to foster a unified digital and Fintech ecosystem, creating opportunities for companies to

develop solutions that bridge traditional banking and mobile wallets.

The Digital Transformation Project is another cornerstone of this strategy, targeting 30 million users. With an allocation of \$385 million for digital access and \$55 million for e-government infrastructure, the project aims to strengthen inclusion, with a focus on ensuring that 50% of beneficiaries are women.

Opportunities in the Ecosystem

The government's digital initiatives are laying a solid foundation for fintech growth, paving the way for innovation in financial services.

For example, in March 2025, Rawbank and Equity BCDC began using mobile banking apps to pay teachers' salaries in Goma and Bukavu.

These payments are transferred to e-wallets such as Airtel Money, M-Pesa, and Orange Money, demonstrating how mobile-first solutions can maintain financial access even during disruptions.

However, challenges such as high withdrawal fees—sometimes reaching up to 10%—highlight the need for more affordable digital payment options. With mobile internet penetration still at only 17% in 2024, there is a vast untapped market for accessible Fintech solutions.

The planned interbank payments platform is expected to improve interoperability among various Fintech services, paving the way for broader adoption. Digital reforms are projected to inject US\$4.1 billion into the DRC's economy by 2029.

Furthermore, the digitization of citizen-government interactions could increase direct tax revenues by 1.2 to 1.3 percentage points of GDP.

For investors and tech innovators, the combination of strong government support, an expanding infrastructure, and a vast underserved population offers a promising opportunity to reshape digital payments and banking services in the DRC.

National AI Strategy and Training Programs

La République Démocratique du Congo The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has placed "strengthening human capital and inclusion" at the heart of its National Digital Plan 2026–2030. A key initiative is the Congolese Academy of Artificial Intelligence, which aims to develop local talent, advance applied research, and create AI solutions tailored to critical sectors such as agriculture, mining, education, and healthcare.

To support these ambitions, the government plans to allocate \$1 billion over five years, with an additional \$500 million coming from international partnerships.

At the "DRC Digital Nation 2030" event in September 2025, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Cisco and Cybastion to train 250,000 young people in fields such as cybersecurity, data science, programming, and digital entrepreneurship.

The program also includes training in technical English, recognizing its importance for global digital participation.

Additional support comes from the World Bank's IDEA program, approved in June 2024. This initiative provides \$400 million in credit, supplemented by €100 million from the French Development Agency, to drive the DRC's digital transformation. The program is expected to train 3,000 young people in advanced digital skills and 1,000 secondary school teachers.

"This project will equip thousands of young people with employable digital skills, stimulate digital innovation, and help achieve climate goals and address key drivers of fragility," announced Albert Zeufack, the World Bank's Country Director for the DRC.

These investments lay the foundation for a workforce equipped to tackle local challenges and develop innovative, locally-driven solutions.

Opportunities for Technology Developers

With these ongoing human capital initiatives, tech innovators in the DRC have a wealth of opportunities to seize. Sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, and data science are ripe for startups looking to make their mark.

The government actively encourages public-private partnerships to fund digital projects and strengthen local expertise. Startups that align their solutions with the country's priorities—digital entrepreneurship, innovation, and sovereign technology—are well-positioned for success.

The goal is to leverage the benefits of the digital economy and position the country as a catalyst for investment and a contributor to addressing the key challenges of our time, noted Minister of the Digital Economy Augustin KIBASSA MALIBA,

Building Digital Trust and Sovereignty

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has made "Cybersecurity and Digital Trust" one of the central pillars of its National Digital Plan 2026–2030 (PNN2), recognizing that protecting

data privacy and creating resilient systems are essential to economic growth.

To achieve this, the DRC established the National Digital Agency (ADN) and the National Digital Council (CNN) to oversee a secure digital framework. A key step is the development of a Tier 3 data center in Kinshasa, which reduces reliance on foreign servers.

A major objective of the plan is technological sovereignty. In June 2025, the government partnered with Singapore-based Trident Digital Tech Holdings to launch the "DRC Pass" digital ID system. Built on blockchain technology, this system creates tamper-proof records, strengthening institutional trust while keeping citizens' sensitive data within the country. This initiative is also expected to create 30,000 jobs in IT, cybersecurity, and the public sector.

To support these efforts, the DRC has incorporated cybersecurity training for 250,000 young people into its national strategy.

Additionally, the World Bank's \$400 million IDEA program, approved in June 2024, allocates \$55 million specifically to the development of trust services.

How Digital Infrastructure Benefits Key Emergency Services

Strengthening digital infrastructure not only builds trust but also delivers measurable benefits in critical sectors. By 2029, digital transformation is expected to contribute \$4.1 billion to the DRC's economy, with mobile technologies alone unlocking 8.6 trillion CDF in value across industries such as mining, agriculture, and public services.

The Congolese Academy of Artificial Intelligence plays a key role, developing tailored solutions that improve productivity while maintaining robust data security.

In agriculture, precision farming tools, powered by improved connectivity, could increase crop yields by 10.5% to 20% and boost profits by 23% in sub-Saharan Africa.

For the mining sector, AI-driven research is expected to improve transparency and competitiveness through better mineral tracking and operational efficiency.

In healthcare, secure data management and the integration of mobile platforms are set to modernize services while protecting patient information.

Furthermore, the digitization of government-citizen interactions is expected to increase direct tax revenue as a percentage of GDP by 1.2 to 1.3 percentage points, providing additional funding for infrastructure projects. This project

will support investments in cross-cutting digital building blocks and trust services necessary to expand the delivery of digital services across the DRC in a cost-effective and secure manner.

Investment and Partnership Opportunities

The DRC government has committed \$1 billion (2026–2030) to its National Digital Plan, supplemented by an additional \$500 million from international partners.

This funding creates numerous opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), particularly in underserved rural areas where infrastructure gaps are most evident.

In February 2025, the Indian firm General Technologies signed a \$1 billion memorandum of understanding with the DRC government to implement various digital initiatives.

Similarly, the U.S.-based Unity Development Fund announced plans to invest in infrastructure, innovation, and technology programs for youth at the "DRC Digital Nation 2030" forum in September 2025.

These collaborations underscore the DRC's commitment to fostering international partnerships. For companies seeking structured entry points, the Project Implementation Unit under the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Digital Technology is a key contact.

This unit manages the \$510 million Digital Transformation Project, supported by the World Bank and the French Development Agency.

It works closely with private investors to align efforts with the four pillars of the National Digital Plan (PNN2): infrastructure and connectivity, digital public services, human capital and inclusion, and cybersecurity and digital trust.

EYARZIGA/ techinafrica

Cooperation: The DRC and France Move Toward a Win-Win Partnership for Forest Conservation



On Monday, February 2, 2026, Marie Nyange Ndambo, Minister of the Environment and the New Climate Economy, received a delegation from the French government led by Éléonore Caroit, Minister Delegate to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, who was on an official visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The discussions focused on the conservation of the Congo Basin forests as well as on innovative financing mechanisms to be put in place, with a view to strengthening the partnership between the DRC and France.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the French minister praised the alignment of the two countries' visions regarding environmental protection, while emphasizing the distinct nature of their

respective national policies.

"We had a very productive discussion on the preservation of the Congo Basin forests. France is firmly committed to policies for the protection of forest environments, with the conviction that a comprehensive approach, tailored to each country, is necessary," she stated.

According to Éléonore Caroit, this cooperation will be based on a win-win principle and a dialogue between equals. In this context, a framework agreement currently being finalized is expected to be signed in the coming days to formalize this partnership.

"We agree on the principles. It is now only a matter of time before this strengthened partnership is officially formalized," she added.

Furthermore, the French Deputy Minister called for fair compensation for the DRC, highlighting the major contribution of Congolese forests to protecting the planet from the effects of global warming. According to her, adjusted compensation is fully in line with the agenda of the Paris Pact for People and the Planet (4P), an initiative led by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Blaise Bozenge

PUBLIC-SECTOR RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES IN THE D.R. CONGO

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CONGOLESE REVIEW OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Published by the National Scientific
Council, Ministry of Scientific Research
and Technological Innovation
Democratic Republic of Congo

ISSN (Online): 2959-202X ISSN Print) :2960-2629 DOI: 10.59228/rcst

www.csnrdc.net

Our review is indexed in the following platforms::



Subscription conditions

Ordinary : 15\$
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3. supervising the financial management of research centers and institutes
4. approving the budgets of the Research Institutes and Centers and submitting them to the Minister for Scientific Research for approval
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Printed on February 18th 2026



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