



## Transboundary Water Management in the Congo Basin (Gestion Transfrontalière de l'Eau dans le Bassin du Congo)

<b>Project Partner:</b>	International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin (CICOS)
<b>Project Region:</b>	Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Republic of Cameroon
<b>Project Term:</b>	overall: June 2006 – December 2016 current phase: January 2009 – December 2012
<b>Project Budget:</b>	total: EUR 7.5 million current phase: EUR 2.5 million

### Context

With a catchment area of 3,700,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Congo River has the second largest river basin in the world, with 62 per cent of the basin's drainage area lying within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The basin's ecosystem is one of the world's richest in terms of biodiversity and is of utmost importance for global climate protection.

With its huge water resources and large, stable discharge, the Congo basin offers enormous opportunities for inland river transport, sustainable energy generation, fisheries and agriculture. The Congo River and its tributaries form an extensive network of 25,000 km of navigable waterways, traditionally the dominant trade link within the region. Following many years of war, political instability and under-investment in infrastructure, river transport has become nearly obsolete since the 1990s. Lack of maintenance of inland waterways and navigational aids as well as poor training for navigation staff are the major factors contributing to high rates of boat accidents. Furthermore, illicit levying has caused a sharp decline in trade in the region. Urgent challenges for revitalising inland water transportation include the restoration of dilapidated port

facilities, maintenance work on inland waterways – notably dredging –, the re-installation of navigational aids and, of course, training of navigation staff.

To capitalise on the enormous potential of the Congo basin, and to ensure the protection of water and other natural resources, organised and far-reaching transboundary cooperation among the riparian states is crucial. For this purpose, the International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin (CICOS) was established in 1999 by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Cameroon. CICOS's mandate includes all aspects of integrated water resource management, with special attention paid to inland navigation. The CICOS headquarters and vocational training facilities have been based in Kinshasa since 2004.

### Project

The project 'Gestion Transfrontalière de l'Eau dans le Bassin du Congo' (GETRACO) has been supporting CICOS's activities since 2006. The main project objective is to promote the organisational development of CICOS as the main river basin organisation in the region by: a) strengthening the technical capacities, both of CICOS staff members and national partner institution staff; b) promoting good governance of the basin's natural resources through the implementation of a basin-wide approach to integrated water resource management; and c) supporting the development of sustainable river transport through the establishment of a common legal framework (Navigational Code) and standardisation of regulations and policies.

To this end, several multi-stakeholder dialogue processes have been initiated. They address key aspects of water



security, climate-resilient development, socio-economic development and poverty reduction within the basin. As an example, the Malebo Pool Convention dialogue aims to improve working relationships between the administrations of the two Congos, leading to substantially reduced transfer time of goods and people between Brazzaville and Kinshasa. The two capitals have developed into Africa's third largest urban agglomeration in terms of population and size.

The project assists CICOS in establishing regional and national databases for the management of both water resources and river transport. It promotes regional cooperation in the collection, analysis, dissemination and exchange of hydrological transport management data.

Since 2009, the project has contributed to the establishment of a Regional Training Center for Inland Navigation (CRFNI). This training centre provides vocational education for shipping and port personnel in the region. It is unique in Central Africa and a best practice example for successful vocational training in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### Impact

The sustainable exploitation of resources in the Congo basin, including energy production and improved transportation facilities, will have a direct impact on the region's development. The sustainable use of water for agricultural production and fisheries as well as economic development in the basin will raise living conditions and improve food security in riparian states.

Harmonisation and implementation of national policies and strategies in inland navigation and transport manage-

ment facilitate the circulation of goods and stimulate trade in the region. The population will directly benefit from a reduction in transport costs and associated risks. Good governance in transport management will also have a significant impact on the preservation of the basin's natural resources.

The promotion of basin-wide stakeholder dialogues facilitates the joint development and implementation of harmonised policies, norms and standards, as well as joint planning for water resource management.

### The water heart of Africa: The Congo Basin



CICOS plays a major role in facilitating sustainable use and protection of the basin's resources and in promoting cooperation among member states in this post-conflict region. The project's impact will be crucial for the mutual economic development of Africa's largest river basin and will, in turn, help stabilise on-going peace processes.

### Imprint

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