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REPORT BY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (Annex 3 of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization), the policy statement by the Democratic Republic of the Congo is attached.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ten years after its second Trade Policy Review at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is approaching its third Review with an open economy and sustained growth, having recorded average real GDP growth of 4.8% over the review period and of 5.7% in 2025. This momentum, driven by mining investment and strong international demand, was maintained despite a volatile global environment and persistent security challenges in the eastern part of the country. The national priority is now to translate this growth into effective export diversification, local industrialization, and lasting improvements in supply chain resilience.

1.2. The Government's strategy is based on compliance with the programmes agreed with the International Monetary Fund and on the macroeconomic stability pact concluded with the Central Bank of the Congo (BCC). This coordination helped to bring inflation under better control, with year-on-year inflation falling to 2.3% at the end of 2025, and contributed to an appreciable stabilization of the Congolese franc. The strengthening of the BCC's analytical tools, in particular through its Monetary Policy Forecasting and Analysis System, now enables more proactive management of external shocks and greater predictability in monetary policy instruments, both of which are essential to maintaining the confidence of economic operators.

1.3. On the fiscal front, the State intensified its revenue mobilization efforts and streamlined sovereign and emergency expenditure, thereby keeping the fiscal balance at -1.3% of GDP in 2025. Public debt management is now conducted under the Strategy 2026-2028, which seeks to optimize financing costs and to promote the development of the domestic government securities market. With the public debt ratio stable at 18.86% at the end of 2025, the DRC retains the fiscal space needed to develop infrastructure and implement structural reforms.

1.4. The DRC is reaffirming its role as a trade hub, with its trade openness ratio having risen from 35.35% in 2016 to 44.6% in 2025. The current account deficit has been kept below the critical threshold of 5.0% of GDP, reflecting prudent management of external payments. Against this backdrop, trade policy is geared towards diversifying the DRC's trading partnerships – currently dominated by China, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates – and moving exports up the value chain to reduce structural dependence on raw materials.

1.5. The Government also continued to pursue ambitious reforms to improve the business climate, focusing on legal certainty and a more streamlined tax system. The new tax nomenclature and the introduction of single-window payment mechanisms are intended to improve the transparency of costs for businesses. At the same time, the commitment to strengthening the rule of law is underpinned by strengthened governance, as reflected in the work of the General Inspectorate of Finance, the enhanced role of the Court of Auditors, and the implementation of the National Justice Reform Policy, thereby helping to reduce institutional risks for investors.

1.6. The modernization of public services relies on digitalization and the strengthening of the Business Start-up Single Window (GUCE) and Integral Single Window for Foreign Trade (GUICE), with a view to sustainably reducing the costs and time involved in business transactions. Together with e-government, the National Digital Plan is turning digital technology into a strategic instrument of trade policy and financial inclusion. This third Review comes at a pivotal time, as the DRC, guided by the Government Action Programme and the Local Development Programme for the 145 Territories (PDL-145T), is seeking to translate its macroeconomic gains into competitive industrialization and smooth integration into regional and global value chains.

1.7. The Government has made entrepreneurship a national priority through the National Programme for the Development of Congolese Entrepreneurship (PRONADEC), which is structured around the "three Cs": **capacity building**, through skills development via the National Agency for the Development of Congolese Entrepreneurship (ANADEC); **credit**, facilitated by the Entrepreneurship Guarantee Fund in Congo (FOGEC); and **contracting**, providing access to subcontracting opportunities and public procurement through the Regulatory Authority for Subcontracting in the Private Sector (ARSP). This integrated approach seeks to formalize the business sector, empower young people and women entrepreneurs, and improve the integration of domestic SMEs into local and international value chains.

1.8. Lastly, the DRC has strengthened its investment protection framework by adhering to international standards and instruments, including Uniform Acts of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), the New York Convention on international arbitration, and various bilateral agreements on reciprocal investment protection. Together with legislation on public-private partnerships (PPPs) and strengthened competition law, this framework is intended to provide domestic and foreign investors with the legal certainty required to undertake large-scale projects, thereby ensuring that the commitments made under this third Review are sustained.

2 THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE DRC

2.1. Covering an area of **2,345,410 km²** and sharing **9,165 km** of borders with **nine** States, the DRC occupies a distinctive geographical position at the centre of the African continent. This configuration gives the country access to the economic areas of Central, East, and Southern Africa and, quite apart from its size, naturally positions it as a market, transit corridor, and trading hub.

2.2. The DRC also possesses exceptional mineral, agricultural, water, forest, energy, and human resources. The key issue is no longer to demonstrate the scale of this potential, but to assess its capacity to support competitive production, replace certain imports, diversify exports, and increase the value added created within the country.

2.3. Between 2016 and 2026, this approach progressively led economic policy to prioritize **local processing, integration into regional and global value chains, infrastructure development, and improved competitiveness**. The DRC's economic potential therefore takes on its full significance when it is linked to concrete market opportunities.

Mining potential enhanced by the energy transition: towards industrialization based on strategic minerals

2.4. The mining sector is the mainstay of the DRC's participation in world trade. The country accounts for more than **70%** of global **cobalt** production, produces more than **3 million tonnes of copper** annually, and has substantial deposits of gold, iron, tin, coltan, tungsten, diamonds, and lithium. Iron ore resources are estimated to exceed **20 billion tonnes**.

2.5. The global energy transition is increasing the strategic value of these resources. Copper, cobalt, lithium and coltan have become essential inputs for **batteries, electric vehicles, electronic equipment, and renewable energy technologies**. Production has begun at the Manono lithium deposit, with the first concentrate exports beginning in June 2026, further broadening the DRC's export base. Developed by Manono Lithium SAS, the project represents an investment of approximately **USD 1 billion** and aims to produce **130,000 tonnes** of lithium carbonate equivalent (LCE) per year at full capacity by 2028.

2.6. The trade policy priority is no longer simply to increase export volumes. The priority is to retain a greater share of the value generated in the DRC through refining, the production of battery precursor materials, mineral processing, and the development of special economic zones linked to mining value chains. Accordingly, the Government intends to gradually reduce exports of raw materials. To support local processing, the Government has taken steps to progressively restrict exports of copper and cobalt concentrates. This policy aims to promote processing and refining within the country, ensuring that a greater share of value added is retained and stimulating domestic industrialization in keeping with the objectives of sustainable development and integration into regional and global value chains.

2.7. The Congolese subsoil contains around 50 identified mineral substances, only about a dozen of which are currently exploited on a significant scale. The main mining basins are located in **Haut-Katanga, Lualaba, Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema, Tanganyika, Kasai, and Sankuru**. This diversity provides considerable scope to broaden the DRC's exportable supply beyond copper and cobalt.

2.8. In 2025, domestic production reached nearly **2.4 million tonnes of copper**, more than **2,000 tonnes of coltan**, and over **28,000 tonnes of cassiterite**. Industrial mining is estimated to have generated turnover of approximately **USD 24 billion** and contributed almost **20%** of GDP,

while artisanal mining provides livelihoods for nearly 1 million people. These results underline the need for a trade policy that provides an effective framework for processing, traceability, formalization, and the integration of local producers into value chains.

Agricultural potential: food security, import substitution, and exports

2.9. The DRC has approximately **80 million hectares of arable land**, substantial freshwater resources, and favourable agroclimatic conditions, although less than 10% of this land is currently being used for agricultural production. The gap between potential and actual production explains the emphasis placed on "**the revenge of the soil over the subsoil**".

2.10. Agricultural policy seeks to develop value chains, agro-processing, mechanization, and high-value export crops. The **coffee, cocoa, oil palm, rubber, cassava, maize, rice, and tropical fruit** value chains are commercially important for two reasons: they can reduce dependence on food imports and expand the DRC's exportable supply.

2.11. Harnessing this potential will, however, require transport, storage, processing, and certification infrastructure capable of connecting production areas with markets. Agriculture is therefore as much a trade policy issue as a food security issue.

Energy potential: supporting industry and regional trade

2.12. The DRC has considerable energy potential, primarily in hydropower, but also in solar power, biomass and wind energy. Development of the Inga complex, expansion of the national grids, regional interconnections, and diversification of renewable energy sources are the main avenues for harnessing this potential.

2.13. From a trade policy perspective, energy is a key determinant of costs: a more abundant, reliable, and competitively priced supply can support mineral and agricultural processing, reduce industrial costs, and create capacity to export electricity to regional markets.

Forest potential: harnessing an ecological asset in the global economy

2.14. With more than **155 million hectares of forest**, the DRC is home to one of the world's largest tropical forest areas. This natural asset offers opportunities beyond timber extraction, including carbon markets, climate finance, the bioeconomy, and the sustainable use of forest resources.

2.15. Trade policy can capitalize on this advantage by promoting processed forest products, environmental services, and certification mechanisms, while ensuring the sustainability of value chains and making conservation compatible with the pursuit of new export revenue.

Trade potential: a hub at the crossroads of Africa

2.16. The DRC's borders with nine States and its membership of several regional economic communities enable it to connect the markets of Central, East, and Southern Africa. This gives the country a direct comparative advantage in transit, distribution, and cross-border trade.

2.17. The implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) reinforces this role, with the development of corridors, one-stop border posts, logistics platforms and trade facilitation expected to turn the country's geographical position into a tangible commercial advantage.

Industrial potential: moving from resources to processed products

2.18. The DRC's industrial potential has grown over the past decade. According to the African Development Bank's 2025 report, the DRC rose from 29th to 16th place on the continent in terms of industrial development between 2010 and 2024. Manufacturing value added per capita increased from **USD 51** to **USD 122.10**, while the DRC's share of African manufacturing value added rose from **1.5%** to **4.1%**.

2.19. Despite this progress, one central challenge remains: processing more raw materials within the country. Priority sectors include **metallurgy, agro-industry, the pharmaceutical industry, construction materials, the chemical industry, and the manufacture of industrial inputs.**

2.20. Through their capacity to produce higher-value-added goods for export and replace certain imports, special economic zones (SEZs) and industrial parks should serve as platforms for this transformation.

Oil and gas potential: reducing external energy dependence

2.21. The DRC's hydrocarbon potential is estimated at more than **22 billion barrels of oil**, in addition to substantial gas resources in the coastal basins, the Central Basin, the country's eastern grabens, and Lake Kivu.

2.22. Methane from Lake Kivu is one of the DRC's most significant gas resources, while the exploitation of these resources could support energy production and help diversify the domestic energy supply.

2.23. The priority remains to accelerate exploration, mobilize investment, and modernize refining capacity, with the principal commercial objective of gradually reducing dependence on imports of petroleum products.

Digital potential: a rapidly expanding services market

2.24. Between 2016 and 2026, the Congolese digital market expanded markedly, reaching nearly **74 million active mobile subscriptions** and approximately **36 million Internet users**, representing a penetration rate of around **32%**. Mobile Internet now accounts for more than **55%** of telecommunications sector revenue.

2.25. Nearly **20 million people** have access to mobile broadband, while data consumption increased more than 24-fold between 2016 and 2025. The fibre-optic network is currently being rolled out, with a target of 10,000 km.

2.26. Digital technology is also transforming payments and financial inclusion. ARPTC reports nearly **34.3 million active subscriptions** to the services concerned, representing an adoption rate of 30.6%, with digital transactions estimated at almost **USD 100 billion**.

2.27. The National Digital Plan 2026-2030 (PNN2) provides for nearly **USD 1 billion** in public investment and **USD 500 million** from international partners, making connectivity, digital financial services, e-commerce, digital platforms, cybersecurity and innovation integral components of services trade policy.

Logistics and infrastructure potential: reducing trade costs

2.28. The national road network is estimated at more than 152,000 km, while the total length of paved national roads increased from approximately 3,000 km in 2019 to nearly 8,000 km in 2026.

2.29. As at the end of June 2026, budgetary resources allocated to public infrastructure for 2026 amounted to approximately USD 2.2 billion. The deep-water port of Banana is projected to generate an additional USD 1.12 billion in trade annually and increase GDP by 0.65%. In its first phase, it is expected to have a capacity of approximately 450,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

2.30. The investments cover road corridors, railways, river ports and seaports, one-stop border posts and multimodal logistics platforms, with a view to reducing costs, shortening delivery times, and connecting production areas with markets more efficiently.

2.31. The needs remain considerable. More than **95%** of the 5,033-km rail network, as well as a substantial proportion of rural roads and the country's 16,238 km of inland waterways, require extensive rehabilitation. This work is essential to the DRC's trade competitiveness.

Tourism potential: diversifying services exports

2.32. The DRC's biodiversity, national parks, landscapes and cultural heritage give it significant tourism potential. Despite security challenges in the eastern part of the country, international tourist arrivals are estimated to have risen from approximately 351,000 in 2016 to nearly 500,000 in the mid-2020s.

2.33. The National Tourism Policy, approved in late 2024, aims to generate up to **USD 7 billion** in annual revenue and create 500,000 jobs by 2030. It is supported by **USD 1.88 billion** earmarked in April 2026 for four major projects and by a digitalization initiative launched in June 2026.

2.34. Ecotourism, cultural, business, and scientific tourism, and hotel infrastructure can broaden the supply of exportable services, provided that security, site accessibility, infrastructure quality, and international promotion are improved.

Demographic potential: an expanding domestic market and production base

2.35. Between 2016 and 2026, the DRC's population is estimated to have risen from approximately 84 million to more than 116 million, with a median age of 16 years, making it one of the continent's largest consumer markets.

2.36. A domestic market of this size can support local industry, trade, financial services, telecommunications and the digital economy, while the country's young population represents a potential base for production, innovation and entrepreneurship, provided that the corresponding skills and jobs are created.

2.37. The DRC's economic potential can therefore no longer be presented as merely the sum total of its natural resources. Its commercial significance depends on the country's ability to undertake local processing, produce at competitive costs, connect production areas with markets and diversify its goods and services exports. The challenge for the decade beginning in 2026 is precisely to turn the country's comparative advantages into lasting competitive advantages within African and global value chains, with the support of a business environment that is more stable, predictable and attractive to productive investment.

3 MEDIUM-TERM MACROECONOMIC APPROACH (2024-2028)

3.1. Recent economic performance has not been enough to eliminate the country's structural challenges. To address these challenges, the Government has adopted the National Strategic Development Plan (**PNSD 2024-2028**) as the framework for guiding public policy, with the Government Action Programme (**PAG**) serving as its main instrument of implementation.

3.2. The PNSD seeks to achieve the structural transformation of the DRC, enabling it to move from low-income to middle-income country status by 2028 by crossing the per capita income threshold of between **USD 1,085** and **USD 1,100**. It then aims to place the country on a path to emerging economy status between 2030 and 2035, with a target GDP per capita of between **USD 2,000** and **USD 4,000**. This ambition is based on a more productive and diversified economy that is integrated into global value chains.

3.3. The ambitious scenario of the PNSD will require a substantial increase in scale. Assuming average population growth of **3.1%**, inflation of between 7% and 8%, and greater stability of the Congolese franc, the country is targeting annual real GDP growth of 8.5% to 11% (with an assumed average of 10.07%), in order to double real GDP by 2028.

3.4. The macroeconomic framework aligned with IMF requirements, meanwhile, projects average annual real GDP growth of **6.4%**, with possible peaks above 7.0%. The extractive sector, in particular copper, cobalt and lithium, is expected to remain buoyant, and major infrastructure works are expected to regain momentum, while inflation is expected to fall below 7.0% by 2028.

3.5. Productive diversification provides the link between macroeconomic stability and trade policy. Through the Industrialization Master Plan (MPI), the Government is accelerating local mineral processing, development of the battery and electric vehicle value chains, expansion of agro-industry

and the entry into operation of SEZs, thereby increasing the exportable supply and domestic value added.

3.6. The viability of this trajectory depends on sound public financial management. The Government is consolidating the macroeconomic stability pact by prohibiting the BCC from providing monetary financing for deficits, continuing to digitalize the budget process, and strengthening oversight by the General Inspectorate of Finance and the Court of Auditors. Strict controls on exceptional expenditure will safeguard debt sustainability.

3.7. Public investment is targeted at between 8% and 10% of GDP. To finance this investment without jeopardizing financial stability, the Government will mobilize foreign direct investment (FDI), domestic-currency bond market instruments, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and innovative financing related to the carbon market.

3.8. To expand the DRC's productive base, support for microenterprises, SMEs, and the craft sector, which are the main drivers of employment and formalization, draws on a strengthened institutional framework (including **ANADEC, FOGEC and the TRANSFORME DRC project**). Particular attention is being paid to access to credit, youth entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment, the last of which is addressed by the National Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment (SNAEF), which aims to remove the structural barriers women face in accessing markets and financing. In this connection, the DRC is building on international initiatives such as **SheTrades Outlook** and the **FIRST project** to integrate gender considerations systematically into its trade policies and improve the competitiveness of women-led businesses. Supported by development partners, these combined efforts seek to make trade a driver of lasting inclusion, underpinned by detailed diagnostic work and better coordination of government action.

3.9. To translate this macroeconomic trajectory into tangible results, government action is organized around six complementary strategic priorities:

- Diversifying the economy and developing domestic industry: moving from raw-material extraction to processing, while renewing efforts to achieve food sovereignty and develop agribusiness;
- Strengthening human capital: guaranteeing free primary education, modernizing technical and vocational training, and gradually extending universal health coverage;
- Consolidating governance and the rule of law: deepening decentralization, professionalizing the public administration and stepping up the fight against corruption;
- Improving connectivity throughout the country: developing road, rail and river transport corridors, connecting the provinces and advancing major strategic energy projects, including Grand Inga;
- Accelerating the green transition and local development: implementing the PDL-145T, strengthening climate resilience, and affirming the DRC's position as a "solution country";
- Strengthening social inclusion: improving access to essential services, including water, electricity, and financial services, and supporting entrepreneurship among young people and women.

4 PROSPECTS FOR REFORM OF THE CONGOLESE ECONOMY

4.1 Business environment

4.1. Improving the business environment is one of the major pillars of the Government Programme of the DRC. This process is being undertaken at the highest levels of government, including through

the Business Environment Unit of the Office of the Head of State, the revitalization of the National Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI), and a government road map that resulted in assignments for 20 reform-oriented ministers.

4.2. Several reforms directly affect the security of transactions, such as the liberalization of the offices of notaries and bailiffs, and the review of the operations of commercial courts aimed at shortening timelines, improving transparency, promoting alternative means of dispute settlement, and digitalizing procedures. This process is completed by the gradual establishment of labour courts at the provincial level.

4.3. At the same time, the DRC is working to promote the application of OHADA law with respect to national implementation arrangements, corresponding sanctions, and capacity building for entrepreneurs, consular judges, and magistrates. The aim is to provide operators with a more predictable and uniform legal environment.

4.4. The streamlining of formalities is reflected in the digitalization of the Trade and Personal Property Credit Register (RCCM), the issuance of the tax identification number (NIF) and national identity number (IDNat) under the GUCE, and work on movable property security rights.

4.5. As regards foreign trade, the operationalization of the GUICE has made it possible to gradually integrate pre-customs clearance, clearance, and post-clearance procedures. The S-One platform run by the Operating Company for the Integrated Single Window for Foreign Trade (SEGUCE) is interconnected with the customs service's Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World system, with a view to fully digitalizing the process. The Trade Information Portal (PIC) complements this framework by providing operators with centralized access to the applicable procedures and requirements.

4.6. The Government of the DRC is pursuing the regularization of border and cross-border posts, the elimination of irregular, redundant or unsupported charges, and, where justified, rebates on certain taxes. These measures are aimed at reducing trade costs and improving border flows.

4.7. The simplification of business creation is continuing through the territorial expansion of the GUCE and preparation for the full digitalization of the process. The challenge lies in reducing timelines, costs, and physical interactions, while facilitating the formalization of economic activities.

4.8. The single window for the issuance of construction permits is already operational in part of the country and continues to be rolled out. The reform also aims to fully digitalize the procedure in order to make industrial and real estate investment more predictable.

4.9. The Investment Code is being reviewed in order to adapt it to developments in the investment ecosystem, the economic priorities of the Government of the DRC, and regional competition for attracting capital.

4.10. The DRC is also preparing a national investment policy, a national business environment policy, and a national business environment strategy. These instruments should ensure greater coherence between cross-cutting reforms, sectoral policies, and investment promotion.

4.11. The Law on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), enacted in 2018, is also undergoing review. The Government of the DRC intends to correct the weaknesses identified and better mobilize domestic and foreign private investment in support of infrastructure and productive sectors.

4.12. The simplification of fiscal and parafiscal requirements will continue with the central government's preparation of a **general code on taxes, duties, fees and levies** and a tax procedures manual. Regarding finance, the second phase of modernization of the **central credit registers** provides for, inter alia, the establishment of a credit bureau.

4.13. The nomenclature of taxes, duties, fees and levies used by the central government, provinces, and decentralized regional entities must also be reviewed. The Steering Committee for Parafiscal Streamlining and Reform (COPIRAP) is responsible for monitoring this work, with the aims of limiting levies, simplifying the business environment, and achieving greater financial transparency.

4.14. The revision of the Family Code has strengthened the legal capacity of married women entrepreneurs by removing the spousal authorization previously required to establish a business or engage in economic activity. This foundation is completed by the National Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment (SNAEF), technically validated in 2025, alongside the work of SheTrades Outlook and the support of the FIRST and TRANSFORME RDC programmes. These instruments are focused on **women's access to financing, markets, trade information, and capacity building**, with a view to increasing the participation of women-owned and women-led businesses in domestic, regional, and international trade.

4.2 Trade

4.15. Trade policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Trade with the support of other sectoral ministries, the Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGDA), the Directorate-General of Taxation (DGI), the Directorate-General for Administrative, Legal, State and Share Revenue (DGRAD), the Congolese Control Office (OCC), the National Export Promotion Agency (ANAPEX), SEGUCE, standardization bodies, and the private sector. The Government of the DRC plans to strengthen this coordination through standing mechanisms for monitoring, notification, and evaluation.

4.16. The GUICE is **one of the major achievements of the review period**. It centralizes formalities, facilitates data exchanges between administrations, secures payments, and reduces physical contact. The digitization of the import-export number, which began in October 2025, is a continuation of this approach.

4.17. The ratification of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA) in July 2025 gave new impetus to the reform process. A technical group was established at the DGDA in February 2026, and the Government of the DRC is continuing to modify the National Trade Facilitation Committee (CNFE) in order to coordinate commitments, technical assistance, and follow-up of deadlines.

4.18. Migration to ASYCUDA World and its interconnection with the single window, ports, logistical operators, and certain partner customs administrations have improved traceability and risk management. At the time of the sectoral review, 87 customs offices were computerized and operational, accounting for approximately 98% of customs activity. The aim remains to achieve full coverage of the territory.

4.19. The Customs Code provides for binding information on tariffs, origin, and value. Information for operators is disseminated through ASYCUDA World and the official channels of the customs service.

4.20. The DRC has improved its notification record since 2016. A network of focal points has been established, and WTO technical assistance continues to be requested for notifications relating to SPS measures, TBTs, subsidies, rules of origin, and trade defence measures.

4.21. Restrictions or safeguard measures aimed at temporarily protecting certain industries are designed to be time-bound instruments, based on investigations and subject to notification in accordance with WTO rules. The Government is strengthening national investigation and impact assessment capacities to that end.

4.22. Product quality and consumer protection are dependent on the Congolese Control Office (OCC), SPS services, standardization bodies, and the relevant laboratories. Priorities include the improvement of control infrastructure, accreditation, electronic certification, enquiry points, and the mutual recognition of results.

4.23. Rationalizing import and export levies remains a priority area of reform. The Government intends to publish the official costs and processing times, eliminate charges without a legal basis, and strengthen the complaint mechanisms accessible to operators.

4.24. Export promotion will be more geared towards trade intelligence, compliance with standards, support for SMEs, access to finance, participation in trade fairs, and the development of value-added products in agriculture, industry, services, and creative industries.

4.3 At sectoral level

4.3.1 Public finances

4.25. Public finance reform is aimed at improving the quality of expenditure and the effective implementation of the Public Finance Law (LOFIP). This is complemented by Order No. 082/CAB/MIN/FINANCES/2025 of 29 December 2025 on the nomenclature of accounts in the State accounting plan.

4.26. The modernization of public accounting has led to the creation and operationalization of the Directorate-General of the Treasury and Government Accounts (DGTCP), as well as the establishment of transitional payment authorization procedures and the gradual decentralization of payment authorization.

4.27. The main legal texts relating to the DGTCP and the Treasury Single Account have been adopted. The DGTCP has been established, accounting offices have been set up in the pilot ministries, and administrative staff are in place.

4.28. The decentralized expenditure chain, cash flows, and general accounting are now managed by IT applications. Six operating accounts have been opened at the BCC for senior government accountants, alongside the designated treasury account of the Central Treasury Accounting Officer.

4.29. Since February 2026, the decentralization of payment authorization has been effective in four pilot ministries: national education, public health, public works and infrastructure, and rural development. The reform remains at the consolidation stage, with security testing and configuration adjustments under way. Five other ministries are expected to join the system in the second half of 2026.

4.30. Treasury governance reform has also led to the review of the Cash Flow Plan Committee and a clarification of the relationship between the DGTCP, the Treasury and Finance Directorate, and the Treasury Committee.

4.31. Following a workshop held between November and December 2025 with the support of the ENCORE project, two orders were signed: one on the creation, organization, and operation of the Treasury Committee, and one on the appointment of members of the Cash Flow Plan Committee.

4.32. The first observations indicate a reduction in payment times, an increase in the number of cases handled, and better coordination between programming, engagement, and cash management. This progress has yet to be confirmed by more comprehensive performance data.

4.33. The four operational accounting offices received CDF 10 billion for the initial operations in the first quarter of 2026. A second phase of CDF 90 billion is planned for the second quarter. At this stage, further time is needed to fully measure the impact of the reform.

4.3.2 Government procurement

4.34. Since the entry into force of the new system on 27 April 2010, government procurement has been based on the separation of procurement, control, regulation, approval, and execution functions. This architecture applies to the contracting authorities of the State and its agencies at both the central and provincial levels.

4.35. The reform, supported by, inter alia, the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and Canada, helped to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, establish the entities in the system, and recruit and progressively train the personnel responsible for implementing it.

4.36. The institutional framework is based on the Government Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP), under the Prime Minister; the Directorate-General for the Control of Government Procurement (DGCMP), under the Ministry responsible for the budget; the project management and government procurement units of the contracting authorities; and the approving authorities.

4.37. The legal and regulatory framework has been developed with the support of COREMAP, national and international experts, and technical and financial partners. It has helped clarify institutional responsibilities and limit conflicts of jurisdiction.

4.38. However, evaluation of the system's operations shows that the legal architecture is insufficiently robust to ensure the quality of management. Challenges relate more to practices, control, transparency, and effective compliance with procedures. The growing interest of the private sector, civil society and the media contributes to strengthening public accountability.

4.39. The Government of the DRC therefore considers the participation of civil society to be an important driver of transparency, ethics, and accountability in public procurement.

4.40. Technical and financial partners support reforms related to the management of public finances, the modernization of the administration, and the strengthening of control and audit mechanisms, which have a direct impact on government procurement.

4.41. The project to strengthen the accountability and management of public finances (ENCORE) includes a sub-component on funding the strategic activities of the government procurement sector.

4.42. The World Bank and the AfDB have evaluated the use of the national government procurement system. The AfDB approved the use of national procedures, while the World Bank recommended prior strengthening measures.

4.43. This support from the main partners of the Government of the DRC is an important lever for the consolidation and credibility of the system.

4.44. The MAPS II assessment conducted between 2018 and 2020 identified several weaknesses: the absence of a fully effective management information system, weak integration into the expenditure chain, a lack of professionalization, shortcomings in the legal and institutional framework, insufficient private sector training, and weak internal and external audits.

4.45. The reforms undertaken since the assessment are specifically aimed at addressing these weaknesses and aligning the system more closely with standards of transparency, efficiency, and competition.

4.46. A Computerized Government Procurement Management System (SIGMAP), connected to the public expenditure chain, has been developed under the PROFIT-CONGO project funded by the World Bank and is at the implementation stage.

4.47. The ENCORE project provides for the acquisition of an e-GP solution, or SIGMAP II, aimed at the full digitalization of public procurement. Its implementation could begin in 2027.

4.48. Reform of the legal framework is ongoing. A draft law amending and supplementing Law No. 10/010 of 27 April 2010 on government procurement and a draft decree establishing the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARCOP), intended to replace the ARMP, are under consideration by the Government of the DRC.

4.49. Professionalization is another priority area of work. Under the ENCORE project, a capacity-building and professionalization strategy for public procurement stakeholders is being finalized, with a costed programme of action and modules tailored to the different types of stakeholders.

4.50. The programme provides for the training of 1,700 stakeholders at the central and provincial levels.

4.51. The Government of the DRC also plans to launch a standing system of internal controls and external audits conducted within the prescribed timeframes.

4.52. In order to improve access to information, understanding of procedures, and the participation of economic operators, these reforms must be complemented by an outreach programme.

4.3.3 State-owned enterprises

4.53. The reform of state-owned enterprises has continued on the basis of Laws No. 08/007, No. 08/008, No. 08/009, and No. 08/010 of 7 July 2008. It has been focused on the conversion of former state-owned enterprises into commercial companies or public institutions, the application of ordinary law to commercial companies, and the increased focus of the State on its role as a shareholder.

4.54. The Ministry of State-owned Enterprises and the Steering Committee for the Reform of State-owned Enterprises (COPIREP) strengthen steering on governance, performance, transparency, restructuring, and audits. The increased use of performance targets and contracts is aimed at improving the contribution of state-owned enterprises to the economy and the provision of essential services.

4.55. The National Summit on the Portfolio of State-owned Enterprises provided an opportunity to reassess the achievements and shortcomings of the reform. The Government of the DRC is pursuing the professionalization of governance, more transparency in the selection of representatives, the revitalization of strategic enterprises, and better utilization of state assets and shareholdings.

4.3.4 Domestic taxation

4.56. In the area of domestic taxation, the Government of the DRC plans to assess the reform that introduced VAT in January 2012. This assessment is intended in particular to improve revenue collection through the widespread use of **standardized invoices** and electronic tax devices (DEF), including by taxpayers not subject to VAT, and to review the adjustments to certain rates, in particular the reduced rate applicable to basic necessities.

4.57. Online declaration is to be extended to small and micro-enterprises. At the same time, the Government intends to enhance and improve the reliability of the tax register in order to improve the management of corporate income tax and personal income tax.

4.58. Already applicable to large and medium-sized enterprises, online declaration is to be progressively extended to small and micro-enterprises. The establishment of a reliable and digitalized register of individuals is intended to broaden the personal income tax base and improve taxpayer monitoring.

4.59. The digital reform also provides for the implementation of integrated tax management software covering the entire tax administration process, with a view to reducing manual interventions and facilitating the interconnection of the tax administration's databases with those of external services.

4.60. The Government intends to ensure the effective collection of personal income tax owed by all members of national and provincial public institutions, as well as on the remuneration of employees of state-owned enterprises and establishments.

4.61. For non-tax revenue, reforms are aimed at strengthening the technical capacities of DGRAD and increasing digitalization of collection, in order to limit barriers to revenue mobilization.

4.62. The nomenclature of central and provincial taxes was amended and supplemented by Law No. 18/003 of 13 March 2018. The reform aims to establish a more transparent tax system, based on legality, payment for services provided, and rationality in the levying of charges.

4.3.5 Customs

4.63. The migration to the latest version of ASYCUDA World has modernized customs administration and improved customs clearance. To date, 87 customs offices are computerized and operational, accounting for approximately 98% of customs activity, while a further 40 are being digitalized.

4.64. With the support of the World Customs Organization (WCO), the DGDA has strengthened the use of performance measurement tools, including the ASYCUDA System for Performance Measurement (ASYPM), in order to monitor and reduce processing times.

4.65. Changes in the average time between declaration and release provide insight into the progress made between 2024, 2025, and 2026.

4.66. The average time decreased from 6 to 5 days, thereafter staying at 5 days, in Mokambo; from 9 to 8 to 7 days in Kasumbalesa; from 16 to 8 to 3 days in Beni; from 10 to 7 to 5 days in Sakania; and from 13 to 9 to 8 days in the port of Matadi.

4.67. The customs service also continues to implement "green customs" through the application of multilateral environmental agreements, with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) within the framework of the East African Community (EAC).

4.68. These developments form part of the implementation of the customs-related measures under the Agreement on Trade Facilitation.

4.69. At the tariff level, steps have been taken towards the inclusion in the customs tariff of columns on the preferences applicable under the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

4.70. Customs valuation has been digitalized further, including through the implementation of the Orange Cell (*Cellule Orange*), which is dedicated to monitoring the declared value of goods.

4.71. The Government of the DRC intends to continue submitting notifications to the WTO concerning the application of the Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, in accordance with Ordinance-Law No. 10/002 of 20 August 2010 on the Customs Code.

4.72. New guidance on customs valuation sets out the rules and practical modalities for determining the customs value of goods for import and export.

4.73. Customs cooperation remains an important pillar of trade facilitation. The DRC continues to conclude bilateral agreements with its trading partners in Africa and beyond.

4.74. An agreement on mutual administrative assistance was signed with China, including on technical assistance in relation to authorized economic operators. An agreement with Morocco is in the process of being signed, while negotiations are continuing with South Sudan, Türkiye, and India.

4.75. In February 2026, the DRC concluded a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the United Arab Emirates with the aim of boosting trade and investment by 2030.

4.76. This agreement is part of the strategy to diversify partnerships, attract investment, and position the DRC as an economic platform in Central Africa.

4.77. In the Northern Corridor, one-stop border posts are planned between Kasindi and Mpondwe (DRC-Uganda), Goma and Rubavu (DRC-Rwanda), and Kamvimvira and Gatuna (DRC-Burundi). In the latter two cases, discussions with the countries concerned are ongoing.

4.78. Negotiations are also under way with Angola on the development of the Lobito Corridor, which could open up a new logistics route for Congolese exports.

4.3.6 Industry, SMEs, traditional crafts, and artisanal activities

4.79. The Congolese industrial fabric was severely weakened in the early 1990s and its reconstruction has long been hampered by an unfavourable investment environment.

4.80. Between 2016 and 2026, the DRC has undertaken a gradual reconstruction of its productive base. Reforms have covered the regulatory framework, productive investment, local value chains, and the strengthening of SMEs and artisanal activities, in accordance with the PNSD 2024-2028.

4.81. The Industrial Policy and Strategies Paper, developed in 2019, includes institutional strengthening, industrial space development, standardization and metrology, industrial property, green industry, the integration of priority sectors, access to inputs, PPPs, and corridor development.

4.82. This is reflected in the country context in the identification of six industrial zones in the Industrialization Master Plan (PDI): West, South, Central, East, North-East and North-West, covering all provinces according to their comparative advantages and investment opportunities.

4.83. A milestone has been achieved in Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy with the launch of production in Maluku, where Saphir Ceramics produces tiles, and Varun Beverage DRC makes Pepsi beverages. The Musompo to Kolwezi SEZ, meanwhile, is focused on the electric battery value chain.

4.84. Flagship logistics and energy projects - the Sakania-Banana Corridor, the Banana deep-water port, road projects under the PDL-145T, Inga, solar power plants, and mini hydroelectric plants - should reduce production costs and connect industrial zones to domestic and international markets. These developments are supported by the liberalization of the energy sector and the arrival of new operators.

4.85. To boost access to markets and financing among SMEs and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs), the Law on Private Sector Sub-contracting of 2017 was reviewed on 30 June 2026, and a law on local content was enacted.

4.86. The Project to Support the Development of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (PADMPE) has seen its budget increase from USD 100 million to USD 300 million.

4.87. PRONADEC, adopted at the 34th meeting of the Council of Ministers on 4 June 2020, is based on three pillars: capacity-building, to develop skills and entrepreneurship; credit, to broaden financial and non-financial support; and contracting, to facilitate the access of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to markets and to encourage them to leave the informal sector.

4.88. These three pillars are part of a fourth "C", a healthy business climate, intended to encourage job creation and the emergence of an entrepreneurial middle class.

4.89. The institutional arrangement was supplemented by the Congolese Entrepreneurship Guarantee Fund (FOGEC), ANADEC, the Agency for the Promotion of the Congolese Middle Class (APROCM), and the ARSP, which are respectively involved in guarantees, entrepreneurial framework, promotion of the middle class, and the regulation of sub-contracting.

4.90. Specialized incubators, such as the **Maison de l'entrepreneuriat** (House of Entrepreneurship), the **Incubateur cuir** (Leather Incubator), and the **Incubateur huile** (Oil Incubator), support the creation and structuring of small businesses.

4.91. Ordinance-Laws No. 22/030 and No. 22/031 of 8 September 2022, complemented by their implementing texts, strengthened the framework for the promotion of entrepreneurship and startups and the framework for artisanal activity, respectively.

4.92. The National Development Strategy for Entrepreneurship and SMEs (SNDEPME) was developed and approved by the technical commission.

4.93. The sector continues to face constraints in access to technologies, financing, information, and markets, as well as shortcomings in management, standardization, and certification.

4.94. State action is therefore aimed at consolidating the legal and institutional framework, supporting professional organizations, improving access to non-financial services, strengthening training, boosting research and innovation, and developing the markets for SMEs and handicrafts.

4.95. The aim of industrial, SME and artisanal policy is therefore to make local processing, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness the main drivers of diversification, job creation, and reduced dependence on imports, while respecting the DRC's trade commitments.

4.3.7 Agriculture, livestock, fishing, and rural development

4.96. Since 2016, the Government of the DRC has increased the budget share for the rural and agricultural sector from **3%** of the national budget in 2016 to almost **10%** in 2025. The aim of this policy is to increase the value of the country's 80 million hectares of arable land, of which only 9-10% is exploited.

4.97. The National Strategic Development Plan (PNSD 2024-2028) and the Government Action Programme (PAG 2024-2028) used the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) as the key instrument for the **"revenge of the soil over the subsoil"**. It is aimed at the sustainable intensification of production, the structuring of value chains, the growth of rural incomes, and the attraction of PPPs to agro-industry.

4.98. Since 2021, the PDL-145T has been working to address rural isolation. After the initial social and administrative infrastructure, the programme is preparing to establish agricultural desert roads for 2024-2028 to facilitate the transportation of produce, access to inputs, and the integration of rural markets, with the aim of increasing the annual growth of agricultural production from **2%** to **6%** by 2030.

4.99. The Law on leasing has expanded farmers' access to production and processing equipment by reducing the restrictions associated with traditional bank guarantees.

4.100. The ATA and the PDL-145T converge on priority value chains such as **cereals, tubers, pulses, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture** through mechanization, improved seeds, rehabilitation of irrigated areas, and strengthening of the Agricultural Council.

4.101. On the basis of completed feasibility studies in **Dingila, Sakania, Ngandajika, and Mbanza-Ngungu**, the Government of the DRC intends to develop **integrated agro-industrial parks** combining production, processing, storage, logistics, and market access. The aim is to increase local added value and reduce dependence on food imports.

4.102. The revision of Law No. 11/022 of 24 December 2011 on the "fundamental principles of agriculture" is intended to adapt the legal framework to developments in the sector, strengthen the security of farms and investments, and consolidate the agricultural land registry. It supports the structural reform launched in 2026, including support and production centres for agricultural services and security of land tenure for production sites.

4.103. In the livestock sector, the aim of the strategy is to harness a potential estimated at over **40 million head of cattle**. Priorities concern securing pastoral areas, genetic improvement, control of cross-border diseases, and local processing of milk, meat, and leather.

4.104. In the fisheries sector, the Government of the DRC established the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Office in 2022 and committed to reviving industrial fishing with the acquisition of **15 vessels**. Fisheries potential is estimated at **700,000 tonnes** per year and the country's hydrographic network accounts for 52% of the African total. Policies are focused on the modernization of artisanal fishing, the regulation of industrial fishing, aquaculture, the cold chain, landing infrastructure, and sanitary traceability.

4.105. The ratification of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in July 2025 strengthened governance of the sector. For 2026-2028, priorities include the legislative framework, local processing, infrastructure, SPS certification, and integration into regional markets.

4.3.8 Forestry and the environment

4.106. Between 2016 and 2026, the DRC strengthened governance of its forestry and environmental sector. The country has more than **145 million hectares of forest**, accounting for nearly **60%** of the Congo Basin's forest massif. The policy combines sustainable management, efforts to combat deforestation, the harnessing of ecosystem services, and climate adaptation, notably through Law No. 25/062 of 30 December 2025 on the land tenure regime and the National Land Plan 2026-2040.

4.107. The *nationally determined contribution*, updated in 2025, targets a **21%** reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The DRC also participates in the *Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)*, the *Congo Basin Forest Partnership*, and *carbon finance mechanisms*, including the **Kivu-Kinshasa Green Corridor**, which was launched in 2025.

4.108. Forest monitoring using remote sensing, inspection brigades, and community reforestation initiatives have all been strengthened. The modernization of the *national forest monitoring system* is improving timber traceability, while the protected-area network now comprises **7 national parks** and **57 reserves**.

4.109. The reform of forestry taxation seeks to improve transparency, reduce undue levies, and increase government revenue. At the same time, the *Government of the DRC* supports local *timber processing*, *non-timber forest products (NTFPs)*, *biomaterials*, *industrial plantations*, and *certified carbon projects*.

4.110. The sector continues to face deforestation caused by *slash-and-burn agriculture*, *illegal logging*, *population pressure*, *insecurity in certain areas*, *limited local processing*, and the *effects of climate change*.

4.111. Priorities until 2028 include the **new forestry law**, **bringing the national carbon market into operation**, **REDD+ certification**, **a digital forest register**, **the restoration of 1.5 million hectares of degraded landscapes**, **the modernization of timber and NTFP value chains**, **the protection of peatlands**, **the sustainable management of protected areas**, and **the integration of environmental standards into value chains**.

4.3.9 Mining and hydrocarbons

4.112. Mining governance was extensively overhauled by *Law No. 18/001* of 9 March 2018 amending the *Mining Code*. The reform increased the State's free equity interest from **5%** to **10%** and *strengthened the regime governing strategic mineral substances*, *local content requirements*, *social and environmental obligations*, and *mechanisms to promote transparency and monitor export revenue*. It seeks to achieve a more equitable distribution of benefits among the *State*, the *provinces*, *decentralized territorial entities (ETDs)*, and *local communities*.

4.113. Implementation of the revised Code was accompanied by stronger measures to ensure traceability and certification and to formalize artisanal mining, involving the Service for Assistance and Supervision of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (SAEMAPE), the Centre for Expertise, Evaluation and Certification of Precious and Semi-precious Minerals (CEEC), the mining cadastre, and extractive-sector transparency mechanisms. The minimum allocation of **0.3%** of turnover to community development is a major innovation. In the artisanal cobalt sector, *Entreprise Générale du Cobalt (EGC)* helps improve traceability, tax collection, and marketing conditions.

4.114. The review period was marked by sustained growth in exports of *copper*, *cobalt*, and tin-bearing products. Following the regulatory measures adopted for cobalt, the Government of the DRC strengthened its policy of promoting local value addition through the Interministerial Order of 29 June 2026 regulating the marketing, export, and nomenclature of marketable mining products. The Order prohibits exports of copper and cobalt concentrates, subject to the exemptions provided for, and seeks to encourage operators to move towards higher-value-added products. It also harmonizes the nomenclature, valuation rules, and treatment of economically significant mining by-products, thereby strengthening the link between mining policy, domestic processing, and trade policy.

4.115. Mining policy is now geared towards local processing and the integration of the DRC into critical-mineral value chains. The establishment of the Congolese Battery Council (CCB) in 2022, cooperation with Zambia, and the partnership initiated in 2026 with the International Trade Centre (ITC) support the development of the battery and electric-vehicle value chain. This policy direction is complemented by the hydrometallurgical plant of the STL hydrometallurgical plant, inaugurated in 2023; the first shipments of locally processed germanium concentrates, beginning in 2024; and the launch of a pilot gold refinery in Kalemie in March 2026.

4.116. Mining investment is also being more closely linked to infrastructure and regional development. The renegotiation of the Sino-Congolese Agreement in March 2024 increased the infrastructure package from **USD 3.2 billion to USD 7 billion** and strengthened the role of Gécamines in marketing part of Sicominex's output. Prospecting activities under the MICKA Project were launched in Greater Kasai in June 2026, while the digitization of geological data is expected to make mining investment more attractive.

4.117. In the medium term, the Government of the DRC intends to provide greater legal certainty for mining rights and contracts, step up geological exploration, combat fraud and illegal mining, improve the regulation of artisanal mining, and accelerate local processing. The objective is to increase the sector's contribution to industrialization, employment, government revenue, and regional development while complying with environmental and social requirements.

4.118. The hydrocarbons sector continues to be governed by Law No. 15/012 of 1 August 2015 on the general hydrocarbons regime, known as the Hydrocarbons Code, which distinguishes between upstream and downstream activities. The regulatory framework was updated, notably through Decree No. 25/14 of 1 April 2025 establishing the Hydrocarbons Regulations. The production-sharing contract is the principal instrument for granting exploration and production rights and provides for the participation of SONAHYDROC in upstream projects.

4.119. The country's oil and gas potential is distributed across **the Coastal Basin, the Central Basin, and the western branch of the East African Rift**. The Coastal Basin remains the main producing basin. The volume of recoverable methane in Lake Kivu is estimated at approximately **50 billion normal cubic metres (Nm³)**, while institutional estimates put the country's oil potential at more than **22 billion barrels**. However, a substantial proportion of these resources has yet to be confirmed through further exploration.

4.120. Since 2016, upstream policy has sought to revive pre-exploration activities, improve understanding of the basins, strengthen the role of the State and SONAHYDROC, and attract investors with the necessary technical and financial capacity. The international invitation to tender launched in 2022 for **27 oil blocks** and **3 gas blocks** was an important step. Current policy directions place greater emphasis on data quality, transparency in the allocation of rights, the publication of contracts, and environmental and social requirements.

4.121. In the downstream sector, the DRC remains heavily dependent on imports of petroleum products. Refining, transport, and storage capacities require substantial investment. The SOCIR refinery no longer operates as a refining facility and is now used primarily as a storage depot. The Government of the DRC is prioritizing the modernization of storage and transport, the eventual restoration of local refining capacity, the establishment of strategic stocks, and stronger measures to combat fraud and monitor product flows.

4.122. In the period ahead, hydrocarbons policy seeks to make oil and gas a complementary driver of growth, energy security, and government revenue. The priorities are to explore underexplored basins, harness gas from Lake Kivu and associated gas, develop modern refining, storage, and transport infrastructure, increase the participation of local enterprises and the use of local expertise, and integrate environmental requirements throughout the value chain.

4.3.10 Electricity and water

4.123. The DRC has adopted a National Energy Compact as an operational framework for transforming the electricity sector. Aligned with the Strategic National Development Plan (PNSD), the DRC Industrialization Master Plan (PDI), and Sustainable Development Goal 7, it seeks to accelerate access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy, strengthen energy security, and support industrialization. The implications for trade policy are clear: a reliable supply of competitively priced energy reduces production costs, improves business competitiveness, and facilitates local processing.

4.124. The Compact provides for increased production, the extension of electricity grids, the development of decentralized renewable energy and clean-cooking solutions, and reform of the institutional and regulatory framework. The Government intends to rehabilitate and expand infrastructure, deepen the DRC's integration into the Southern, Central, and Eastern African power

pools, harmonize conditions for cross-border electricity trade, and mobilize up to USD 20 billion in private capital across the energy value chain.

4.125. The reform also seeks to make public utilities more financially viable and transparent, notably through the regular publication of audited financial statements. A new state-owned electricity company is planned by 2027 to manage new electricity infrastructure and the associated transmission lines. This development is expected to improve sector governance and provide a more predictable framework for investment.

4.126. The Compact is complemented by the Access Governance and Reform for the Electricity and Water Sectors Project (AGREE), implemented with support from the World Bank and the French Development Agency. The USD 600 million project covers 14 cities in 10 provinces and seeks to expand access to basic services, improve the performance of the National Electricity Corporation (SNEL), and the Water Supply Board (REGIDESO), and strengthen institutional governance.

4.3.11 Postal services and telecommunications/ICT (digital technology and e-commerce)

4.127. The legal framework governing telecommunications and digital technology was extensively modernized, first by Law No. 20/017 of 25 November 2020 on telecommunications and information and communication technologies, which replaced the former framework law of 2002, and subsequently by Ordinance-Law No. 23/010 of 13 March 2023 establishing the Digital Code. The postal sector continues to be governed notably by Law No. 012/2002.

4.128. The reform clarified the regimes applicable to electronic communications networks and services, with a focus on competition, innovation, technological neutrality, and infrastructure development. The Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ARPTC) regulates the sector, in particular with regard to operating licences, interconnection, service quality, the management of scarce resources, competition, and consumer protection.

4.129. The universal service mechanism was strengthened through the establishment of the Universal Service Development Fund (FDSU) in 2022. The Fund finances the extension of telecommunications and ICT services to underserved rural and peri-urban areas in order to narrow the digital divide and broaden access to digital services for households and businesses.

4.130. The mobile telephony market remains competitive and is served by four operators. According to consolidated sector data, subscriptions exceeded 73.9 million in the fourth quarter of 2025, up from 69.4 million in the second quarter, representing a penetration rate of approximately 65.9%. Growth in mobile data use is driving the expansion of digital services, platforms, and e-commerce.

4.131. Mobile money is also contributing to this transformation, with more than 34.3 million subscriptions and a penetration rate of approximately 30.6%. The Government continues to promote service interoperability, expand broadband coverage and fibre-optic networks, and simplify the licensing regime through an increasingly unified and technologically neutral approach.

4.132. In the postal sector, the Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Company (SCPT) remains the reference public operator for universal service. The priorities include modernizing infrastructure and digitalizing operations, as well as integrating postal, logistics, and digital networks more closely. This integration is expected to support domestic trade and e-commerce.

4.3.12 Transport, logistics, and infrastructure

4.133. The Government continues to modernize the national transport system through a multimodal approach encompassing roads, railways, inland waterways, maritime routes, ports, and airports. The priority is to open up production areas, reduce logistics costs and transit times, and connect the domestic market more efficiently to regional corridors.

4.134. Major projects include the deep-water port of Banana, the first phase of which will comprise a 600-metre quay, a 30-hectare storage area, and an initial capacity of approximately 450,000 containers, as well as the Lobito Corridor. The Corridor is designed as an integrated

economic corridor combining transport, trade facilitation, industrialization, private investment, and coordination with Angola and Zambia.

4.135. Sectoral policy also seeks to rehabilitate and interconnect road, rail, inland-waterway, and air transport networks, improve border infrastructure and one-stop border posts, and strengthen transport security. These investments are intended to enhance export competitiveness, support implementation of the AfCFTA, and promote the development of domestic and regional value chains.

4.3.13 Financial services and insurance

4.136. The National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2023-2028 seeks to raise the financial inclusion rate to 65% by 2028. It combines access to basic financial services, affordable credit for households and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), greater use of mobile money and fintech, financial literacy and consumer protection, stronger financial infrastructure, and wider uptake of insurance.

4.137. The DRC is also preparing to establish its first stock exchange to provide businesses with a new source of financing and develop the capital market. The planned Kinshasa Stock Exchange is receiving technical assistance from the International Finance Corporation in developing the regulatory framework and market infrastructure, building capacity, broadening the investor base, and supporting the first transactions. A draft law has been submitted to the Parliament.

4.138. The financial framework was also strengthened by Law No. 22/068 of 27 December 2022 on combating money laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Taken together, these reforms seek to establish a safer, more inclusive financial system that is better able to finance productive investment and trade.

4.3.14 Tourism

4.139. Law No. 18/018 of 9 July 2018 has modernized the legal framework governing tourism. The Government is preparing a national tourism policy while supporting tourism development and expansion zones and encouraging public-private partnerships and sustainable, community-based, cultural, and nature tourism.

4.140. The sector's potential continues to be constrained by site accessibility, security, infrastructure quality, training, international promotion, and inadequate statistics. The strategy seeks to connect tourism more effectively with transport corridors, national parks, historic cities, and cultural industries, making it a more significant source of services exports and foreign-exchange earnings.

4.3.15 Culture, arts, and creative industries

4.141. Since its second TPR, the DRC has begun modernizing its cultural framework to give greater recognition to the economic importance of the arts, heritage, and creative industries. Ordinance-Law No. 25/030 of 12 March 2025 establishing the fundamental principles governing culture and the arts is one of the main advances of the period and is intended to provide the foundation for the future national cultural policy.

4.142. The Government is also continuing to modernize the regime for protecting copyright and related rights. The new regime seeks to improve the protection of artistic and literary works and creators' rights and to strengthen mechanisms for obtaining redress against counterfeiting and piracy. The approach is presented as consistent with international standards and the principles of the TRIPS Agreement.

4.143. At the institutional level, consultations have begun on establishing a public authority to protect and regulate copyright and related rights, provisionally named the National Copyright and Related Rights Observatory. At this stage, the authority cannot be established or become operational until a specific legal framework has been adopted. The Congolese Society of Copyright and Related Rights (SOCODA) remains the country's collective management organization; it is not a public regulatory authority.

4.144. At the same time, sectoral policy seeks to help cultural associations develop into genuine creative enterprises, professionalize cultural occupations, and attract more public and private investment. This policy direction is intended to enable cultural industries to contribute more directly to employment, wealth creation, and the diversification of exportable supply.

4.145. The protection of cultural property and intellectual property is another priority. The reforms concern the safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage, the restitution of illegally exported cultural property, the protection of intellectual creations, and improvements in rights management.

4.146. Measures to combat piracy and counterfeiting, the digitization of content, stakeholder training, and creators' access to regional and digital markets complement this policy. The objective is to integrate Congolese cultural industries more fully into trade in creative goods and services while improving remuneration for right holders.

4.3.16 Land affairs and spatial planning

4.147. Land reform entered a new phase with Law No. 25/062 of 2025 amending and supplementing the Land Law of 1973. It strengthens legal certainty for land and property rights, improves procedural transparency, digitizes the land registry, supports efforts to combat unlawful dispossession and land disputes, and protects land belonging to local communities.

4.148. The modernization measures include establishing the National Register of Land and Property Titles, channelling property transactions through the banking system, and improving title traceability. The National Land Plan 2026-2040, adopted in June 2026, provides the framework for implementing the reform. Secure land tenure is essential for investment in agriculture, industry, mining, real estate, and logistics.

4.149. Law No. 25/045 of 1 July 2025 on spatial planning complements these measures with a framework intended to improve coordination among agricultural, mining, forestry, industrial, urban, and logistics land uses. The national policy, the national spatial planning framework, and the provincial councils are intended to reduce conflicts arising from overlapping land uses and make the investment environment more predictable.

5 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRADE COOPERATION

5.1 International trade cooperation

5.1. The DRC continues to integrate into the global economy through its participation in the WTO and the AfCFTA, its trade relations with the European Union, and its involvement in subregional integration processes. Its eligibility under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) complements the available preferential market-access instruments.

5.2. Over the decade under review, the country took part in negotiations within COMESA, the SADC, the EAC, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL). Implementation is at different stages across these organizations: it is well advanced within COMESA, discussions on the SADC Protocol on Trade are ongoing, and integration work continues within the EAC and ECCAS.

5.3. The main items on the DRC's continental and international trade agenda were the AfCFTA, the Registered Exporter (REX) system, the Trade Facilitation Agreement, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, the AGOA, and the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the DRC and the United Arab Emirates.

5.2 The DRC and the multilateral trading system

5.4. The DRC reaffirms its commitment to a fair, predictable, and open multilateral trading system in which the development dimension remains central for least developed countries.

5.5. Within the WTO, it supports the positions of the African Group, the LDC Group, and the ACP Group to defend the interests of developing economies and strengthen their capacity to integrate into global trade.

5.6. In particular, the country advocates effective special and differential treatment tailored to the structural constraints and institutional capacities of the most vulnerable economies.

5.7. The DRC has completed implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and institutionalized a framework for consultation through the National Trade Facilitation Committee.

5.8. It also participates in LDC initiatives promoting preferential treatment for services, focusing on sectors in which Congolese suppliers can develop a comparative advantage.

5.9. The DRC continues to support implementation of WTO Ministerial Conference decisions concerning LDCs, in particular those on duty-free and quota-free market access. It also supports recent discussions on e-commerce.

5.10. In 2021, the DRC ratified the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA and created a dedicated national implementation committee.

5.3 Negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

5.11. The DRC continues to participate in negotiations on the EPA between Central Africa and the European Union as part of efforts to harmonize the positions of the regional grouping.

5.12. The Government of the DRC considers the EPA a potential means of promoting regional integration, managing trade opening, and strengthening local productive capacity.

5.13. The Congolese position emphasizes the principle of asymmetry to take account of differences in productive, fiscal, and institutional capacities between Central Africa and the European Union.

5.14. The Agreement's success will depend on support mechanisms that can facilitate productive adjustment and absorb the net fiscal impact of liberalization, including the proposed EPA Regional Fund (FORAPE)/EPA Regional Development Support Programme (PRADA)-type arrangements.

5.4 Regional integration and trade negotiations

5.15. Located at the heart of Africa and sharing borders with nine countries, the DRC is a member of several regional integration groupings: the SADC, COMESA, ECCAS, the EAC, and the CEPGL. This configuration provides potential access to several markets but also requires substantial efforts to harmonize the country's commitments.

5.16. The DRC has prepared preferential tariff schedules as part of its free-trade commitments. Their effective application will, however, depend on finalizing the necessary regulatory arrangements, in particular those concerning rules of origin.

5.17. An AfCFTA-specific tariff schedule has also been prepared in accordance with Annex 1 to the Agreement. Its implementation likewise depends on the completion of the necessary regulatory and operational prerequisites.

5.18. In preparation for ratification of the SADC Protocol on Trade, a corresponding customs tariff schedule has been prepared as the basis for the future implementation of preferences.

5.19. The DRC has adopted regulatory provisions on rules of origin to support the implementation of the free-trade agreements to which it is a party.

5.20. Within ECCAS, the DRC participates in work on tariff and customs harmonization. Within the EAC, it is continuing negotiations on its integration into the regional tariff regime.

5.21. The country is also continuing negotiations on the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area, established under the treaty signed in Sharm el-Sheikh on 10 June 2015.

5.22. In services, the DRC participates in the liberalization process under way within SADC in strategic sectors such as transport, financial services, tourism, and energy.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1. Ten years after its second TPR, the DRC has made significant reforms, but substantial challenges remain. Several projects announced or launched in 2016 are now operational and are helping to modernize customs, the single window, financial services, insurance, special economic zones, taxation, and the governance of government procurement.

6.2. Growth and export earnings have increased, but heavy dependence on minerals, limited local processing, infrastructure deficits, and the scale of informality continue to limit the extent to which the benefits of this growth are shared.

6.3. The Government of the DRC intends to accelerate implementation of trade agreements, improve transparency, reduce trade costs, and build a more diversified, productive, and resilient economy.

6.4. The DRC regards trade as a means of advancing industrialization, food security, employment, regional development, and the green transition. It calls upon its partners to support this transformation through market access, responsible investment, technology transfer, financing, and technical assistance.

6.5. On the occasion of its third TPR, the DRC reaffirms its determination to contribute actively to the multilateral trading system and to make its regional and global integration a source of shared prosperity.

ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGEDUFOR	Support for sustainable forest management
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AMAA	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters
ANAPI	National Investment Promotion Agency
ARE	Electricity Regulatory Authority
ARMP	Government Procurement Regulatory Authority
ARPTC	Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
ASYPM	ASYCUDA System for Performance Measurement
AU	African Union
BCC	Central Bank of the Congo.
CDF	Congolese franc
CEPA	DRC-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
CN-AfCFTA	AfCFTA National Implementation Committee
CNN	National Committee for Standardization
CNO	OHADA National Committee
COFED	Support Unit for the National Authorizing Officer for the EDF
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONAREF	National Land Reform Commission
COPIREP	Steering Committee for the Reform of State-owned Enterprises
COREF	Steering Committee for the Reform of Public Finances
CRCN	Regional Coordinating Committee for EPA Negotiations
CSP	Higher Council for the State Portfolio
CVM	Congolaise des voies maritimes, state-owned enterprise responsible for shipping lanes
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
DGCMP	Directorate-General for the Control of Government Procurement
DGDA	Directorate-General of Customs and Excise
DGI	Directorate-General of Taxation
DGRAD	Directorate-General for Administrative, Legal, State and Share Revenue
DNSC	National Trade Strategy Paper
DPSI	Industrial Policy and Strategy Paper

DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSCR	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ERSUMA	Regional Postgraduate School for the Magistracy
EU	European Union
FEC	Congolese Business Federation
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FIRST	Finance, Investment and Trade for Resilience and Sustainability
FNC	Trade Negotiations Forum
FONADA	National Fund for Agricultural Development
FORAPE	EPA Regional Fund
FPI	Industry Promotion Fund
HIPC-I	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IBP	Tax on profits and earnings
IDF	Infrastructure Development Fund
INS	National Institute of Statistics
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ITC	International Trade Centre
LDC	Least-developed country
LOFIP	Public Finance Law
NFI	Net fiscal impact
OCC	Congolese Control Office
OGEFREM	Multimodal Freight Management Office
OHADA	Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa
ONPDA	National Copyright and Related Rights Observatory
PAMFIP	Project to support the modernization of public finances
PNEFEB	National Environment, Forest, Water and Biodiversity Programme
PNIA	National Agricultural Investment Plan
PRADA	EPA Regional Development Support Programme
PSRFP	Strategic Plan for the Reform of Government Finances
RECOS	Simplified trade regime
REDD	Reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation
RVA	Régie des voies aériennes, state-owned enterprise responsible for national air space and airports
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SCPT	Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Company
SCTP	Transport and Ports Company
SEZ	Special economic zone
SIGMAP	Computerized Government Procurement Management System
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNCC	Congolese National Railway Company
SNEL	National Electricity Corporation
TFA	World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area (SADC-EAC-COMESA)
TPR	Trade Policy Review
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WCO	World Customs Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
