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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

This report, prepared for the third Trade Policy Review of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has been drawn up by the WTO Secretariat on its own responsibility. The Secretariat has, as required by the Agreement establishing the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (Annex 3 to the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization), sought clarification from the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its trade policies and practices.

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SUMMARY

1. Trade is a key lever for the economic development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The DRC is one of the countries with the greatest economic potential in Africa and the world, given the abundance of its natural resources, its strategic geographical position at the centre of the continent, and the size of its population. The country has large reserves of strategic minerals, considerable hydroelectric potential, vast areas of arable land, a young population, and ready access to the markets of Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. This combination of natural and human resources offers considerable leverage in favour of economic diversification, regional integration and integration into global value chains. However, this potential remains largely underexploited.

2. Despite its abundant resources, the DRC faces major infrastructure deficits, particularly in the transport, energy and technology sectors. These constraints are compounded by inadequate governance and high levels of corruption. Limited access to electricity, education, healthcare and essential services curbs productivity and human capital development. Moreover, the lack of transport infrastructure, particularly roads and railways, severely restricts internal connectivity and integration into external markets, thereby constituting a major obstacle to trade, economic diversification, industrial development and economic growth. These difficulties are exacerbated by the ongoing armed conflicts in certain regions, as well as institutional weaknesses that hinder efforts to unlock the national economic potential. Against this backdrop, the development of the Lobito corridor takes on strategic importance, as it will provide more effective access to international markets and improve logistics links for exports, particularly mining products.

3. In 2024, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was approximately USD 654, meaning the country is among the world's least prosperous economies in terms of per capita income (205th out of 218 countries). The poverty rate remains extremely high, placing the DRC among the poorest countries in the world. In 2024, about 73.5% of the population lived on less than USD 2.15 per day, demonstrating the extent of poverty. The Gini index, which was 0.44 in 2020, reflects a relatively moderate but persistent level of income inequality.

4. Over the period 2016-2024, the DRC recorded an average economic growth rate of 5.4%, higher than that of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, this momentum was severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed growth, down from 4.4% in 2019 to 1.7% in 2020, due to health restrictions, sluggish global demand and supply chain disruptions. Overall, the trend was driven by exports, particularly those of the mining sector, which benefited from favourable international prices.

5. While inflation remains high, it is falling; averaging 7.4% annually in 2025, compared to 11.7% in 2024 and 19.9% in 2023. In the face of inflationary pressures, the Central Bank of the Congo (BCC) tightened its monetary policy considerably, raising its policy rate from 7.5% in January 2022 to 25% in August 2023. This rate was gradually reduced to 17.5% in October 2025 and to 13.5% in April 2026. Despite these measures, inflationary pressures persist. The fiscal deficit remained modest in 2024 (-1.3% of GDP), but public finances are under pressure due to higher security spending and public investment. Public debt, although low, reached 20.2% of GDP in 2025. The current account remains in deficit (3.8% of GDP in 2024), despite an improvement compared with previous years.

6. The primary sector remains the main driver of the economy, accounting for 36.8% of GDP in 2024, compared to 37.9% in 2016. The extractive industries, in particular copper, cobalt, gold, and diamond mining, account for 19.7% of GDP alone (19.3% in 2016), while agriculture, largely dominated by subsistence activities, contributes 17.1% (compared to 18.6% in 2016). The secondary sector accounts for 26.9% of GDP (21.8% in 2016), of which about 18% comes from manufacturing. The services sector contributes 33% to GDP, the same proportion as in 2016. However, the employment structure contrasts sharply with the production structure. In 2025, industry accounted for only 8% of total employment, a share unchanged from 2016, reflecting the highly capital-intensive nature of the mining sector. Meanwhile, agriculture's share was close to 59% of employment (compared to 60% in 2016), while services accounted for around 33% (32% in 2016). These shares have changed little since 2016, confirming the major role of agriculture and the informal sector in labour absorption. The DRC's heavy reliance on the mining sector increases the risk of "Dutch disease", characterized by a misallocation of resources to extractive activities to the detriment of other productive sectors. This situation hinders economic diversification, limits job creation, and increases the country's vulnerability to shocks related to commodity prices.

7. Exports and imports have seen rapid growth since the DRC's last Review. The DRC's exports remain highly concentrated with little diversification. The mining sector accounts for over 90% of total exports, reflecting a structural dependence on raw materials. Trade flows are also geographically concentrated, primarily destined for Asia, particularly China, while Africa's share remains limited. Despite regional integration ambitions, Congolese exports remain more competitive in European and Asian markets than in regional markets, particularly those of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The comparative advantage index reveals a comparative advantage in ores and metals between 2016 and 2023, confirming the increased reliance on the extractive sector. On the other hand, the DRC's imports are dominated by electrical machinery and equipment, mainly from Asia and the Middle East, with China as the main supplier country.

8. The competitiveness of Congolese exports continues to be undermined by high trade costs. These are mainly the result of red tape, significant border delays, poor institutional coordination, limited access to reliable and affordable electricity, and inadequate logistics and transport infrastructure. These constraints drive up transaction costs and reduce the ability of firms to compete effectively in international markets. Although certain logistics performance indicators have improved, including customs clearance and the quality of logistics services, the DRC continues to underperform compared with most of its neighbouring countries. This hampers export diversification and restricts the country's integration into global value chains. Imports are subject to multiple duties, taxes and levies, which increase their cost and the complexity of administrative procedures, putting additional pressure on economic operators.

9. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to the DRC rose steadily between 2016 and 2024, reaching USD 3.1 billion in 2024, or 4.3% of GDP, up from USD 1.2 billion in 2016 (3% of GDP). However, these investments remain highly concentrated in the extractive industries and, to a lesser extent, in services. The infrastructure and agriculture sectors receive a relatively small share of FDI flows. The main investor countries include China, the United Kingdom, Egypt, India and Mauritius. Despite this positive trend, the sectoral concentration of FDI underscores the need to diversify investments in order to enhance their contribution to the structural transformation of the economy.

10. The DRC participates actively in the work of the WTO as a member of several negotiating groups, including the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the African Group, the G-90, and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Group. It is also involved in the joint initiatives on investment facilitation and the development of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The DRC ratified the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on 11 July 2025. Despite the progress made since the previous Review, the country's notification record remains mediocre and below that of most LDCs. Since its accession, the country has only submitted 38 notifications, of which 25 were submitted since 2016, covering mainly services, trade facilitation, subsidies and countervailing measures, and anti-dumping measures.

11. The DRC remains committed to the process of regional economic integration as a member of several trade agreements, including COMESA, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Nevertheless, the effective application of tariff preferences under these agreements remains non-existent, partly due to opposition by the Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGDA). Customs duties are still levied in full on the basis of the national tariff, without systematic implementation of preferential schemes. This situation reduces the expected benefits of regional integration and restricts the access of Congolese economic operators to regional markets.

12. The legal framework for investment is based in particular on the Investment Code. The country has also joined and applies the rules of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). The National Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI) is the main institution responsible for the administration and implementation of measures relating to investment procedures. The economic environment remains affected by major structural obstacles, including corruption, inadequate infrastructure, legal insecurity, the complexity of administrative procedures, the high costs of production factors, the multitude of taxes and fees, and armed conflicts. Access to finance remains limited, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. In this context, it is essential to pursue reforms to strengthen governance, simplify procedures and improve infrastructure, and thus stimulate private investment and support economic diversification and inclusive growth.

13. The roll out of the ASYCUDA World System is the main customs modernization reform undertaken during the period under review. This system has made it possible to digitalize customs procedures, including the electronic submission of declarations and documents, and thus simplify administrative procedures. The progressive computerization of customs offices has improved processing times, strengthened risk management-based controls, and increased customs revenue mobilization. In addition, interconnections with other administrations have fostered better institutional coordination and accelerated the clearance of goods.

14. Imports remain subject to mandatory quality control checks of goods before shipment. In principle, the DRC applies the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation and mainly uses the transaction value as the taxable basis for duties. Administrative and judicial appeals mechanisms exist in the event that customs decisions are challenged. However, the DRC has not yet notified its non-preferential rules of origin to the WTO and does not apply preferential rules of origin, due to the incomplete implementation of regional agreements.

15. The DRC's customs tariff is based on three tariff bands (5%, 10% and 20%), applied to almost all tariff lines. In 2026, these rates covered 36.2%, 32.9% and 30.8% of tariff lines, respectively. The simple average MFN tariff is 11.3% in 2026, compared to 11.2% in 2016, reflecting the overall stability in the level of tariff protection. Agricultural products remain slightly more protected (11.5% compared to 11.1% in 2016) than non-agricultural products (11.2%, unchanged since 2016). The DRC has bound all its tariff lines. The simple average bound rate is 94.4%. The large gap between the bound and applied rates leaves considerable room for tariff flexibility, which could increase uncertainty regarding the future evolution of tariff policy. There are still significant tax and customs exemptions in the DRC, particularly for the mining, agriculture and energy sectors, representing a substantial loss of revenue for the State.

16. In addition to customs duties, the DRC applies several taxes and fees on imports, including excise duty, an administrative fee (2% of the customs value), an IT service fee (1% of the c.i.f. value), in addition to a statistical tax and storage fee. These levies push up the overall cost of imports significantly. In addition, value added tax (VAT), at the standard rate of 16%, is applicable to both imports and locally produced goods. Excise duty is applied to a limited range of products, including alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, petroleum products, and other goods or services, as defined by the relevant legislation. The primary aim of that duty is to further the objectives of public health, environmental protection and consumption controls.

17. Several import prohibitions and restrictions remain in force for reasons of public health, security, environmental protection, and support for domestic production. Since 2024, temporary restrictions have also been imposed on certain manufactured products, as part of the "Made in Congo" policy, aimed at encouraging local processing and reducing dependence on imports. Furthermore, the DRC has not implemented any anti-dumping, countervailing or safeguard measures during the period under review.

18. Government procurement in the DRC remains governed by the 2010 Law, based on the principles of transparency, competition and equal treatment. However, concerns remain about the frequent use of non-competitive procedures, including direct contracting, as well as inadequate controls, transparency and contract management. In 2020, an assessment by the Government Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP) identified structural weaknesses affecting the effectiveness, transparency and credibility of the system, including the legal framework, institutional capacities, the planning and execution of contracts, as well as control, audit and anti-corruption mechanisms. Procurement and contract management practices often fail to comply with regulatory provisions, while payment delays, inadequate information systems, and weak follow-up of audit recommendations continue to affect the effectiveness of public expenditure and the confidence of economic operators.

19. Agriculture remains the main employment sector in the DRC, employing nearly 59% of the labour force, although its contribution to GDP shrank slightly during the period under review. The country has exceptional agricultural potential, with an estimated 80 million hectares of arable land, supported by significant water resources and rich agro-ecological diversity. The fisheries potential is also significant, due to the abundance of rivers, lakes and bodies of water. Furthermore, the livestock farming potential in the DRC is considerable, with around 125 million hectares of pastureland capable of supporting up to 40 million head of cattle and producing a substantial amount of meat, even under an extensive farming system.

20. Despite this potential, the agriculture sector continues to be dominated by subsistence family farms with low levels of mechanization and that are poorly integrated into value chains. Low yields are explained by the limited access to modern inputs, financing, rural infrastructure, and support services. The agricultural sector is also affected by the growing incidence of climate change and extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall, which undermine the agricultural production potential and increase the vulnerability of producers. The livestock and fisheries sectors also remain underdeveloped. Moreover, ongoing insecurity in certain agricultural zones impedes the exploitation of large areas of arable land, disrupts production activities, and restricts producers' market access. This weak performance contributes to persistent food insecurity and a growing dependence on food imports. During the period under review, food imports increased significantly, reaching nearly USD 3 billion per year, and concern in particular cereals, dairy products, vegetable oils and other staple foods. This situation is contributing to the structural agricultural trade deficit.

21. The lack of a coherent and sufficiently integrated agricultural policy is one of the main obstacles to the development of the sector. The current framework suffers from a lack of strategic vision, insufficient investment, and inadequate support mechanisms for producers. An updated agricultural policy should promote sustainable growth in production; the development of competitive value chains; improved access to markets, financing and technology; and the local processing of agricultural products. Such reforms are essential for increasing productivity, enhancing food security, reducing imports, creating jobs, and making agriculture an engine for economic diversification.

22. The mining sector is the main driver of the DRC's economic growth and exports. The country is one of the world's largest producers of copper and cobalt, and also has significant reserves of gold, diamonds, tin, coltan, zinc, lithium, and other strategic ores. Mining exports generate the bulk of foreign exchange earnings and are the main source of government revenue. Production followed its upward trend during the period under review, but the sector continues to face several challenges, including low levels of local processing, inadequate infrastructure, the persistence of artisanal mining, as well as governance and environmental and social sustainability issues. Cobalt exports were suspended by the Congolese Government between February and October 2025 and, since then, they have been subject to quotas.

23. Despite its economic weight, the contribution of the mining sector to employment remains limited because of its highly capital-intensive nature and the marked prevalence of artisanal production. The majority of jobs are concentrated in artisanal mining. Moreover, local value added remains meagre, due to the underdevelopment of processing activities and domestic value chains. A major goal is to strengthen the linkages between the mining sector and the rest of the economy in order to enhance the impact on inclusive growth and employment. Furthermore, in December 2025, the DRC and the United States signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement to strengthen cooperation on critical ores, infrastructure, mining governance and regional security, while promoting investment, value chain development, and the sustainable exploitation of mineral resources.

24. Industrial development in the DRC remains limited. Major constraints include the inadequate electricity supply, the high price of inputs, high logistics costs, and poor infrastructure. The manufacturing sector is mainly composed of the agri-food and chemical industries, producers of building materials, and mining-related processing activities. Public policies seek to promote industrialization, the local processing of natural resources, and the development of special economic zones (SEZs) in order to diversify the productive base and create jobs; however, implementation efforts face major structural challenges, including an unfavourable business climate. SEZs, which enjoy tax and customs benefits, target sectors with high development potential, notably the agro-industry, wood processing, building materials, and metallurgy. In addition, the DRC has considerable renewable energy potential, particularly hydroelectric and solar power, which remains largely underexploited. Harnessing this potential would increase the electricity supply, improve the reliability of the energy supply, and enhance the competitiveness of the industrial sector.

25. The service sector plays an increasingly important role in the DRC's economy. Progress has been made with regard to telecommunications thanks to the expansion of mobile networks and the Internet. Financial services have also been gradually modernized, driven by digital innovations. However, transport infrastructure remains unable to meet the needs of domestic and foreign trade. Improving logistics corridors, roads, railways, ports, and airport infrastructure remains crucial to

enhancing the overall competitiveness of the economy and facilitating trade. Financial inclusion remains low, and access to credit from the private sector, especially for SMEs and women, remains limited. This situation hinders investment and the creation and growth of businesses, impedes the development of entrepreneurship, and stymies industrial development.

26. In short, the DRC has considerable economic potential, but this potential remains largely underexploited. The country has undertaken several reforms to overhaul its trade regime, strengthen regional integration and improve the business climate, including by modernizing customs procedures, promoting investment, and participating in multilateral trade initiatives. However, carrying out these reforms in full will require more effective implementation, improved governance and better institutional coordination. The country's competitiveness could be enhanced by reducing trade costs, simplifying administrative procedures, improving transport and energy infrastructure, as well as the effective implementation of regional trade agreement commitments. Improving the business climate will also require greater legal certainty, a streamlined tax system, greater transparency in government procurement, and the implementation of governance reforms.

1 ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Main features of the economy

1.1. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) covers an area of 2.345 million km² and has considerable economic potential. The country is one of the most resource-rich in the world, with abundant mineral and water resources, considerable energy potential and extensive arable land. The DRC is located on the equator, in the heart of Central Africa, close to countries across Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa. This geographical location offers the DRC potential access to a large regional market and opportunities to diversify its exports. Moreover, with a population of approximately 112 million people, most of whom are young, the country has a young and dynamic workforce capable of supporting economic and export diversification and rapid, sustained growth.

1.2. Despite this considerable economic potential, the DRC faces major structural challenges. Infrastructure is severely limited, in particular the road, rail, and power networks (Section 4.4.5). Access to electricity and modern technologies is similarly limited. Education, healthcare, and basic services are also difficult to access, hampering the development of a skilled workforce. These shortcomings therefore constrain production and both domestic and foreign trade.

1.3. The DRC's economy depends heavily on the extraction of its vast natural resources. The country has substantial reserves of copper, cobalt, gold, diamonds, coltan, tin, and oil. Cobalt, in particular, is a strategic resource for electric batteries, of which the DRC is the world's leading producer. The mining sector accounts for more than 90% of the country's exports and is the main driver of economic growth. This heavy dependence makes the Congolese economy vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity prices on the international market.

1.4. Agriculture employs around 60% of the labour force but is largely subsistence-based and only lightly mechanized. Despite considerable agricultural potential, with more than 80 million hectares of arable land, abundant land resources, and favourable rainfall, the DRC continues to import a substantial proportion of its food (Section 4.1.1). This is mainly on account of the sector's low productivity, recurrent armed conflicts, the isolation of many rural areas, and inadequate road infrastructure, all of which hamper the development of large-scale commercial agriculture.

1.5. The informal sector plays a predominant role in the DRC's economy. According to the authorities' estimates, the informal economy accounts for more than 80%¹ of economic activity in the DRC and accounted for approximately 88.6% of employment in 2025.² It encompasses a wide range of unregistered activities, from small-scale street trading and crafts to domestic services and transport, and is often the main source of income for many households. However, informality limits the mobilization of public resources and access to formal financial services, social protection, and adequate insurance coverage.

1.6. The DRC continues to face an extremely high poverty rate, placing it among the poorest countries in the world.³ In 2024, its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita stood at USD 654, ranking it 205th out of 218 countries worldwide. According to the World Bank, an estimated 73.5% of the DRC's population was living on less than USD 2.15 per day in 2024, placing the DRC among the world's five poorest countries.⁴ In 2020, the Gini coefficient stood at 0.44, indicating a moderate degree of income inequality.⁵

1.7. This high level of poverty is reflected in adverse socio-economic indicators, including limited human capital and significant economic vulnerability among households. In 2023, the DRC's Human Development Index (HDI) stood at 0.52, up slightly from 0.49 in 2016, but remained among the

¹ *Dynamique du secteur informel en RDC*, viewed at: <https://mesrids.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/17.-M.E.S.-n per centC2 per centB0141 Vol- Article-Makolo-Kamba-et-Charles-Masuwa.pdf> (15/04/2026).

² *African Futures*, viewed at: <https://futures.issafrica.org/special-reports/country/drc-french/> (15/04/2026).

³ World Bank, viewed at: <https://www.banquemoniale.org/ext/fr/country/drc> (01/05/2026).

⁴ World Bank, viewed at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2024/10/09/questions-and-answers-on-world-bank-support-for-the-democratic-republic-of-congos-afe-drc-grand-inga-development-program#:~:text=Context,The%20Inga%20hydropower%20site> (29/04/2026).

⁵ World Bank, viewed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CD> (29/04/2026).

lowest in the world. In the same year, life expectancy at birth stood at 61.9 years, below the averages for developing countries (72 years) and countries in the low human development category (65 years).⁶ In 2024, the infant mortality rate was 56.4 per 1,000 live births, reflecting persistent shortcomings in the health system and continued precarious living conditions.

1.2 Recent economic developments

1.8. The DRC's economy has recorded relatively sustained growth in recent years, driven mainly by the extractive sector, in particular the extraction of strategic minerals, despite persistent security challenges.

1.9. Between 2016 and 2019, GDP grew at an average annual rate of 4.1%. More specifically, GDP growth rose from 2.4% in 2016 to 4.4% in 2019 (Table 1.1). This momentum was driven mainly by renewed investment in mining, spurred by stronger global demand and a rebound in world prices for copper and cobalt, both of which the DRC continues to produce on a globally significant scale.⁷

1.10. However, the COVID-19 pandemic hindered this pace of growth in 2020. GDP growth slowed sharply, falling from 4.4% in 2019 to only 1.7% in 2020 (Table 1.1), owing to the economic disruptions associated with lockdown measures, the decline in global demand, and restrictions on commercial activity.

1.11. Growth rebounded quickly, returning to its pre-pandemic level in 2021, and accelerated in 2022 and 2023 before slowing in 2024. Over the period 2016-2024, the average growth rate was 5.4% (Table 1.1). The slowdown in economic growth in 2024 was due mainly to weaker performance in the extractive sector, which expanded by 15.5% in 2024, compared with 18.2% in 2023. Growth in the non-extractive sector was also modest, at 3.2% in 2024, down slightly from 3.5% in 2023.⁸

1.12. Overall, the extractive sector benefited from favourable world market prices between 2016 and 2024, with prices almost doubling over the period. The average annual price of copper rose sharply from USD 4,868 per tonne in 2016 to USD 9,142 per tonne in 2024. At the same time, the price of tin increased significantly, from USD 17,934 per tonne in 2016 to USD 30,066 per tonne in 2024, while the price of gold rose from USD 1,249 per ounce in 2016 to USD 2,388 per ounce in 2024.⁹

1.13. After relatively moderate inflation of 5.9% in 2016, the country experienced severe inflationary pressures, with inflation peaking at 53.5% in 2017. Inflation then fell to 4.4% in 2019 before rising again in subsequent years. Despite easing slightly in recent times, inflation remains high, averaging 17.7% in 2024, compared with 23.5% in 2023 (Table 1.1). The persistence of strong inflationary pressures is due mainly to the depreciation of the Congolese franc (CDF), rising world energy and food prices, and disruptions to global supply chains. These pressures were further compounded by the country's heavy dependence on imports, especially for everyday consumer goods.

1.14. To address inflationary pressures and macroeconomic imbalances, the Central Bank of the Congo (BCC) has pursued a firmly restrictive monetary policy in recent years. This strategy notably included raising the policy rate from 7.5% in January 2022 to 25% in August 2023.¹⁰

1.15. The BCC also adjusted its monetary policy instruments, notably by raising the required reserve ratio on demand deposits in Congolese francs from 10% to 12% in August 2024 to absorb

⁶ UNDP, Human Development Index, viewed at: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/documentation-and-downloads>.

⁷ Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuel 2024*, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels> (29/04/2026).

⁸ Central Bank of the Congo, *Note de conjoncture économique au 07 mars 2025*, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/notes-de-conjoncture/note-de-conjoncture-ceb-du-07-mars-2025> (02/04/2026).

⁹ World Bank, Commodity Prices, viewed at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/commodity-markets> (02/04/2026).

¹⁰ Central Bank of the Congo, policy rate, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/operations-et-marches/domaine-operationnel/operations-de-change/taux-dinteret/taux-directeur-pct> (16/07/2026).

excess liquidity in the financial system.¹¹ However, the policy was gradually eased from October 2025, with the policy rate cut to 17.5% following a marked slowdown in year-on-year inflation to 5.9%, and then to 13.5% in April 2026 amid a strengthening of the CDF exchange rate.¹²

1.16. The primary sector remains the main driver of the economy, accounting for 36.8% of GDP in 2024, compared with 37.9% in 2016. This mainly reflects the contribution of the extractive industries, in particular cobalt, copper, gold, and diamond mining, which accounted for 19.7% of GDP in 2024, compared with 19.3% in 2016. The agricultural sector, dominated by subsistence farming, accounted for 17.1% of GDP in 2024, down from 18.6% in 2016. The secondary sector accounted for 26.9% of GDP in 2024, compared with 21.8% in 2016, driven mainly by manufacturing, which contributed 18% of GDP. Lastly, services accounted for 33% of GDP in 2024, broadly unchanged from 33.1% in 2016, while duties and taxes on products accounted for approximately 3.3% of GDP (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Main economic indicators, 2016-2024

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
GDP at current prices (CDF billion)	37,517	55,676	77,181	85,314	90,181	110,115	132,064	163,777	199,717
GDP at current prices (USD billion)	37.1	38.0	47.6	51.8	48.6	55.4	65.8	70.3	71.5
Annual real GDP growth (% , at constant 2005 prices)	2.4	3.7	5.8	4.4	1.7	6.2	8.9	8.6	6.7
GDP per capita (USD)	442	436	528	557	507	558	643	664	654
Inflation (CPI, annual change, %)	5.9	53.5	20.1	4.4	14.1	10.1	7.0	23.5	17.7
Population (million)	84.0	87.1	90.0	92.9	96.0	99.1	102.4	105.8	109.3
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	55.1	55.4	55.8	56.5	57.2	57.6	57.6	57.2	56.4
GDP by branch of economic activity at market prices (% , at current prices)									
Primary sector	37.9	37.8	38.8	33.5	34.7	38.7	40.8	36.8	36.8
Agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing	18.6	19.7	18.9	19.4	20.9	19.0	17.7	17.4	17.1
Agriculture	17.9	18.9	18.2	18.7	20.2	18.5	17.2	17.0	16.8
Subsistence crops	17.6	18.7	17.9	18.4	19.9	18.2	17.0	16.8	16.6
Cash crops	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
Forestry	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3
Mining and quarrying	19.3	18.1	19.9	14.1	13.8	19.7	23.1	19.3	19.7
Secondary sector	21.8	24.0	23.3	25.5	27.4	25.7	24.7	27.1	26.9
Manufacturing	18.3	19.5	18.2	19.5	19.0	17.7	17.0	18.0	18.0
Agro-industries	15.8	16.7	15.5	16.6	16.2	15.2	14.6	15.5	15.5
Other manufacturing	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5
Construction and public works	2.6	3.6	4.1	5.1	7.6	6.9	6.7	8.1	7.8
Electricity, gas, and water	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1
Tertiary sector	33.1	32.9	32.2	34.9	34.7	32.3	31.1	32.6	33.0
Wholesale and retail trade	11.0	12.0	11.5	12.1	12.8	11.9	11.5	12.1	12.1

¹¹ Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport sur la politique monétaire en 2024*, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-politique-monetaire/rapport-sur-la-politique-monetaire-en-2024> (16/04/2026).

¹² Central Bank of the Congo, policy rate, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/operations-et-marches/domaine-operationnel/operations-de-change/taux-dinteret/taux-directeur-pct> (16/07/2026).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
Transport and telecommunications	10.3	8.6	8.1	8.4	9.0	8.4	8.2	8.5	9.2
Tradable services	7.2	7.7	7.6	8.3	8.3	7.7	7.5	7.9	7.8
Non-tradable services	5.3	5.5	5.9	7.1	5.6	5.1	4.9	5.1	5.0
Financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM)	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0	-0.9	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0
GDP at factor cost	92.8	94.8	94.4	94.0	96.8	96.7	96.6	96.4	96.7
Duties and taxes on products	7.2	5.2	5.6	6.0	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.3
External sector									
Current account (USD million)	-1,504	-1,241	-1,672	-1,620	-1,052	-516	-3,148	-4,183	-2,719
(% of GDP)									
Current account	-4.1	-3.3	-3.5	-3.1	-2.2	-0.9	-4.8	-6.0	-3.8
Goods (balance)	-0.7	0.5	2.1	0.5	4.0	7.1	3.0	2.3	5.5
Exports	32.0	30.4	33.6	25.5	28.3	40.1	43.6	42.1	48.9
Imports	32.7	29.9	31.5	25.0	24.4	33.0	40.6	39.8	43.4
Services (balance)	-5.3	-4.3	-5.6	-4.1	-5.2	-6.8	-7.5	-8.0	-8.1
Exports	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5
Imports	5.6	4.5	5.9	4.4	5.5	7.1	7.6	8.1	8.6
Exchange rate (CDF/USD; period average)	1,010.3	1,464.4	1,622.5	1,647.8	1,851.1	1,989.4	2,006.7	2,340.0	..
Nominal effective exchange rate (weighted index, 2010=100)	120.0	81.0	72.2	74.9	70.0	62.2	65.9	56.9	50.2
Real effective exchange rate (CPI-based, index 2010=100)	118.3	104.1	118.1	124.8	126.3	118.3	128.7	127.0	127.6
External debt (stock)									
CDF billion	5,521.411	7,313.674	5,377.740	6,238.178	8,378.454	8,382.703	11,414.363	18,270.136	21,687.144
USD billion	4.5422	4.5935	3.2879	3.7289	4.2491	4.8680	5.6593	6.8454	7.6072
% of GDP	14.7	13.1	7.0	7.3	9.3	7.6	8.6	11.2	10.9
Gross official reserves (USD million) ^b	708.2	695.4	665.3	1,194.4	747.7	3,467.1	4,378.1	5,104.2	..

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
In months of imports of goods and services	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.6	1.7	1.5	1.7	..

.. Not available.

a Estimates.

b Including gold.

Source: Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuels*, 2022, 2023, and 2024, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels-0> (15/04/2026); World Bank, world development indices, population data, viewed at: <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators#> (15/04/2026); infant mortality data, viewed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN> (15/04/2026); official reserves data, viewed at: <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SI.POV.GINI,SI.DST.FRST.10,SI.DS.T.FRST.20,SI.DST.02ND.20,SI.DST.03RD.20,SI.DST.04TH.20,SI.DST.05TH.20,SI.DST.10TH.10#> (15/04/2026); United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Index, viewed at: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI> (15/04/2026); International Monetary Fund, exchange rate and effective exchange rate, viewed at: <https://data.imf.org/en/Data-Explorer> (15/04/2026); and inflation for 2024, viewed at: <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PCPIPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/COD> (22/07/2026).

1.17. In terms of job creation, in 2025, agriculture remained the largest source of employment, accounting for nearly 59% of total employment, down slightly from 60% in 2016, despite its relatively limited contribution to GDP. Services also accounted for a significant share of employment, at 33%, up slightly from 32% in 2016. By contrast, industry accounted for only 8% of employment, unchanged from 2016. This highlights a mismatch between the contribution of industry and services to GDP and their capacity to absorb labour.¹³

1.18. Tax revenue mobilization remains weak despite sustained economic growth in recent years. This is due in particular to the narrow tax base and is compounded by the large informal sector and heavy dependence on volatile mining revenue. The DRC's tax revenue amounted to 10.2% of GDP in 2024 (compared with 9.7% in 2016), below both the levels recorded in peer countries and the sub-Saharan African average of approximately 15% of GDP. Similarly, government revenue in the DRC stood at 11.3% of GDP in 2024 (Table 1.2), down from 14.7% in 2016 and below the sub-Saharan African average of 17% of GDP.¹⁴

1.19. The fiscal balance remained slightly negative in 2024, at -1.3% of GDP. The fiscal balance fluctuated over the period 2016-2024. After large surpluses in 2016 and in particular in 2017, the fiscal surplus narrowed sharply in 2018 and 2019 before stabilizing at more moderate levels in 2020 and 2021. The position then deteriorated, moving into a small deficit in 2022, rebounding strongly in 2023 and returning to negative territory in 2024, mainly because of higher security expenditure and public investment (Table 1.2).

1.20. Public debt followed a generally upward but uneven path over the period 2019-2025. After rising rapidly between 2019 and 2021, from 9.7% to 14% of GDP, it continued to increase at a more moderate pace through 2024, when it reached 15.8% of GDP. However, 2025 marked a significant shift, with the ratio rising by more than 4 percentage points in a single year to 20.2% of GDP.¹⁵ This increase was due mainly to higher public investment and increased security expenditure related to conflicts in the country.

1.21. The current account recorded a deficit of 3.8% of GDP in 2024 (Table 1.1), reflecting a persistent imbalance between inflows and outflows of goods, services, income, and current transfers. This deficit was partly attributable to the deficit in trade in goods and services, which had recently

¹³ World Bank, viewed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=CD> (16/04/2026).

¹⁴ IMF, viewed at: [https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2024/07/15/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo-Selected-Issues-551897#:~:text=Domestic%20revenue%20mobilization%20\(DRM\)%20in,avoidance%20in%20the%20mining%20sector](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2024/07/15/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo-Selected-Issues-551897#:~:text=Domestic%20revenue%20mobilization%20(DRM)%20in,avoidance%20in%20the%20mining%20sector) (16/04/2026).

¹⁵ IMF, viewed at: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/CG_DEBT_GDP@GDD/SWE (16/04/2026).

widened and weighed on the overall external position. Nevertheless, the deficit was smaller than in 2016 (4.1% of GDP) and 2023 (6% of GDP). The balance of payments is set out in the Annex (Table A1.1).

Table 1.2 Government finance, estimates, 2016-2024

(% of GDP at current prices)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total revenue	14.7	16.9	10.2	9.9	9.7	12.2	13.3	16.1	11.3
Tax revenue	9.7	9.6	6.9	8.0	5.5	8.0	9.0	11.4	10.2
Taxes on international trade	3.7	3.7	2.7	2.4	1.4	2.0	2.6	2.0	2.1
Import duties and taxes	3.7	3.7	2.7	2.4	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0
of which customs duties	1.6	1.7	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
VAT on imports	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.5	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.0	1.0
Taxes on income	2.7	2.9	2.2	3.1	2.0	3.3	3.5	6.3	5.0
Natural persons	1.5	2.0	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.6
Companies and enterprises	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.8	0.8	1.8	1.9	4.9	3.5
Taxes on goods and services	3.0	2.7	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.8
Other tax revenue	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Non-fiscal revenue	1.8	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2
Administrative, judicial, and government property revenue	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
State portfolio revenue	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Exceptional revenue	3.2	7.1	3.0	1.5	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.6	0.9
Total expenditure	9.5	7.6	8.3	8.3	8.0	9.4	13.5	11.2	12.5
Goods and services	8.0	5.4	5.6	5.7	6.4	7.9	9.0	10.1	8.3
Interest payments	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
on domestic debt	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4
on foreign debt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Subsidies and transfers	0.7	2.0	2.5	2.4	1.6	1.3	4.4	0.9	3.7
Fiscal balance	5.2	9.3	1.9	1.6	1.7	2.8	-0.2	4.9	-1.3

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Central Bank of the Congo database, *Rapports Annuels*, 2022, 2023, and 2024, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels-0> (15/04/2026).

1.3 Developments in trade and investment

1.3.1 Trends and patterns in merchandise and services trade

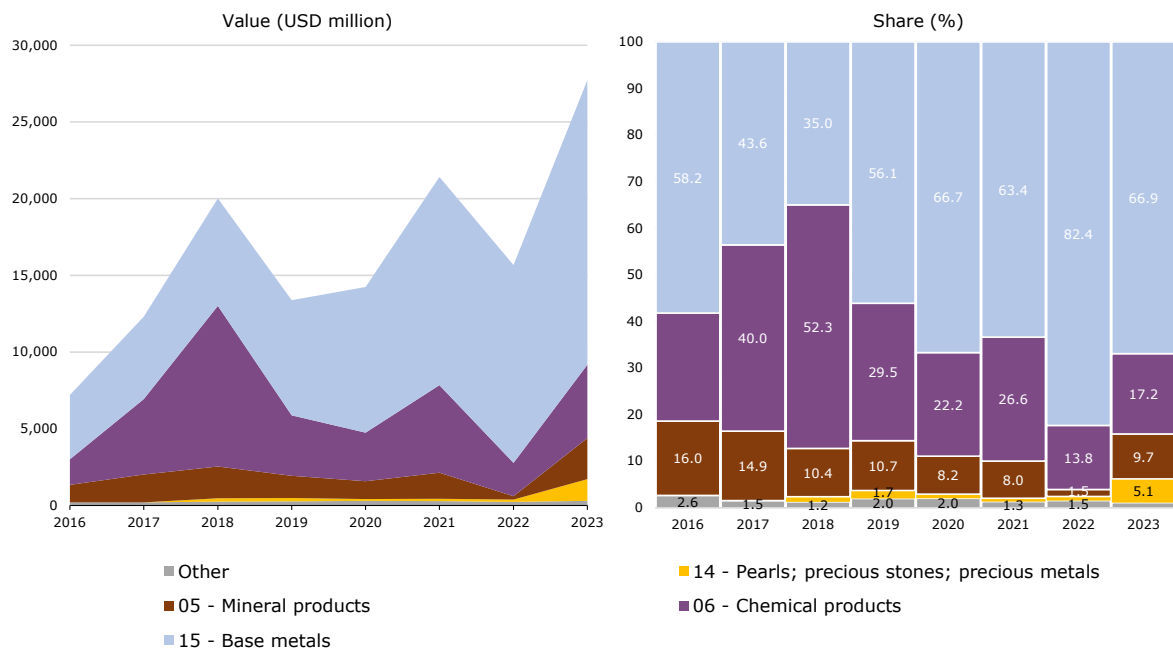
1.22. The DRC's trade openness increased significantly between 2016 and 2024, reaching a level higher than that of many comparable countries. Measured by the ratio of total trade (goods and services) to GDP, trade openness increased from 71% in 2016 to 101% in 2024 (Table 1.1). This trend was driven mainly by trade in goods, which accounts for the bulk of the country's external trade.

1.23. During the period under review, the DRC's exports and imports of goods and services grew steadily in volume terms. Exports increased from USD 7.3 billion in 2016 to USD 27.8 billion in 2023 (Table 1.4 and Table A1.2). Their share of GDP also increased over the same period, from 32.4% of GDP in 2016 to 42.2% in 2024 (Table 1.1). Imports also increased, from USD 7.6 billion in 2016 to USD 31.2 billion in 2024 (Table 1.4 and Table A1.3). Imports as a percentage of GDP increased from 38.3% in 2016 to 47.9% in 2024 (Table 1.1).

1.24. Goods exports recorded strong growth over the period 2016-2023, despite significant fluctuations. They increased from USD 7.2 billion in 2016 to USD 27.7 billion in 2023, nearly four times their level at the beginning of the period under review (Table A1.2). This trend primarily reflects the country's reliance on exports of raw materials, making trade performance sensitive to fluctuations in international prices and external demand. Moreover, the authorities indicated that exports had increased to USD 40.7 billion in 2025, compared with USD 37.7 billion in 2024.

1.25. The DRC's goods exports are heavily dominated by mining and chemical products and metals. The share of base metals in exports increased from 58.2% in 2016 to 66.9% in 2023, further increasing dependence on this category. By contrast, the shares of chemical products and mining products declined from 23.2% to 17.2% and from 16% to 9.7%, respectively, while the share of gemstones and precious metals increased from 0% to 5.1%, reflecting limited diversification (Chart 1.1 and Table A1.2). This heavy reliance on minerals makes the economy particularly vulnerable to external shocks, including commodity price volatility, which can lead to macroeconomic instability. This further underscores the need for the DRC to diversify its economy in order to promote more balanced and sustainable growth.

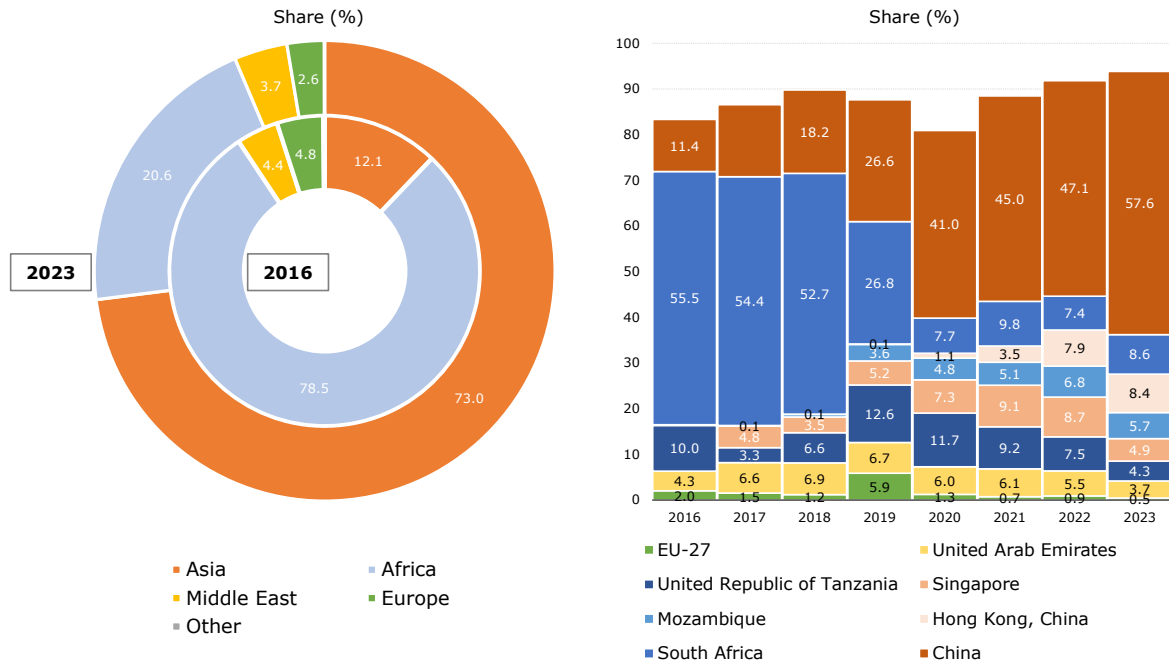
Chart 1.1 Merchandise exports, by main HS section, 2016-2023



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/26).

1.26. In addition, the DRC's exports are highly concentrated among a limited number of trading partners. In 2023, the five main destination countries accounted for approximately 85% of total exports. In the same year, China became by far the main destination for Congolese exports: its share increased from 11.4% in 2016 to 57.6% in 2023, overtaking that of South Africa, which fell from 55.5% to 8.6%. Other markets included Hong Kong, China; Mozambique; and Singapore. Africa's share fell from 78.5% in 2016 to 20.6% in 2023, marking a sharp decline in the importance of the African market in favour of Asia, whose share rose from 12.1% to 73%, making it the DRC's main export destination (Chart 1.2 and Table A1.4).

1.27. Changes in the revealed comparative advantage (RCA) index between 2016 and 2023 show that the DRC's RCA has clearly shifted towards minerals and metals, with its competitive position in minerals strengthening. In 2016, the DRC already had a high RCA in minerals, metals, stones, and glass. In 2023, the export structure showed that the DRC's comparative advantage had become increasingly concentrated in strategic metals and raw minerals such as copper and cobalt, reflecting growing global demand for these resources. Over recent decades, the number of products for which the DRC has had an RCA has declined (Table 1.3). This comparative advantage in mining products masks a lack of industrial diversification and low productivity levels in non-mining sectors, limiting job creation outside the mining sector and constraining the development of a more resilient and inclusive economy.

Chart 1.2 Merchandise exports, by region and major trading partner, 2016-2023

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

Table 1.3 Revealed comparative advantage, 2016 and 2023

	2016		2023	
	Share (%)	RCA index	Share (%)	RCA index
01-05 Animals	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01
06-15 Vegetables	0.59	0.16	0.21	0.06
16-24 Foodstuffs	0.45	0.13	0.62	0.18
25-27 Minerals	22.23	1.97	19.11	1.20
28-38 Chemical products	5.05	0.53	0.66	0.06
39-40 Plastics/Rubber	0.10	0.02	0.04	0.01
41-43 Raw hides and skins, Leather	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
44-49 Wood	1.16	0.48	0.71	0.37
50-63 Textiles, Clothing	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.00
64-67 Shoes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
68-71 Stone/Glass	5.76	1.08	2.28	0.45
72-83 Metals	63.21	9.31	76.26	11.14
84-85 Machinery/Electronics	0.44	0.02	0.04	0.00
86-89 Transport	0.69	0.06	0.01	0.00
90-97 Miscellaneous	0.22	0.03	0.02	0.00

Note: The RCA (revealed comparative advantage) index is the ratio of the share of a specific sector in a country's exports to the share of that same sector in total world exports. An RCA index greater than one indicates that the share of the sector in the country's total exports exceeds the share of the same sector in total world exports for the same period. In this case, the country is considered to have a comparative advantage in that sector. Export values are expressed in thousands of USD. Share (%): share of exports of that category in the DRC's total exports.

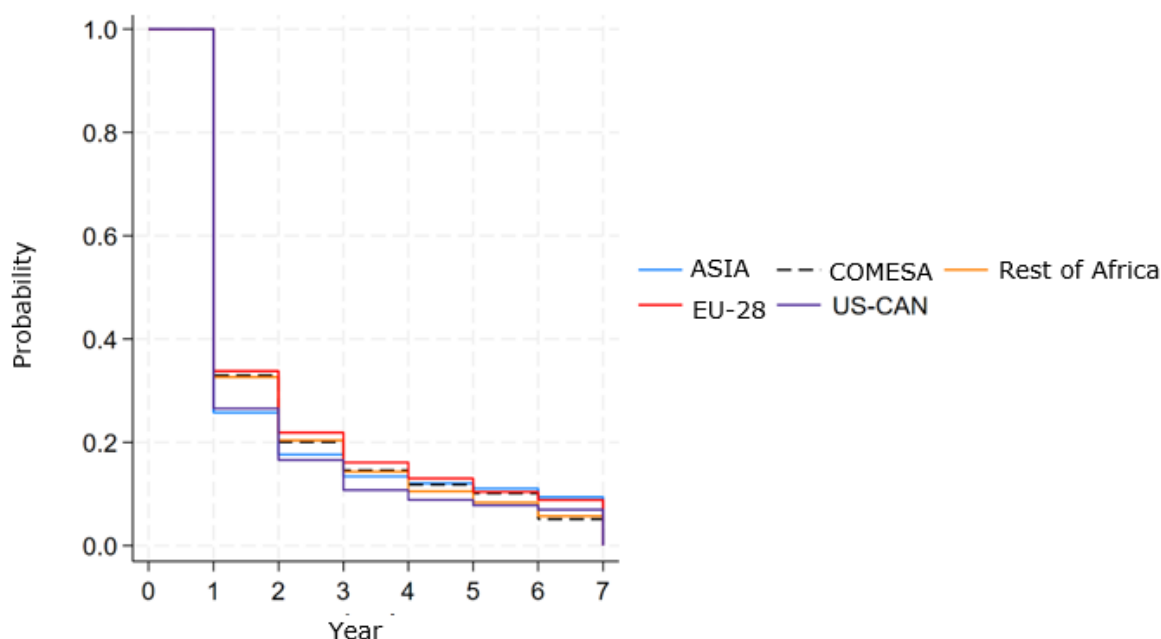
Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (04/05/2026).

1.28. Despite the stated ambitions for regional economic integration in Africa, the DRC's merchandise exports stand a better chance of survival in European and Asian markets than in COMESA and African markets in general. The survival of exports is measured both by entry into new markets and by the duration of export flows. Survival rates for DRC exports to COMESA remain

lower than those observed in the European Union and Asian markets. Furthermore, over a period of more than six years, the survival rate of Congolese exports in COMESA markets is lower than that recorded in other international markets (Chart 1.3). This trend reflects the high export costs and persistent barriers affecting trade between the DRC, COMESA member countries and, more broadly, the African continent.

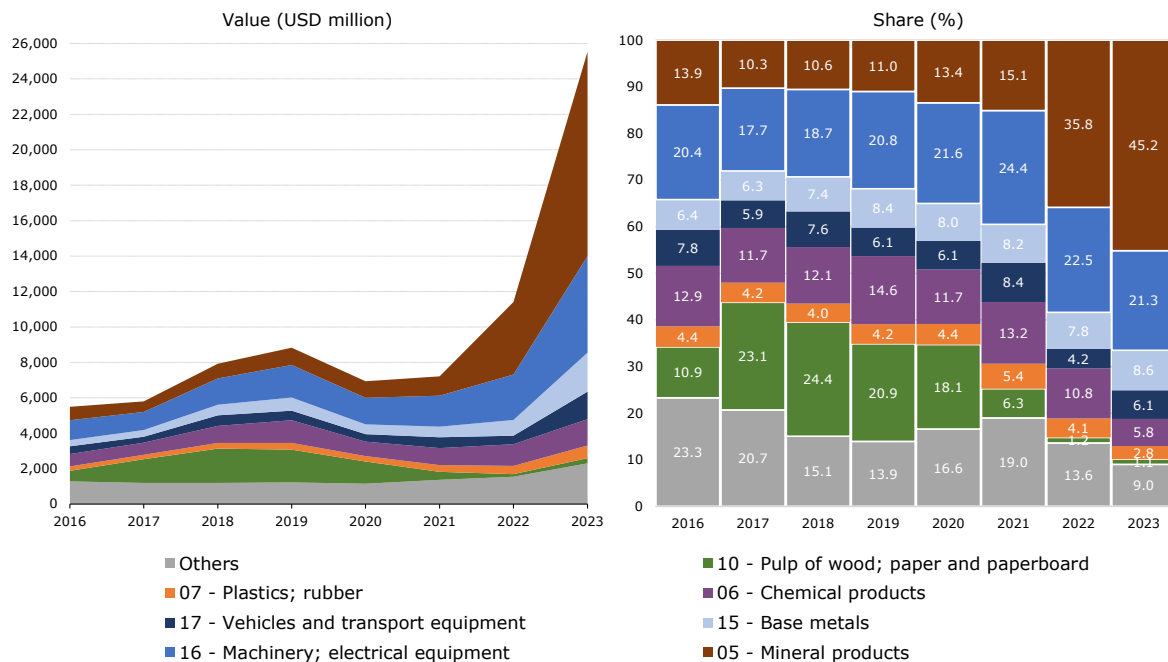
Chart 1.3 Survival of DRC exports, 2016-2023

Kaplan–Meier survival estimates



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (04/05/2026).

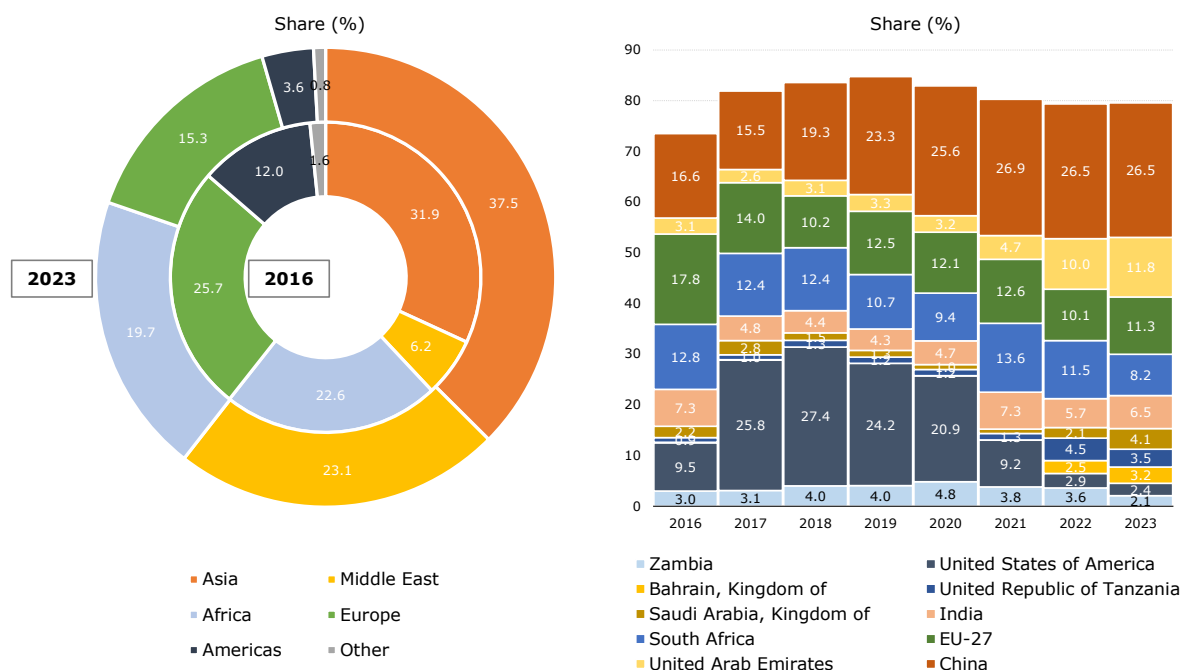
1.29. The DRC's goods imports also recorded strong growth, increasing from USD 5.5 billion in 2016 to USD 25.5 billion in 2023. On the other hand, the authorities indicated that imports decreased between 2023 and 2025, falling from USD 14.3 billion in 2024 to USD 13.2 billion in 2025. The DRC's imports are dominated mainly by machinery and electrical equipment and mineral products, followed, to a lesser extent, by chemical products and paper-based materials. Between 2016 and 2023, the share of mineral products increased sharply, from 13.9% to 45.2%, making them the main import category. By contrast, machinery and electrical equipment remained relatively stable, increasing from 20.4% to 21.3%, while chemical products declined from 12.9% to 5.8%, and pulp of wood, paper, and paperboard fell sharply, from 10.9% to 1.1%. Base metals, whose share increased from 6.4% to 8.6%, and vehicles and transport equipment, whose share declined from 7.8% to 6.1%, recorded more moderate changes, reflecting the growing concentration of imports in mineral products (Chart 1.4 and Table A1.3).

Chart 1.4 Merchandise imports, by main HS section, 2016-2023

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

1.30. Between 2016 and 2023, the structure of the DRC's imports gradually shifted towards a few dominant trading partners, primarily in Asia and the Middle East. China strengthened its position as the main supplier, with its share increasing from 16.6% to 26.5%, while the share of the United Arab Emirates rose sharply, from 3.1% to 11.8%. By contrast, the shares of the United States and South Africa declined, from 9.5% to 2.4%, and from 12.8% to 8.2%, respectively. The European Union's share also fell, from 17.8% to 11.3%, while India and the United Republic of Tanzania recorded slight increases in their shares, reflecting a gradual but limited rebalancing of sources of supply. Africa's share of the DRC's imports decreased slightly, from 22.6% in 2016 to 19.7% in 2025 (Chart 1.5 and Table A1.5).

1.31. Low levels of trade with SADC and COMESA countries and with other African countries point to ineffective and inefficient regional integration and inadequate trade infrastructure, particularly in terms of roads and logistical connections.

Chart 1.5 Merchandise imports, by region and major trading partner, 2016-2023

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

1.32. The DRC's services balance remained in deficit throughout the period under review, deteriorating from USD -2.0 billion in 2016 to USD -5.8 billion in 2024, reflecting a continued widening of the deficit, particularly after 2020 (Table 1.4).

1.33. Exports of services remained low and volatile, and declined over the period under review, ranging from USD 128 million in 2016 to USD 322 million in 2024. They were driven mainly by transport, government goods and services, and travel, with a one-off peak in 2024 brought about by the recovery in travel (Table 1.4).

1.34. Imports of services, by contrast, increased sharply, from USD 2.1 billion in 2016 to USD 6.1 billion in 2024. This increase was driven mainly by transport, other business services, and travel, which explains the widening of the overall services deficit (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Trade in services, 2016-2024

(USD million)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Services balance	-1,962	-1,615	-2,687	-2,107	-2,548	-3,779	-4,931	-5,627	-5,821
Transport	-709	-840	-1,246	-1,059	-1,053	-1,562	-2,415	-2,853	-2,972
Travel	-56	-62	-54	-364	-123	-112	-177	-180	61
Construction and public works	-19	-18	-73	-16	-65	-127	-135	-163	-170
Pensions and insurance	-311	-373	-483	-300	-476	-598	-711	-849	-1,047
Financial services	-32	-20	-115	-44	-108	-158	-211	-237	-259
Telecommunications, computer and information	-429	6	-1	1	-1	-4	-7	-9	-7
Other business services	-182	-176	-595	-230	-547	-970	-1,138	-1,272	-1,001
Personal, cultural and recreational services	-3	-2	-10	-3	-9	-16	-18	-21	-23
Government goods and services n.i.e.	-222	-129	-111	-93	-167	-233	-120	-44	-404
Exports	128	108	115	152	144	169	70	49	322
Transport	64	35	19	59	24	19	16	32	56

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Travel	4	6	61	71	81	108	34	0	245
Financial services	4	4	2	1	3	3	1	1	1
Telecommunications, computer and information	6	7	4	2	4	4	2	2	4
Other business services	7	8	4	2	4	5	2	2	2
Government goods and services n.i.e.	43	49	26	16	28	30	14	13	14
Imports	2,089	1,723	2,802	2,258	2,691	3,948	5,000	5,676	6,143
Transport	772	874	1,264	1,117	1,076	1,581	2,431	2,885	3,028
Travel	60	68	115	435	204	220	211	180	184
Construction and public works	19	18	73	16	65	127	135	163	170
Pensions and insurance	311	373	483	300	476	598	711	849	1,047
Financial services	36	25	117	45	110	160	212	238	260
Telecommunications, computer and information	435	1	5	1	4	8	9	10	11
Other business services	188	183	599	232	551	975	1,140	1,274	1,003
Personal, cultural and recreational services	3	2	10	3	9	16	18	21	23
Government goods and services n.i.e.	265	178	137	109	195	264	134	57	417

Source: Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuel 2024, Balance des paiements*, p. 148, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels> (15/04/2026).

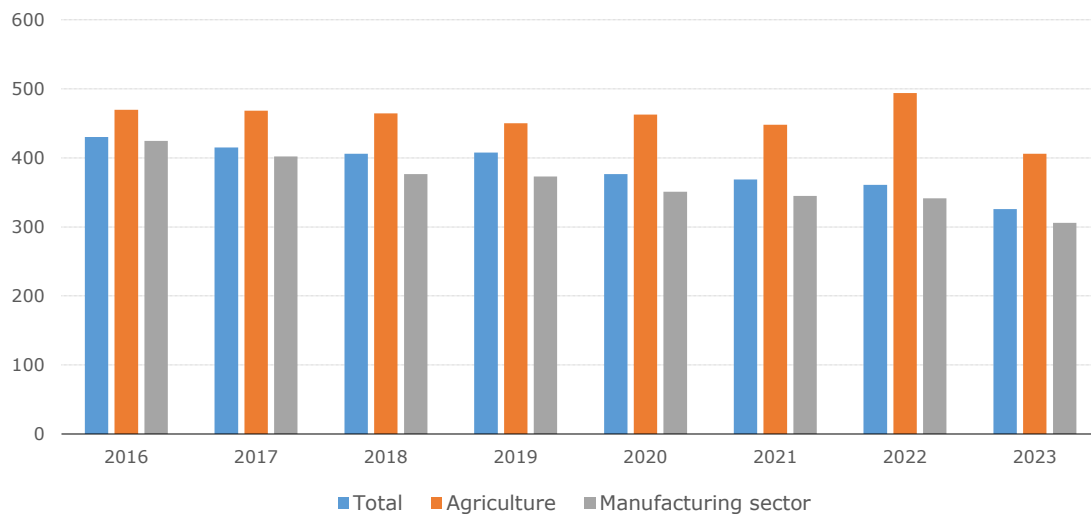
1.35. Trade-related costs have fallen in the DRC in recent years. However, they remain higher than those in most neighbouring countries in Central and Eastern Africa, and higher than the average for sub-Saharan Africa (Chart 1.5). The situation is particularly pronounced in the agricultural sector, where trade costs remain significantly higher than in the manufacturing sector (Chart 1.6). This disparity is mainly due to inadequate transport infrastructure, characterized by roads in poor condition and limited access to reliable logistics services, resulting in longer transport times and higher costs associated with the transportation of agricultural products. In addition, constraints on access to modern technologies and adequate financing hinder farmers' ability to expand their production and comply with required quality standards.

Table 1.5 Comparison of trade costs, *ad valorem* equivalents, 2016-2023

Year	DRC	Africa	Cameroon	Kenya	Angola
2016	430.1	359.3	326.8	352.3	340.0
2017	415.1	356.9	338.5	365.4	343.5
2018	405.8	361.1	353.2	378.9	366.1
2019	407.8	362.7	334.7	365.0	381.4
2020	376.4	362.0	327.9	347.7	385.8
2021	368.9	350.7	316.7	340.2	396.5
2022	360.7	343.1	..	319.4	405.1
2023	326.0	326.6	..	302.5	384.7
% change (2016-2023)	-24.2%	-9.1%	-3.1%	-14.2%	13.1%
		Ratio DRC/Africa	Ratio DRC/Cameroon	Ratio DRC/Kenya	Ratio DRC/Angola
2016		1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3
2017		1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2
2018		1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
2019		1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1
2020		1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
2021		1.1	1.2	1.1	0.9
2022		1.1	..	1.1	0.9
2023		1.0	..	1.1	0.8

.. Not available.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on ESCAP - World Bank data, viewed at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/escap-world-bank-trade-cost-database> (04/04/2026).

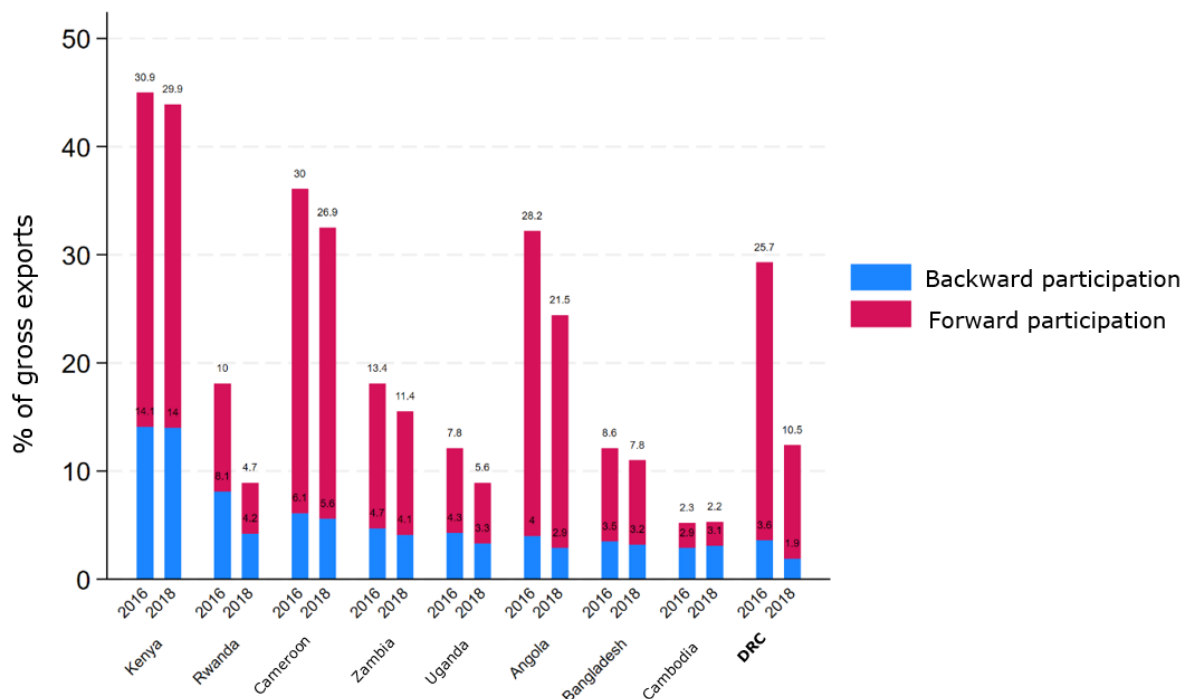
Chart 1.6 Trade costs by sector, *ad valorem* equivalents, 2016-2023

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on ESCAP – World Bank data, viewed at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/escap-world-bank-trade-cost-database> (04/04/2026).

1.36. The DRC's integration into global value chains (GVCs) remains limited and asymmetrical, particularly in terms of backward and forward participation.¹⁶ Backward participation remains very low, and declined over the period 2016-2018. Moreover, the DRC recorded the lowest level of backward participation in GVCs among its peers. By contrast, its forward participation is significantly higher, reflecting the export of locally produced inputs, mainly mineral products, to other countries, where they are used in subsequent stages of production. Forward participation declined considerably between 2016 and 2018. Moreover, despite being landlocked and having lower economic potential than the DRC, Rwanda has a higher level of backward participation (Chart 1.7).

1.37. This position in GVC participation leaves the DRC vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices and limits domestic economic benefits in terms of jobs, technology transfer, and industrial diversification. The lack of industrial infrastructure, limited processing capacity, and logistical and regulatory barriers constrain deeper integration. To improve its position in GVCs, the DRC needs to develop local processing capacity, strengthen its human capital, attract investment in industry, and actively engage in strategic partnerships aimed at developing higher value-added sectors.

¹⁶ Backward participation refers to a country importing foreign inputs to manufacture goods for export, while forward participation refers to the export of domestically produced inputs to other countries, where they are used in subsequent stages of production.

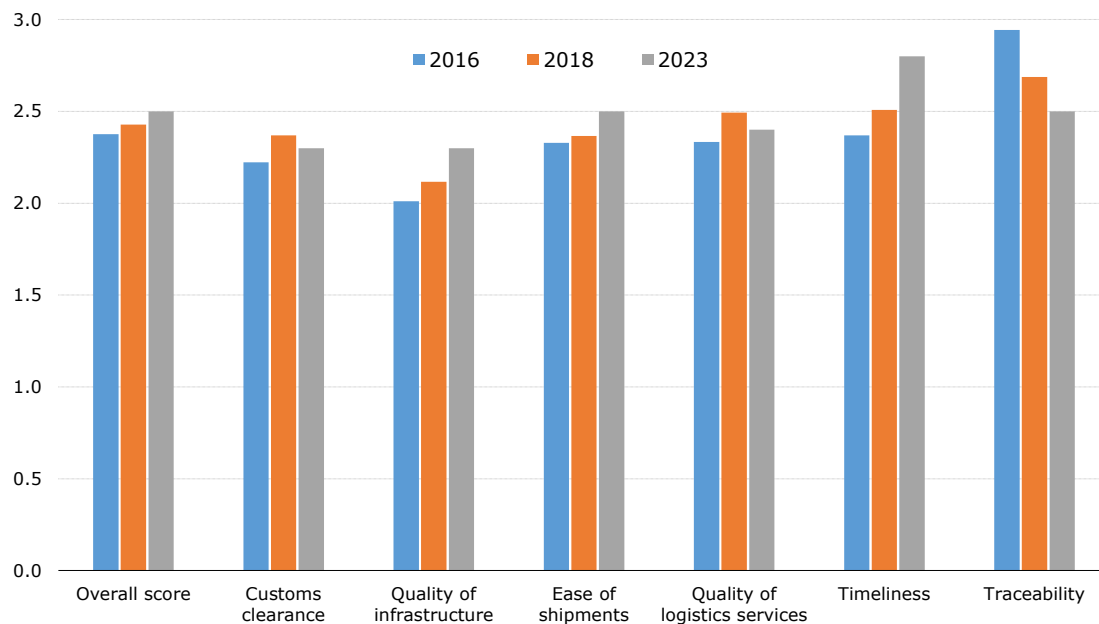
Chart 1.7 Integration into global value chains, 2016 and 2018

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on Eora and BACI databases, viewed at: <https://worldmrio.com/> and https://www.cepii.fr/CEPII/en/bdd_modele/bdd_modele_item.asp?id=37 (04/05/2026).

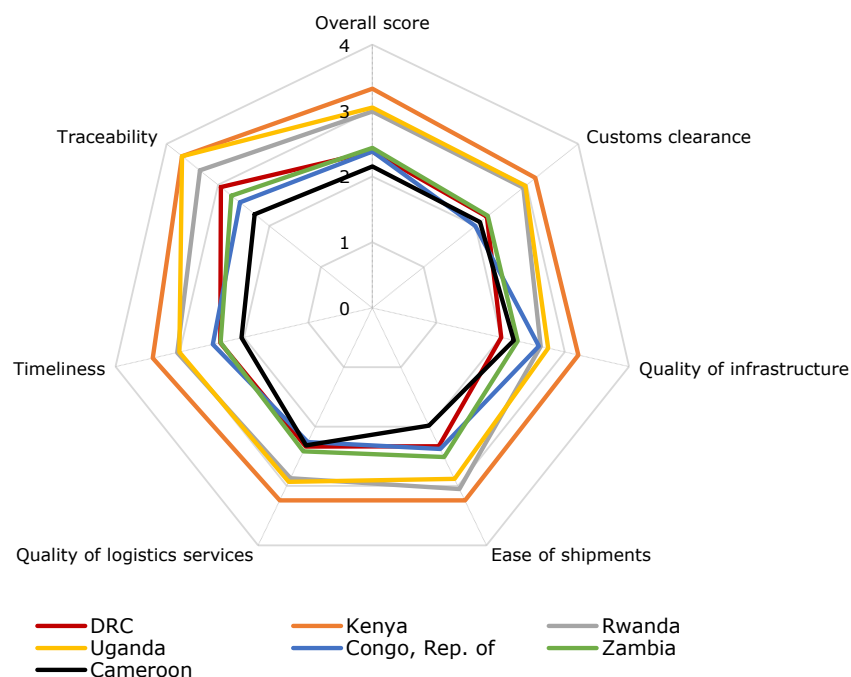
1.38. The DRC's weak trade performance is largely explained by structural deficiencies in trade facilitation, which continue to hinder smooth transactions and increase the costs of foreign trade. These constraints include cumbersome administrative procedures, long border delays, limited institutional coordination, and logistics infrastructure that remains insufficiently developed, thereby reducing the competitiveness of Congolese exports.

1.39. Despite recent progress, the DRC's logistics performance remains weak. According to the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), the DRC recorded a moderate improvement in its performance between 2016 and 2023, while remaining behind most other African countries. It rose from 127th place in 2016 to 120th out of 160 countries in 2018. In 2023, it ranked 97th out of 139 countries. Over the period 2016-2023, improvements were recorded in several indicators, notably infrastructure quality, the frequency with which shipments reach their destination within the scheduled delivery time (timeliness), the ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, the efficiency of the customs clearance process, and the quality of logistics services. The scores for the customs clearance efficiency and quality of logistics services indicators were lower in 2023 than in 2018. Meanwhile, the score for the traceability indicator (the ability to track and trace shipments) declined compared with 2016 (Chart 1.8).

1.40. Nevertheless, the DRC's logistics performance remains inadequate by the standards of countries in the sub-region. Its overall score in this area is lower than that of neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and the Republic of the Congo, but higher than that of Cameroon. The quality of the DRC's infrastructure is lower than that of all its peers. In terms of the ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, the DRC ranks below its peers, with the exception of Cameroon (Chart 1.9).

Chart 1.8 Logistics Performance Index, 2016-2018

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on World Bank data, viewed at: <https://lpi.worldbank.org/en/home> (04/04/2026).

Chart 1.9 Logistics Performance Index 2018, comparison

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on World Bank data, viewed at: <https://lpi.worldbank.org/en/home> (04/04/2026).

1.3.2 Trends and patterns in FDI

1.41. Inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the DRC increased markedly and steadily between 2016 and 2024, despite an economic and institutional environment characterized by significant structural challenges. In 2024, FDI inflows reached approximately USD 3.1 billion, equivalent to 4.3% of GDP, representing a significant increase of 158% compared with 2016 (USD 1.2 billion, 3% of GDP) and an increase of 20.8% compared with 2023 (USD 2.6 billion, 3.7% of GDP) (Chart 1.10).

This positive trend continues the recovery that began after 2016 and extended through 2024, as FDI flows gradually rebounded following earlier political uncertainties.¹⁷

1.42. However, the sectoral distribution of FDI in the DRC remains highly unbalanced. FDI flows remain largely concentrated in sectors related to the exploitation of natural resources. In 2023, FDI was directed predominantly towards the extractive sector, which accounted for 42% of total FDI. The sectors that received the second- and third-largest shares of FDI were services (33%) and infrastructure (23%), respectively. By contrast, agriculture and forestry attracted only about 1% of FDI, highlighting the limited sectoral diversification of FDI.¹⁸

1.43. The main source countries of FDI in the DRC over the period 2016-2024 included China (USD 2.9 billion, or 29% of total FDI), the United Kingdom (USD 1.3 billion, 13.5%), Egypt (USD 1.3 billion, 13%), India (USD 0.6 billion, 6%), and Mauritius (USD 0.5 billion, 5.5%). China stood out in particular for its large-scale investments, mainly in infrastructure (roads, railways, hydroelectric dams, and telecommunications) and the mining sector (copper and cobalt). Other sectors, such as energy, petroleum, agriculture, and telecommunications, also attracted investment.¹⁹

1.44. On the other hand, FDI outflows remain low, amounting to only USD 198 million (0.3% of GDP) in 2024, down from USD 272 million in 2016 (0.8% of GDP) (Chart 1.10). This modest level reflects the limited internationalization of Congolese enterprises.

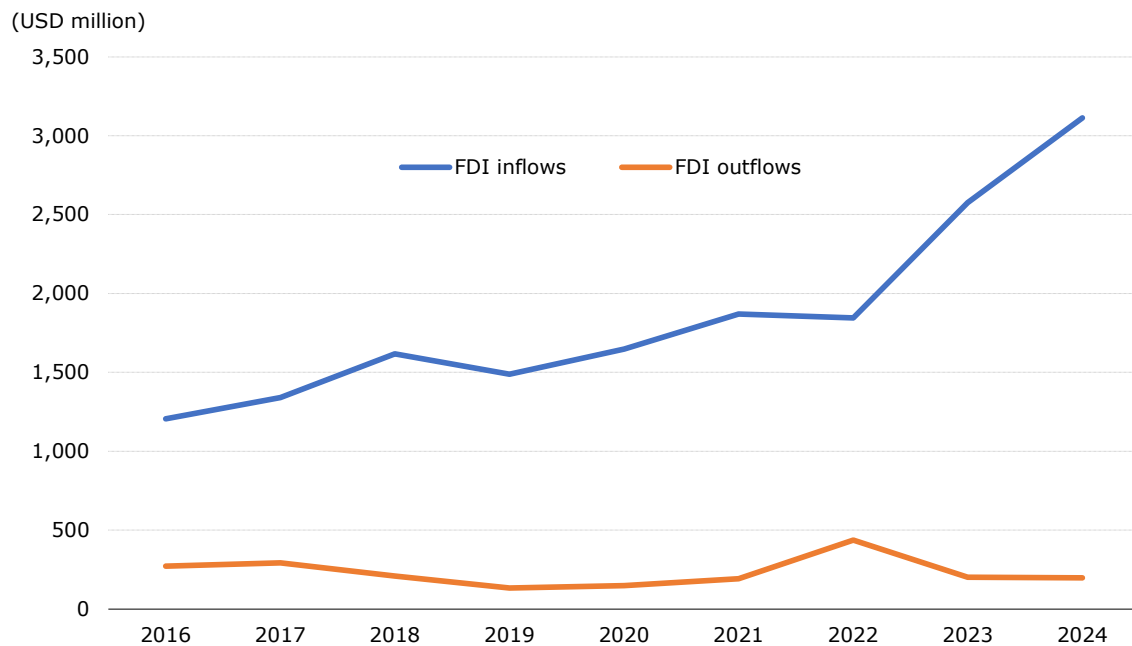
1.45. Several challenges continue to shape the relationship between these investments and the country's development. The high concentration of FDI in the extractive sector limits its impact on the economy in terms of technology transfer, skilled job creation, and local integration. Moreover, the fragile institutional framework, characterized by corruption, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure, constrains the extent to which these investments can generate sustainable benefits for the national economy.

1.46. The predominance of the mining sector in exports, FDI, and government revenue raises questions about its effects on the diversification of the Congolese economy. This high concentration indicates a risk of "Dutch disease", as it limits the linkages between the extractive sector and the rest of the economy and increases the DRC's vulnerability to fluctuations in commodity prices.

¹⁷ UNCTAD data.

¹⁸ Ministry of Planning, *Bulletin d'information des secteurs productifs*, novembre 2025, viewed at: <https://plan.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Bulletin-dinformation-des-secteurs-productifs-.pdf> (23/07/2026).

¹⁹ ANAPI, *Rapport statistique sur les projets agréés 2019-2023*, viewed at: <https://anapi.cd/news/document/rapport-statistique-des-projets-agrees-2019-2023> (01/05/2026).

Chart 1.10 Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, 2016-2024

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on UNCTAD database, viewed at: <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/> (05/05/2026).

2 TRADE AND INVESTMENT REGIMES

2.1 General framework

2.1. Since the last Trade Policy Review (TPR), the general legal and institutional framework has not undergone any significant changes and continues to be governed by the 2006 Constitution (as amended in 2011).¹ The Constitution of the DRC establishes it as a democratic State and enshrines principles aimed at strengthening economic freedoms, including the safeguarding of private investment. It proclaims the objective of equal representation of men and women within the country's institutions and instructs the authorities to ensure women's full participation in the country's economic and social development.

2.2. Under the Constitution, the DRC operates under a semi-presidential system in which the President of the Republic, the head of State, is elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of five years, renewable once. Presidential elections were last held on 20 December 2023. In the exercise of their powers, the head of State promulgates laws and may issue decisions by ordinance. The head of State appoints a Prime Minister (head of government) from the parliamentary majority and, on the latter's recommendation, the other members of the Government. The Government, which is responsible for formulating the country's general policy in consultation with the President of the Republic, is accountable to the Parliament, which may collectively remove it from office by means of a motion of no confidence.² The current Government, led for the first time by a woman, has been in place since May 2024.

2.3. The Parliament, based on a bicameral model, is composed of the National Assembly and the Senate. The Parliament votes on laws and oversees the Government and state-owned enterprises. The 500 members of the National Assembly are elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term and may be re-elected, while the 108 members of the Senate are elected by indirect suffrage by the provincial assemblies for a five-year term and may likewise be re-elected. The most recent legislative elections were held in December 2023, at the same time as the presidential elections. The most recent senatorial elections took place on 29 April 2024.

2.4. Judicial power is exercised by courts and tribunals, consisting mainly of judicial bodies under the authority of the Constitutional Court, the Court of Cassation and the Council of State. Under the Constitution, judicial power is, in principle, independent of the executive branch. Judges fall under the authority of the Judicial Service Council, which is composed exclusively of members of the judiciary.

2.5. In order to facilitate the settlement of violations of economic and trade regulations, Law No. 002/2001 of 3 July 2001 establishes the procedures for the creation, organization, and functioning of commercial courts in the DRC. At present, five commercial courts are operational.

2.6. In principle, courts and tribunals apply duly ratified international treaties in the same way as laws and regulatory acts. Subject to reciprocity, ratified treaties and agreements take precedence over laws.

2.7. Some treaties, including those relating to areas such as peace, trade, and the exchange or addition of territory, require legislation in order to be ratified. Draft ratification laws are first debated and adopted by the Council of Ministers, then submitted to the Parliament for consideration and adoption by vote. They are then sent to the President of the Republic for promulgation. Once promulgated, ratification laws are published in the Official Journal. Any transfer of territory or territorial modification must be approved by referendum. If the Constitutional Court determines that a treaty contains provisions inconsistent with the Constitution, the treaty may only be ratified after a constitutional amendment.

2.8. The DRC remains a decentralized State whose provinces enjoy a certain autonomy, including for the management of economic and financial resources. Each province has a provincial assembly

¹ Office of the President of the DRC, *La Constitution*, viewed at: <https://presidence.cd/uploads/files/Constitution%20de%20la%20RDC%20%202011.pdf> (06/01/2026).

² National Investment Promotion Agency, *Régime politique du pays*, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article79&lang=fr#:~:text=La%20R%C3%A9publique%20D%C3%A9mocratique%20du%20Congo,Les%20Cours%20et%20Tribunaux> (06/01/2026).

and a provincial government for this purpose. The provincial assembly, as the deliberative body of the province, oversees the actions of the provincial government, which is the executive body. The Constitution determines which matters fall within the exclusive competence of the provinces, and which fall within the shared competence of the central government and the provinces.

2.2 Trade Policy formulation and objectives

2.9. Trade policy in the DRC is mainly coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Trade, which formulates export strategies, negotiates trade agreements and oversees institutions such as the National Export Promotion Agency (ANAPEX), the Congolese Control Office (OCC) and the Operating Company for the Integrated Single Window for Foreign Trade (SEGUCE). The Ministry also works in collaboration with the Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGDA), the technical service responsible for cross-border trade, particularly in the context of negotiations and the implementation of trade agreements. Several other ministries are involved in the formulation and implementation of various aspects of the country's trade policies and practices. The Ministry of the National Economy is in charge of the domestic market, price regulation, and competition, notably through the National Competition Commission (CONAC). The Ministry of Industry covers matters relating to industrialization and manages special economic zones with the support of the Industrial Promotion Fund (FPI) and the DGDA for the determination of customs regimes. Through the DGDA, the Ministry of Finance administers customs taxation, as well as taxation applicable to imports and exports, including parafiscal charges levied at border posts. The Ministry of Agriculture is tasked with formulating tariff policy for agricultural products and defining policies to support the agricultural sector. It also deals with biosafety issues relating to agricultural products marketed in the DRC. In accordance with Articles 72 and 73 of Law No. 11/022 of 24 December 2011 on fundamental principles relating to agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture applies provisions stipulating that customs duties and VAT on the import and export of agricultural products are set at zero.³

2.10. According to the authorities, private-sector participation in the formulation of trade policies is structured primarily around consultation frameworks and representative organizations. At the forefront is the Federation of Congolese Enterprises (FEC), a central stakeholder serving both as a chamber of commerce and an employers' association, which is regularly consulted in the preparation of finance laws, sectoral codes and tariff policies. The National Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI), a state body, also plays a key role in improving the business climate by acting as an interface between the State and the private sector. Its work is carried out through several formal mechanisms, including public-private dialogue, joint committees in the context of negotiations on international trade agreements, and the National Trade Facilitation Committee (CNFE), a joint body dedicated to simplifying and modernizing trade procedures.

2.11. Furthermore, in the evaluation of trade policies, the private sector contributes to assessing the impact of trade reforms and formulating recommendations for adjustments aimed at improving the effectiveness of these measures.

2.12. The DRC has several strategic documents that provide the framework for its trade policy. The "RDC-EXPORT" strategic document (2025), prepared by ANAPEX, directs investment towards high-value agricultural export products. The National Strategy for the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (2022-2027) sets out a road map for continental integration. The Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS, 2019) and the National Export Promotion and Diversification Strategy (SPED) serve, respectively, to identify non-tariff barriers and to improve the competitiveness of Congolese products on domestic and international markets.

2.13. The authorities' trade policy vision includes facilitating the DRC's integration into the global trading system and promoting trade.

2.14. By facilitating access to foreign markets for its products, particularly natural resources, the DRC seeks to increase its export earnings, attract foreign investment and support the diversification of its economy, which remains largely dependent on the mining sector.⁴ However, trade practices

³ Ministry of Agriculture, *Loi agricole*, viewed at: <https://agriculture.gouv.cd/legislation.php> (30/03/2026).

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Trade website, viewed at: <https://commerce.gouv.cd/#:~:text=Dans%20un%20contexte%20de%20mondialisation,les%20int%C3%A9r%C3%aats%20%C3%A9conomiques%20du%20pays> (17/12/2025).

are characterized by high tariff levels, the absence of zero-rated customs duties, and multiple non-tariff barriers (e.g. complex administrative procedures and insufficient infrastructure), which are inconsistent with the DRC's trade policy objectives.

2.15. The national trade policy also focuses on consolidating the productive capacities and competitiveness of the economy. This involves supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promoting the local processing of resources, modernizing trade and logistics infrastructure, and simplifying administrative and customs procedures. Combating fraud, smuggling and unlawful trade practices is also a priority.

2.16. In addition, the National Strategic Development Plan (PNSD), based on the Vision 2050 framework, covers the period 2024-2028 and is structured around five major strategic pillars: improving governance; diversifying the economy; developing human capital; infrastructure development and territorial planning; and the sustainable and balanced development of the provinces. It emphasizes the enhancement of national resources, the modernization of infrastructure, industrial development, the creation of decent jobs, and poverty reduction. It aims to make the DRC a middle-income country by 2030. More specifically, the Plan highlights the crucial role of international trade, with an emphasis on export diversification to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty.⁵

2.17. The DGDA does not currently apply any preferential tariffs under preferential trade agreements concluded by the Congolese Government. Although the Ministry of Foreign Trade, whose main mission is to promote the DRC's international trade, supports the effective implementation of these preferential tariff regimes, it is confronted with the DGDA's persistent refusal to apply them.

2.3 Trade agreements and arrangements

2.3.1 WTO

2.18. The DRC acceded to the GATT on 11 September 1971 and has been a Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1 January 1997. It is not party to any of the plurilateral agreements concluded under the auspices of the WTO, and it actively participates in general multilateral negotiations.

2.19. The DRC ratified the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and the Trade Facilitation Agreement on 11 July 2025.⁶

2.20. The DRC struggles to submit notifications to the WTO. Since its accession, the DRC has submitted a total of 38 notifications to the WTO, representing one of the lowest levels among WTO Members. Since its last Trade Policy Review in 2016, the DRC has submitted 25 notifications (Table 2.1), representing progress compared with the two previous TPRs. Indeed, between the two previous TPRs in 2010 and 2016, the DRC had submitted only one new notification. The new notifications submitted since 2016 relate primarily to services, trade facilitation, subsidies and countervailing measures, and anti-dumping measures. This low rate of notifications provides WTO Members with limited visibility of the DRC's trade policy.⁷

Table 2.1 Notifications submitted by the DRC to the WTO, November 2016-June 2026

Agreement	Description	Periodicity	Most recent WTO document
Anti-Dumping Agreement – Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the GATT 1994			
Article 16.4	Anti-dumping actions	Ad hoc	G/ADP/N/193/COD , 7 July 2020
Article 16.5	Competent authorities	One-time	G/ADP/N/193/COD , 7 July 2020

⁵ Ministry of Planning, *Plan National Stratégique du Développement 2024-2028*, viewed at: <https://plan.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/PNSD-2024-2028-V41.pdf> (04/12/2025).

⁶ WTO, *La République démocratique du Congo accepte officiellement l'Accord de l'OMC sur les subventions à la pêche et l'Accord sur la facilitation des échanges*, viewed at: https://www.wto.org/french/news_f/news25_f/fish_11jul25_f.htm (26/09/2025).

⁷ WTO, notifications, viewed at: https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Search/FE_S_S006.aspx?DataSource=Cat&query=%40CountryConcerned_per_cent3dDemocratic+Republic+of+the+Congo+AND+%40DocumentType_per_cent3dNotification&Language=French&Context=ScriptedSearches&languageUIChecked=true (10/07/2026).

Agreement	Description	Periodicity	Most recent WTO document
General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)			
Article III:4	Enquiry points	One-time and updates	S/ENQ/78/Rev.24 , 29 April 2024 S/ENQ/78/Rev.17 , 7 June 2018
Article IV:2	Contact points	One-time and updates	S/ENQ/78/Rev.24 , 29 April 2024 S/ENQ/78/Rev.17 , 7 June 2018
Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement)			
Article 25.11	Countervailing duty actions (taken within the preceding six months)	Semi-annual	G/SCM/N/202/COD , 7 July 2020
Article 25.1; Article XVI:1 of the GATT 1994	Subsidies	Biennial	G/SCM/N/123/COD ; G/SCM/N/155/COD ; G/SCM/N/186/COD ; G/SCM/N/220/COD ; G/SCM/N/253/COD ; G/SCM/N/284/COD ; G/SCM/N/315/COD ; G/SCM/N/343/COD ; G/SCM/N/372/COD ; G/SCM/N/401/COD , 9 January 2024
Article 25.12	Competent authorities	One-time	G/SCM/N/202/COD , 7 July 2020
Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA)			
Articles 1.4, 10.4.3, 10.6.2 and 12.2.2	Notification of category commitments under the TFA	One-time	G/TFA/N/COD/3 , 26 June 2024
Article 22.3	Members seeking assistance and support for capacity-building	One-time	G/TFA/N/COD/2/Rev.3 , 3 May 2024 G/TFA/N/COD/2/Rev.2 , 8 August 2023 G/TFA/N/COD/2/Rev.1 , 27 January 2023 G/TFA/N/COD/2 , 2 March 2021 G/TFA/N/COD/1 , 18 October 2019 WT/PCTF/N/COD/1 , 24 January 2017
Regional trade agreements			
Article XXIV:7 of the GATT 1994; Article V:7 of the GATS; paragraph 4 of the Enabling Clause	Establishment of a free-trade area or accession to such an agreement	One-time	WT/COMTD/RTA27/N/1/Rev.1 , 1 December 2025

Source: WTO Secretariat, notifications, viewed at:

https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Search/FE_S_S006.aspx?DataSource=Cat&query=@CountryConcerned=Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%20Congo%20AND%20@DocumentType=Notification&Language=French&Context=ScriptedSearches&languageUIChanged=true (10/07/2026).

2.21. The DRC belongs to several active groups within the WTO, including the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the African Group, the G90 and the LDC Group. The country also participates in two joint initiatives: Investment Facilitation for Development and the Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs).⁸

2.22. Since its accession, the DRC has not been involved in any trade dispute as a complainant, respondent, or third party.

2.23. In implementing the WTO Agreements, the DRC places particular emphasis on priority issues, particularly investment, which must be encouraged through simple, flexible and transparent mechanisms in order to support trade and development. The DRC supports the fisheries subsidies negotiations aimed at combating overfishing, overcapacity and illegal fishing, and advocates strengthened regional cooperation.⁹

⁸ WTO, *Groups in the negotiations by WTO Member*, viewed at: https://www.wto.org/french/tratop_f/dda_f/groups_by_country_f.htm (10/07/2026).

⁹ Statement by the DRC at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, viewed at: <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=r:/WT/MIN24/ST124.pdf&Open=True> (16/12/2025).

2.24. The DRC also remains in favour of the WTO effectively strengthening special and differential treatment for LDCs and seeks to improve the rules of the multilateral trading system in order to ensure equitable benefits for all.¹⁰

2.3.2 Regional and preferential agreements

2.25. The DRC has signed several regional trade agreements. However, it does not generally apply the preferential tariffs negotiated under these agreements.

2.3.2.1 AfCFTA

2.26. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a trade agreement among the countries of the African continent aimed at establishing a large single market for goods and services. It was officially launched in March 2018 and entered into force on 30 May 2019. To date, 54 of the 55 African countries (with the exception of Eritrea) have signed the agreement, and 48 have ratified it.¹¹

2.27. The DRC signed the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on 9 July 2021, becoming the 40th signatory State. It subsequently deposited its instrument of ratification on 20 April 2022. The AfCFTA was notified to the WTO on 18 June 2025, and that notification includes the DRC.¹²

2.28. The implementation of the Agreement is based on eight Protocols, six of which were adopted at the time of the establishment of the AfCFTA. These Protocols are intended to facilitate trade, investment and other key aspects of the continent's economic integration. The six initial Protocols adopted in 2018 cover: (i) trade in goods; (ii) trade in services; (iii) investment; (iv) competition policy; (v) intellectual property rights; and (vi) dispute settlement. In 2020, two additional Protocols were added covering: (vii) digital trade; and (viii) women and youth in trade.

2.29. States Parties to the AfCFTA Agreement are required to adopt these Protocols. Phase I of the negotiations covers the Protocols on trade in goods, trade in services, and the rules and procedures on the settlement of disputes. These Protocols establish the basic legal framework of the AfCFTA, including tariff liberalization mechanisms, schedules of concessions, rules of origin, and the system for settling disputes between States Parties.

2.30. Phase II of the negotiations concerns the development of Protocols on competition policy, investment, and intellectual property rights. These instruments are intended to harmonize national policies, promote an attractive business environment, and protect African innovation.

2.31. Lastly, Phase III completes the legal architecture of the AfCFTA through two Protocols: one on digital trade and one on women and youth in trade.

2.32. The DRC does not yet participate in the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative. The Guided Trade Initiative allows trade under the Agreement to be launched in practice. It applies to participating countries and to products for which customs duties and rules of origin have been finalized. As a pilot mechanism, it tests the institutional, customs and operational framework of the AfCFTA while facilitating the first commercially meaningful trade transactions.

2.3.2.2 COMESA

2.33. The DRC is a founding member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), established in 1994. COMESA was notified to the WTO on 4 May 1995, and that

¹⁰ Statement by the DRC at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, viewed at: <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=r:/WT/MIN24/ST124.pdf&Open=True> (16/12/2025).

¹¹ African Union, *The African Continental Free Trade Area*, viewed at: <https://au.int/en/african-continental-free-trade-area> (14/11/2025).

¹² WTO, *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)*, viewed at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowMemberRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=1086> (03/12/2025).

notification includes the DRC.¹³ COMESA currently comprises 21 member countries from Eastern and Southern Africa.

2.34. It establishes a customs union and a free trade area (for 16 participating countries), provides for the elimination of non-tariff barriers among member countries, and ensures the application of a common external tariff (CET).

2.35. As the DRC is not yet part of the COMESA Free Trade Area, it does not apply the preferential tariffs provided for under this framework. However, the DRC implements the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) at its borders with certain COMESA member countries, including Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. The STR aims to simplify customs clearance procedures and reduce commercial transaction costs for small-scale cross-border traders.

2.36. In addition, COMESA provides its members with special funds called the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF) and the COMESA Infrastructure Fund (CIF).

2.37. Through the Regional Integration Support Mechanism, the CAF aims to provide financial support to countries in implementing COMESA regional integration programmes. More specifically, the CAF helps compensate for the loss of customs revenue and other related taxes, contributes to the implementation of policy reforms aimed at improving the efficiency of domestic markets and the business environment, and strengthens the competitiveness and resilience of member countries' economies and industries. The CAF is financed by the European Union (EU). Under the CAF, the DRC received EUR 480,720 in 2018-2019 during the seventh call for proposals, and EUR 660,000 in 2019-2021 during the eighth call for proposals (COMESA, 2018).¹⁴ According to the authorities, the DRC was allocated an estimated amount of more than EUR 800,000 for the 2024-2025 period.

2.38. Unlike the CAF, which primarily provides grants for administrative reforms, the CIF mobilizes capital for large-scale projects. During the 2023-2025 period, the DRC benefited from support in the energy and transport sectors, notably for regional power interconnection and the mobilization of financing for the Lobito-Indian Ocean Corridor.

2.3.2.3 SADC

2.39. The DRC has been a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) since September 1997. The SADC was established in 1992 and currently comprises 16 member States. The SADC was notified to the WTO on 2 August 2004 with respect to trade in goods and on 12 September 2022 with respect to trade in services, and these notifications include the DRC.¹⁵

2.40. The SADC Protocol on Trade was signed in 1996 and aims to liberalize trade among the member States. The Protocol covers trade in goods, customs procedures, trade laws, investment, and other trade-related matters. The Protocol on Trade has been amended several times to incorporate aspects relating to rules of origin and safeguard measures, and new provisions on dispute settlement.

2.41. The DRC has not yet signed the SADC Protocol on Trade and does not yet participate in the SADC Free Trade Area. Consequently, it does not apply the preferential tariffs provided for under the SADC framework. Nevertheless, it submitted tariff offers in December 2025.

2.42. The SADC adopted a Protocol on Trade in Services, which entered into force in January 2022 following its ratification by 11 of the 16 member States. However, the DRC has not yet ratified this Protocol.

2.43. In June 2016, the SADC countries signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. The Agreement mainly consists of a trade agreement that grants the signatories

¹³ WTO, *Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)*, viewed at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowMemberRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=121> (03/12/2025).

¹⁴ COMESA (2018), *"Industrialisation inclusive et durable", Rapport biennal 2016-17*, viewed at: https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2016_17-Annual-Report-FINAL_fr_web.pdf (14/11/2025).

¹⁵ WTO, *Southern African Development Community (SADC)*, viewed at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowMemberRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=45> (03/12/2025).

preferential access to the markets of the participating member countries. The DRC is not yet a party to the Agreement but has begun the process of negotiating its accession.

2.3.2.4 ECCAS

2.44. The DRC is a founding member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which was established in 1983. ECCAS comprises 11 members: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe. The corresponding agreement has not been notified to the WTO.

2.45. The revised ECCAS Treaty is aimed at establishing a common market and ensuring the free movement of goods, capital and services.

2.46. A free-trade area has been in effect since 2004. However, the DRC does not apply the preferential tariffs provided for under the corresponding agreement. Since April 2022, ECCAS member countries have been discussing the development of a common external tariff (CET) for the Central African region based on that of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).

2.47. The Treaty also includes a Protocol on Transit and Transit Facilities. Under this Protocol, the ECCAS member States undertake to guarantee freedom of transit through their territories for goods and means of transport. No import or export duties are levied on such transit traffic. Specific measures have been put in place to facilitate transit and warehousing for the benefit of landlocked and island States, including through the simplification of procedures. In addition, the member States undertake to ensure non-discriminatory treatment of regional traffic.

2.48. The Inter-African transit carnet (TIA (ECCAS) Carnet) serves as recognized documentary evidence of transit in all ECCAS member States. For goods in transit within the ECCAS area that are transported under a TIA Carnet, guarantees must be provided by authorized guarantors. Under bilateral agreements between member States, intra-ECCAS transport operations may be exempt from security deposits or the payment of premiums, provided that the carrier's State of origin assumes financial responsibility in the event of a customs offence. For trade with third countries, however, guarantees must be provided by approved banks or institutions. Such guarantees may cover one or more transport operations over a given period and may include not only the duties payable but also the fines incurred in the event of non-compliance with customs requirements.

2.49. However, several challenges impede effective integration within ECCAS. Transport and communications infrastructure remains inadequate, armed conflicts in certain member States undermine stability, and the existence of multiple regional organizations with similar objectives sometimes results in overlapping areas of competence.

2.3.2.5 EAC

2.50. The DRC has been a member of the East African Community (EAC) since 11 July 2022. The EAC was established on 7 July 2000 and currently comprises eight members: the DRC, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The EAC was notified to the WTO on 9 October 2000 with respect to trade in goods and on 1 August 2012 with respect to trade in services. However, these notifications do not cover the DRC.¹⁶

2.51. The EAC has established a customs union, which has been in force since 2005. The customs union is based on the elimination of customs duties on trade among member States and the application of a CET on imports from third countries. The CET entered into force on 1 July 2022 and is structured in four tariff bands according to product type: 0%, 10%, 25%, and 35%. The 0% rate applies to raw materials and capital goods; the 10% rate to intermediate goods not available in the region; the 25% rate to intermediate goods available in the region; and the 35% rate to imported finished products available in the region. In addition, certain products are classified as sensitive products and are subject to rates exceeding 35%.

¹⁶ WTO, *East African Community (EAC)*, viewed at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowMemberRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=94> (03/12/2025).

2.52. The EAC Treaty also established a common market, which has been in force since 2010. The DRC's accession to the EAC provides access to a common market of approximately 331.1 million people, with a GDP of approximately USD 312.9 billion.

2.53. However, the DRC does not yet apply the EAC preferential tariffs.

2.3.2.6 Tripartite Free Trade Agreement

2.54. The Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA) is an agreement bringing together the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC). It was signed on 10 June 2015 and entered into force on 25 July 2024. The Agreement aims to establish a free trade area among the three African economic communities.

2.55. The DRC signed the Agreement on 10 July 2015 but has not yet deposited its instrument of ratification.

2.3.3 Other agreements and arrangements

2.56. The DRC has bilateral trade agreements with several countries. It maintains trade relations with the European Union under the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)–European Union Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The DRC has also concluded bilateral trade facilitation agreements with Zambia (since 2015), the Republic of the Congo (2021), Angola (2021), and Burundi (2022), as well as a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the United Arab Emirates (2026).¹⁷

2.57. During the review period, the DRC became eligible for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as of January 2021.

2.58. The DRC benefits from preferential access to several markets under tariff preference schemes for LDCs. These preferences are granted, *inter alia*, by Chile, China, Chinese Taipei, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Montenegro, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, and Thailand.¹⁸

2.59. In addition, under the Generalized System of Preferences, the DRC benefits from the European Union's Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative. Under this initiative, all imports of goods originating in LDCs, with the exception of arms and ammunition, are admitted duty-free and quota-free. In addition, the DRC benefits from preferential access for its exports to several other developed-country markets applying the Generalized System of Preferences, including Armenia, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States.¹⁹

2.60. Furthermore, under the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP), the DRC also benefits from preferential access to the markets of Egypt, India, and Türkiye.²⁰

2.4 Investment regime

2.61. The investment regime in the DRC is governed primarily by the Investment Code, enacted by Law No. 004/2002 of 21 February 2002. This legal framework is designed to encourage domestic and foreign investment in the country. Investment policy is formulated by the Ministry of Planning and Development Aid Coordination. The National Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI) is the public body responsible for implementing investment policy and acts as an interface between the private sector and the Government in the implementation of the investment regime. It acts as a one-stop shop, providing support to investors, facilitating administrative procedures, and granting the

¹⁷ DRC, Ministry of Foreign Trade website, viewed at: <https://commerce.gouv.cd/accords> (03/12/2025).

¹⁸ WTO, *Preferential Trade Arrangements*, viewed at: <https://ptadb.wto.org/Country.aspx?code=180> (03/12/2025).

¹⁹ WTO, *Preferential Trade Arrangements*, viewed at: <https://ptadb.wto.org/Country.aspx?code=180> (03/12/2025).

²⁰ WTO, *Preferential Trade Arrangements*, viewed at: <https://ttd.wto.org/en/profiles/democratic-republic-of-the-congo?page=2> (03/12/2025).

concessions provided for under the Code.²¹ In addition, a new Mining Code governing investment in the mining sector was introduced in 2018, amending and supplementing the 2002 Code.

2.62. The Investment Code provides for a single regime, namely the general regime, which includes special provisions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and applies to all domestic and foreign investment projects.

2.63. The general regime grants approved enterprises various customs, fiscal, and parafiscal concessions for a specified period of three to five years, depending on the economic zone in which the enterprise is established. To qualify for these concessions, investors must be economic entities established under Congolese law; make an investment of at least the equivalent of USD 200,000; comply with environmental protection and nature conservation standards; help to train Congolese staff for specialized technical and managerial positions; and achieve a value-added ratio of at least 35%.

2.64. The Investment Code defines three categories of economic zone, each of which benefits from concessions of a specific duration. In Zone A, comprising the city of Kinshasa, concessions are granted for three years. In Zone B, comprising provinces with intermediate industrial potential,²² concessions are granted for four years. Lastly, in Zone C, comprising less economically developed regions²³, concessions are granted for five years.

2.65. Regarding customs, the general regime provides for full exemptions from import duties and taxes in certain cases (Section 3.1.4). Enterprises are exempt from import duties and taxes on new machinery and equipment. For SMEs and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs), the exemption also covers second-hand equipment and initial stocks of spare parts, for up to 10% of the c.i.f. value of the equipment concerned. Enterprises are also exempt from export duties and taxes, while newly established enterprises and startup projects are exempt from import VAT.

2.66. At the fiscal and parafiscal levels, approved enterprises are fully exempt from profits tax. Enterprises are also exempt from property tax and turnover tax on capital goods and industrial inputs used in their projects.

2.67. An enterprise or investor seeking approval must submit an application to ANAPI. To that end, the investor must prepare and submit a complete application including an investment project that complies with the Investment Code; the enterprise's legal documents (notarized articles of association, certificate of registration in the Trade and Personal Property Credit Register (RCCM), tax identification number, etc.); a list of the equipment to be imported; and proof of payment of the application filing fee (USD 1,000 for large enterprises and USD 500 for SMEs). ANAPI then examines the application and submits it to the Approval Board for assessment (against the eligibility criteria under the Investment Code) and for a decision. If the application is approved, an interministerial order is prepared and signed by the competent authorities, including the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Finance. The order formally grants approval and entitles the investor to the tax and customs concessions provided for by law. The statutory maximum period for the processing of the application is 30 days from the date on which it is filed.²⁴

2.68. Profits derived from newly approved investments are fully exempt from the business tax on income. Approved enterprises are also exempt from the tax on turnover and on purchases of capital goods and industrial inputs manufactured in the DRC, as are enterprises procuring construction services. Enterprises are also exempt from certain proportional charges when they are incorporated or increase their share capital. The duration of these exemptions varies according to the economic zone: three years in Zone A, four years in Zone B, and five years in Zone C.

2.69. SMEs receive additional benefits. They may deduct from their taxable profits any expenditure on the training and professional development of the enterprise owner or staff, as well as expenditure

²¹ DRC Investment Code, viewed at: https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/IMG/pdf/code_des_investissements.pdf (14/12/2025).

²² Kongo Central and the cities of Lubumbashi, Likasi, and Kolwezi.

²³ Bandundu, Équateur, Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Maniema, Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, Province-Orientale, and Katanga.

²⁴ ANAPI, *Procédures du Conseil d'agrément*, viewed at: <https://anapi.cd/procedures/procedure-dagrement> (12/12/2025).

on environmental protection and conservation. They may also calculate depreciation using the declining-balance method. They are also exempt from duties on instruments of incorporation for companies or cooperatives and from fees for registration in the new commercial register.

2.70. The customs and tax concessions provided for under the Investment Code and other legislation are summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Selected investment concessions under different codes and laws

A. Concessions granted under the Investment Code ^a		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Exemption from profits and gains tax Exemption from land tax Exemption from import (customs) duties on equipment and other materials Exemption from export duties on finished products Additional concessions for SMEs, including exemptions from import duties on equipment and industrial inputs	Application to be submitted to ANAPI in three copies Processing time: 30 days maximum	Zone A (Kinshasa): 3 years Zone B (Kongo Central and some cities in Katanga): 4 years Zone C (other provinces): 5 years
B. Concessions granted under the Mining Code ^b		
Customs concessions	Tax concessions	
Full exemption from customs duty on exports of tradable goods Payment of fees and charges for export-related services, capped at 1% Reduced rates of customs duty on imports at various stages (prospection and exploitation)	• The standard property tax applies only to immovable property not subject to the mining surface-area tax • Exemption from tax on transport vehicles • Dividends taxed at 10%; profits and gains tax rate of 30%	
C. Concessions granted under the Agriculture Law ^c		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Preferential rates for farmers' consumption of water, electricity, and petroleum products Exemption from import duties and taxes on agricultural inputs Exemption from tax on all rolling stock used exclusively for farming	Letter to the Minister of Agriculture Processing time: 30 days maximum	Indefinite
D. Concessions granted to enterprises admissible under the strategic partnership on value chains ^d		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Suspension of VAT, both domestically and on imports, on equipment, construction materials, inputs, and raw materials Exemption from import duties and taxes on goods, inputs, raw materials, and equipment intended for the project Application of preferential energy tariffs per kilowatt/hour	Prior conclusion of a partnership agreement with the Government under the strategic partnership on value chains	4 years
E. Concessions granted under the tax, customs, parafiscal, non-tax revenue, and foreign exchange regimes applicable to collaboration agreements and cooperation projects ^e		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Exemption from direct and indirect national, provincial and municipal taxes, customs duties, fees and other charges levied domestically or on imports or exports. Suspension of customs duty and VAT on imports of electricity and of capital goods, equipment, and materials intended exclusively for electricity generation	- The value of the investment may not be less than the CDF equivalent of USD 1 billion - Approval by the Minister of Finance, acting within the scope of their authority, of the list of goods to be imported, after consultation with the ministers responsible for mining and energy, respectively, where the goods are imported by the holder of mining rights	Life of the project
F. Concessions under the special economic zones regime in the DRC ^f		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Concessions granted under the Investment Code	The fiscal, parafiscal, and customs concessions are determined jointly by the public institution responsible for administering the special economic zones and the developer	3 years for investment projects - Life of the project for the developer

G. Concessions granted pursuant to the rules relating to the conditions and procedures for rescuing an industrial enterprise in difficulty^{g,h}		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Full exemption from import duties and taxes on inputs and machinery, with the exception of the related administrative fee	The enterprise must be subject to collective procedures for preventive settlement or judicial reorganization aimed at safeguarding jobs, adding value to raw materials, and securing its contribution to state tax revenue.	Once only
H. Concessions involving tax and customs relief measures applicable to the generation, import and export of electricityⁱ		
Type	Granting procedure	Duration
Suspension of customs duty and VAT on imports of equipment, materials, tools, and spare parts	Application to the Minister of Finance	4 years
Suspension of customs duty and VAT on electricity imports		

- a Law No. 004/2002 of 21 February 2002; application to be submitted to ANAPI in three copies; maximum processing time: 30 days.
- b Law No. 18/001 of 9 March 2018.
- c Law No. 11/022 of 24 December 2011.
- d Decree No. 13/049 of 6 October 2013.
- e Law No. 14/005 of 11 February 2014.
- f Law No. 14/022 of 7 July 2014.
- g, h Law No. 14/023 of 7 July 2014 and Law No. 14/005 of 11 February 2014.
- i Decree No. 15/009 of 28 April 2015.

Source: Information provided by the authorities.

2.71. The legal framework also imposes requirements for Congolese participation or limits on foreign equity holdings in agriculture, subcontracting, and certain service activities.²⁵ For example, foreign nationals are not permitted to engage in retail activities. Foreign equity participation in agro-industrial enterprises is capped at 49%, while the telecommunications sector must have at least 25% Congolese equity participation.²⁶ The principle of non-discrimination is set out in Articles 23 to 24 of the Investment Code. The mining sector is governed by the Mining Code, as revised on 9 March 2018. The Code sets out the rules applicable to mining activities, including the conditions for granting mining rights and the applicable taxes, levies, and customs regimes. The mining sector's tax and customs regime provides incentives for investors. The concessions provided for include a reduced profits tax rate of 30% for mining companies, compared with the standard rate of 35% applicable to other companies.

Box 2.1 Legal guarantees for investors, Articles 23-29

Principle of non-discrimination (Articles 23-24)

Foreign investors receive the same treatment as domestic investors, subject to reciprocity. This principle applies without prejudice to the DRC's international commitments and does not extend to specific advantages granted under regional economic integration agreements. Tax provisions are not covered.

Fair and equitable treatment (Article 25)

The State guarantees investors treatment consistent with the standards of international law and ensures that the exercise of their rights is not impeded either in law or in practice.

Protection against expropriation (Article 26)

Property rights are guaranteed by the Constitution. Nationalization or expropriation may take place only for a public purpose and must be accompanied by prior, fair, and equitable compensation based on the market value determined before the measure is taken.

Freedom to transfer capital (Articles 27-29)

Foreign investors are guaranteed the freedom to make transfers abroad, in accordance with foreign exchange regulations.

Source: DRC Investment Code, viewed at: <https://leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/code.investissement.%20loi%20004.2002.pdf>.

²⁵ Law on subcontracting in the DRC, viewed at: <https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/105121/COD-105121.pdf> (16/12/2025).

²⁶ Lloyds Bank, *Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, viewed at: <https://www.lloydsbanktrade.com/en/market-potential/democratic-republic-of-congo/investment> (15/12/2025).

2.72. The DRC also has special economic zones (SEZs), which receive specific benefits. Law No. 14/022 of 7 July 2014 establishes the regime governing SEZs. Under the Law, developers are fully exempt from property tax, movable property tax, and business tax on profits for 10 years, on a renewable basis, while enterprises benefit from the same exemption for five years, renewable following an evaluation. Developers and enterprises are also fully exempt for 10 years from import duties and taxes on machinery, tools, new or second-hand equipment, and capital goods. Enterprises are further exempt for 10 years from export duties and taxes on finished products. The Maluku pilot zone is the only SEZ already operational among the seven zones under development. It hosts two enterprises, Sapphire Ceramics and Varun Beverages, which have already begun industrial production.

2.73. The DRC is a signatory to several bilateral and multilateral investment protection agreements. It is also a member of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which enables investors to resort to international arbitration in the event of a dispute with the State. The DRC guarantees, *inter alia*, freedom of investment, non-discrimination, and equal treatment of investors, regardless of nationality. It has also concluded a number of bilateral investment promotion and protection agreements with various partners, including South Africa, Germany, Belgium, the United States, France, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Switzerland, and Türkiye.

2.74. The DRC benefits from guarantees provided by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) against expropriation without adequate compensation, restrictions on currency transfers, war or civil disturbance, and breach of contract by the State.

2.75. The DRC is also a member of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), which comprises 17 African States, including several in Central and West Africa, and whose primary objective is to harmonize business law in order to facilitate trade and investment in the region. OHADA draws up Uniform Acts that are intended to apply in all member States.

2.76. OHADA Uniform Acts contain provisions on the protection of shareholders' rights, corporate transparency, and dispute resolution. Company law, for example, promotes better governance, while simplified procedures for debt recovery and dispute settlement help protect investors' interests. OHADA has also established a Common Court of Justice and Arbitration (CCJA).

2.77. Nevertheless, the DRC continues to face various structural obstacles that make it less attractive to investors and hamper economic performance. These include armed conflict, conditions that are not conducive to business activity, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure. Several large non-mining companies, including Nestlé, have left the country since the previous TPR because of these conditions.

2.78. Armed conflict has a profoundly negative effect on the conditions in which businesses operate by exacerbating insecurity and institutional instability and increasing operating costs for businesses. Persistent insecurity disrupts supply chains, restricts the movement of goods and people, increases logistics costs, and limits access to essential infrastructure and markets. It also raises transaction costs, reducing the competitiveness of businesses. Furthermore, such conflict exposes businesses to significant risks of asset destruction and disruption to their operations. Together, these factors undermine investor confidence and tend to discourage both domestic and foreign private investment.

2.79. According to the Heritage Foundation, business conditions in the DRC remain difficult and are not conducive to entrepreneurial activity. The country's business freedom score is far below the world average. In 2025, the DRC ranked 161st out of 184 countries in the Index of Economic Freedom. Its score fell by 0.3 points in relation to the previous year. Within sub-Saharan Africa, the DRC ranked 41st out of 47 countries. The country's economic freedom score is below the world and regional averages. According to the 2025 Index, the DRC's economy is considered "repressed".²⁷

²⁷ The Heritage Foundation, *Economic Freedom Country Profile, Democratic Republic of Congo*, viewed at: <https://economicfreedom.heritage.org/pages/country-pages/congo-dem-rep> (10/11/2025).

Table 2.3 World Bank 2025 B-READY Index

Pillar	Score
Regulatory framework	63.61 (66)
Public services	26.56 (54)
Operational efficiency	46.97 (60)
Topic	Score
Business entry	58.19 (72)
Business location	42.41 (60)
Utility services	55.73 (71)
Labour	51.93 (65)
Financial services	48.22 (69)
International trade	60.97 (59)
Taxation	38.39 (54)
Dispute resolution	39.86 (53)
Market competition	33.85 (50)
Business insolvency	27.59 (48)

Note: The index evaluates business conditions in a country over the life cycle of an enterprise. It assigns scores to countries ranging from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating a more favourable environment. It is based on three pillars (regulatory framework, public services and operational efficiency) and 10 topics.

The figures in brackets are world averages.

Source: World Bank, *Business Ready*.

2.80. The DRC's overall performance in the World Bank's 2025 Business Ready (B-READY) assessment, which evaluates the business and investment climates worldwide, remains weak. However, performance varies considerably by topic, ranging from a score of 61 for international trade to only 28 for business insolvency (Table 2.3). Across all topics assessed, the DRC scored 64 out of 100 for regulatory framework, placing it in the bottom 40% of the economies covered, while its scores for public services (27) and operational efficiency (47) placed it in the bottom 20%. Although the DRC benefits from deep commitments under preferential trade agreements with its main partners, which support market integration and the potential for trade expansion, significant weaknesses persist as regards business insolvency. This topic is marked by very limited digitalization of procedures, the absence of electronic court services and electronic case-management systems, and the fact that no judicial insolvency proceedings involving businesses were concluded over the preceding three years. These shortcomings undermine predictability and legal certainty for economic operators.

2.81. The DRC's tax system is burdensome, with high levels of taxation, numerous taxes and charges, and cumbersome administration, all of which adversely affect the business climate. The overlap of national, provincial, and local taxes, combined with complex and sometimes opaque administrative procedures, increases compliance costs for economic operators and makes the country less attractive to investors.

2.82. Corruption remains a major challenge that profoundly affects the business climate in the DRC. Despite recent efforts to strengthen governance and combat corruption, the perception persists that the environment is marked by opaque practices. This situation creates a climate of uncertainty and inequality before the law, discouraging some foreign investors and constraining economic development. During the period under review, several cases of corruption were reported in the DRC.

2.83. In 2024, according to Transparency International, the DRC ranked 163rd out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index. By comparison, it ranked 156th out of 176 countries in 2016. This result points to a particularly high perceived level of corruption. Furthermore, the DRC's score fell from 21 to 20 between 2016 and 2024, reflecting a deterioration in perceptions of corruption. This development suggests a weakening of anti-corruption efforts and highlights the need to strengthen supervisory institutions and accountability mechanisms.²⁸

2.84. Audits by the General Inspectorate of Finance (IGF) have revealed irregularities in the mining sector, primarily involving the company Gécamines and, more broadly, the Congolese public sector. Between 2012 and 2020, more than USD 413 million in tax advances reportedly paid to the Treasury

²⁸ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index, Democratic Republic of the Congo*, viewed at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/cod> (10/11/2025).

and USD 315 million in advance tax payments could not be traced.²⁹ The Central Bank of the Congo recorded unjustified cash withdrawals amounting to several million US dollars, including a USD 16 million withdrawal made in 2018 solely on the basis of a verbal instruction.³⁰ At the same time, mining partnerships entered into by Gécamines generated USD 35 billion in turnover for private operators, while the state-owned company received only USD 564 million, indicating a substantial loss of revenue for the State. The Inspectorate-General for Finance also highlights excessive bonuses and benefits granted to Gécamines senior management, accounting for USD 1.5 billion out of USD 2 billion in internally generated resources.³¹

2.85. Several other scandals, including suspicious fund transfers, illustrate the risks of collusion in the mining sector.³² In addition, several cases of corruption were documented in 2024, notably in connection with the renegotiation of a Chinese contract.³³

2.86. Such forms of corruption undermine confidence in the business climate in the DRC. Investors may fear being associated with opaque practices or incurring financial losses if contracts are cancelled.

2.87. Inadequate infrastructure is also one of the main obstacles to improving the business climate in the country. Road, rail, and energy networks are inadequate and poorly maintained, increasing production costs and reducing competitiveness. Limited access to domestic and international markets complicates logistics, especially in remote areas or areas with significant mining potential. Infrastructure development therefore remains key to facilitating trade and attracting more investment.

2.88. Improving the business climate is therefore a strategic priority for the Government of the DRC in its efforts to attract investment and promote economic development. Since 2019, several major reforms have been undertaken to improve the business environment and strengthen investor confidence.

2.89. To that end, a Business Climate Unit (CCA) was established in 2020 and attached to the Office of the President of the Republic. It is responsible for analysing and assessing the country's economic environment and business climate and proposing measures to improve them.³⁴ In 2023, the Unit contributed to the development of a draft emergency plan to improve the business climate.

2.90. The reforms undertaken by the Government included the establishment, in January 2021, of a One-Stop Shop for Business Registration. In particular, this mechanism made it possible to abolish the minimum capital requirement for incorporating a limited liability company (SARL) and to digitalize a number of administrative procedures. It also helped to streamline business registration and shorten processing times, which now do not exceed three working days from the submission of a complete application, including proof of payment. The costs of establishing an enterprise have also been reduced considerably.³⁵ Lastly, the DRC introduced e-GUCE, a digital platform for tracking

²⁹ Reuters, *DR Congo justice ministry orders probe into state mining company embezzlement*, viewed at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/dr-congo-justice-ministry-orders-probe-into-state-mining-company-embezzlement-2025-01-18/> (06/11/2025).

³⁰ Actualité.cd, viewed at: <https://actualite.cd/2025/01/20/rdc-315-millions-usd-disparus-la-justice-se-penche-sur-la-gestion-de-la-banque-centrale> (06/11/2025).

³¹ Ouragan.cd, *RDC : la Gécamines saignée, plus de 400 millions de dollars dilapidés*, viewed at: <https://ouragan.cd/2022/06/rdc-la-gecamines-saignee-plus-de-400-millions-de-dollars-dilapides> (06/11/2025).

³² Swissinfo, Foreign Affairs, *Calls for DRC to benefit from \$150m Glencore corruption damages*, viewed at: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/foreign-affairs/calls-for-drc-to-benefit-from-150m-glencore-corruption-damages/87765365> (07/11/2025); and Deutsche Welle, *Des affaires de détournements secouent la RDC*, viewed at: <https://www.dw.com/fr/rdc-d%C3%A9tournements-fonds-publics-senat-gecamines-enquete-corruption/a-69707915> (07/11/2025).

³³ Breakingnews RDC, viewed at: <https://breakingnews-rdc.net/economie/06/04/2025/corruption-en-rdc-le-cnpav-publie-son-rapport-du-troisieme-edition-de-kanyaka-rushwa-au-dernier-trimestre-de-2024/> (07/11/2025).

³⁴ Leganet.cd, a non-governmental, association-run website providing online access to Congolese law, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/JO/2020/JO.15.02.2020.pdf> (12/11/2025).

³⁵ For companies, fees were reduced from USD 120 to USD 80 where the articles of association are notarized, or to USD 70 where they are executed under private signature; for sole proprietorships, they fell from USD 40 to USD 30.

business-registration applications online. This innovation has also enhanced the transparency and traceability of administrative procedures.³⁶

2.91. As part of the same reform drive, the Finance Law of 2018 introduced a series of tax incentives intended to encourage private investment. The profits tax rate was reduced from 35% to 30%, and the late-payment penalty applicable to enterprises was reduced from 4% to 2% per month. The time limit for processing tax disputes was also reduced from six months to three, helping to strengthen trust between the administration and economic operators.

2.92. Continuing its efforts to modernize public administration and promote e-government, in 2022, the DRC digitalized the payment of duties, taxes, and charges administered by the Directorate-General of Administrative, Judicial, Government Property, and Equity Revenue (DGRAD). This reform, implemented through the Single Window for Revenues from Collaboration Agreements (GURCC), is intended to make non-tax revenue collection more transparent, secure, and efficient. The system now allows online payments through banks or mobile money services, ensures that funds are transferred directly to the Public Treasury, reduces the risk of fraud, and speeds up revenue reconciliation.

2.93. In 2021, the DRC established a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Advisory and Coordination Unit. The Unit's mandate is to support the Government in the design, structuring, and implementation of PPP projects.

2.94. The Government has also taken steps to remove illegal obstacles to maritime, river, lake, and road transport. This measure is intended to facilitate the movement of goods and people, reduce transport costs, and enhance the transparency of commercial operations.

2.95. To improve private-sector access to finance, the Government established the Guarantee Fund for Entrepreneurship in Congo (FOGEC). The Fund provides partial or full guarantees for loans granted by financial institutions, thereby reducing risk for lenders and encouraging lending to SMEs. FOGEC thus plays an essential role in promoting entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and strengthening the competitiveness of the country's business sector

2.96. According to the authorities, by 31 December 2025, FOGEC had provided financing to 328 entrepreneurs, amounting to a total commitment of USD 3,233,785, with preferential terms, including annual interest rates of 4% to 5%, well below the 15% to 20% charged by microfinance institutions. Its support covers formal income-generating activities in all lawful sectors other than trade in imported goods, through four guarantee products: an individual guarantee for eligible entrepreneurs and SMEs; a portfolio guarantee for specific sectors; the VIJANA scheme, targeting young industrial entrepreneurs; and a socially oriented business-recovery guarantee, notably for affected carpenters in Delvaux. FOGEC's annual budget is funded by a levy on private-sector subcontracting contracts, but its budgetary autonomy remains limited because the levy is not collected consistently.

³⁶ ANAPI, *Création d'entreprise*, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article159&lang=fr> (13/11/2025).

3 TRADE POLICIES AND PRACTICES BY MEASURE

3.1 Measures directly affecting imports

3.1.1 Customs procedures, valuation, and requirements

3.1. The legal and regulatory framework for customs procedures in the DRC has not undergone any major changes since the previous TPR in 2016. Customs procedures continue to be governed by the Customs Code, established by Law No. 10/002 of 20 August 2010 on the customs regime and customs procedures.¹ The Code is supplemented by regulatory texts setting out measures for its implementation, including instructions from the Director-General of Customs and Excise.² The Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (DGDA) is under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance.

3.2. Any economic operator wishing to import products must first obtain a national identification number issued by the Ministry of the National Economy via the Business Start-up Single Window (GUCE). This number is issued free of charge and is valid indefinitely. Operators must also obtain a tax identification number (NIF) from the Directorate-General of Taxation. The NIF is also issued free of charge and valid indefinitely.³ Moreover, importers must be entered in the commercial register (import/export) held by the Ministry of Trade in order to carry out import operations. The import/export number is valid for one year and is renewable. The cost of obtaining this number is set at USD 250 for natural persons and USD 500 for legal persons.⁴ However, the authorities have indicated that a sector-specific authorization, issued by the relevant sectoral entities, is also required to import certain products.

3.3. All imported goods, including those exempt from duties or taxes, must be declared to Customs using the Single Administrative Document (DAU). This procedure, which must be carried out electronically (except at offices without computer systems), enables the goods to be placed under a customs procedure (release for consumption, transit, customs warehousing, etc.). For parcels of low commercial value, a simplified declaration may be used, subject to the conditions laid down by the customs authorities.

3.4. The declaration may be lodged either by the importer or by an approved customs broker.⁵ Authorizations for customs brokers are granted by the Director-General of Customs and Excise, on the recommendation of a committee set up for this purpose. The cost of a customs broker's services is determined by private agreement between the customs broker and the economic operator.

3.5. The conditions for approving customs brokers are governed by Articles 116 to 119 of the 2010 Customs Code and by Ministerial Order No. 016/CAB/MIN/FINANCES/2011. In practice, the procedure involves a review of the application file, verification of the applicants' details, and the provision of a refundable financial guarantee prior to the commencement of operations. This guarantee is set at USD 100,000 for goods, with the exception of petroleum products, for which it is USD 250,000.

3.6. According to the DGDA, the declaration must contain all the following information: tariff heading, customs value, and origin and source of the goods. The DRC operates an advance ruling system under which an importer may apply for binding tariff information (BTI) in order to ascertain the correct tariff classification. The BTI is a document issued by the DGDA, indicating the appropriate tariff classification of the goods. If there is any doubt as to the origin, binding origin information (BOI) may be requested, which is a document issued by Customs certifying the origin of the goods.

¹ Leganet.cd, *Ordinance-Law No. 10/002, of 20 August 2010, setting out the Customs Code*, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Dfiscal/Douanes/OL.10.002.20.08.2010.htm> (11/03/2026).

² Decree No. 011/46 of 24 January 2011, Ministerial Order No. 016/CAB/MIN/FINANCES/2011 of 11 April 2011, and Decision No. DG/DGDA/DG/2011/296 of 11 August 2011 on measures to implement the Customs Code.

³ DGDA, *Procédures de dédouanement à l'importation en République Démocratique du Congo*, viewed at: <https://douane.gouv.cd/les-procedures-douanieres/les-procedures-de-dedouanement-a-limportation-en-rcd-per-centEF-per-centBF-per-centBC/> (11/03/2026).

⁴ The fees for obtaining an import/export number are set in accordance with Interministerial Orders No. 019/CAB/MIN/COMEXT//2020 and No. CAB/MIN/FINANCES/2020/119 of 8 October 2020.

⁵ DGDA, *Procédures de dédouanement à l'importation en République Démocratique du Congo*.

The BTI and the BOI are governed by Articles 13 and 14 of Ordinance-Law No. 10/002, of 20 August 2010, setting out the Customs Code.⁶

3.7. Since January 2018, ASYCUDA World has been used in all customs offices in the DRC to replace ASYCUDA++. However, some customs offices are still not computerized and rely on manual record-keeping. According to the authorities, of the 120 customs offices in the DRC, 90 are computerized, representing 75% of the total. These computerized offices handle nearly 98% of customs operations and generate more than 90% of the revenue paid into the Exchequer.

3.8. ASYCUDA World is reported to have significantly reduced the average customs clearance time, particularly in Matadi, where it has fallen from 10 to 3 days, or to as little as 1 day at Matadi Gateway Terminal (MGT), while also cutting costs. In particular, the system has contributed to the automation of customs declarations through a process of digitization, the establishment of secure interfaces with various partners (including the Operating Company for the Integrated Single Window for Foreign Trade, the National Transport Office (ONATRA), MGT, and Tanzanian Customs), the automated management of exemption requests, and the scanning of 2D barcodes.⁷

3.9. Preshipment inspections remain mandatory for imports and are the responsibility of the Congolese Control Office (OCC).⁸ In practice, they are carried out by the private foreign company BIVAC. Since 2016, the contract with BIVAC has focused exclusively on assessing the quality and conformity of goods. The preshipment inspection fee is set at 1% of the c.i.f. (cost, insurance, and freight) value of the goods inspected; however, in the event of failure to present goods for inspection or evasion of inspection, an administrative fine is imposed equivalent to the customs duties and taxes due. All imported goods are subject to preshipment inspection, with the exception of petroleum products, goods benefiting from customs concessions (exemptions or relief), and those with a customs value of less than USD 2,500.

3.10. The DRC has incorporated the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation into its domestic legislation through Law No. 009/03 of 18 March 2003 and, subsequently, the 2010 Customs Code. For imports, the DRC uses the c.i.f. value as the basis for taxation. The main method is the transaction value, but if this is not applicable, alternative methods may be used.

3.11. Once registered, declarations may be subject to a documentary check or a physical inspection, depending on the screening channel assigned by the ASYCUDA system: green (no checks), blue (deferred check), yellow (immediate documentary check), or red (full inspection). According to the authorities, the breakdown of goods by screening channel during the period under review was as follows: 50% red, 20% blue, 20% yellow, and 10% green. In addition, the DRC had a risk management system called *Système Orange*, installed with the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the form of a value database. This system made it possible to identify goods that pose a valuation risk (declared value 5% below or above the reference value in ASYCUDA World) and provided Congolese Customs with a reliable database.

3.12. Authorized economic operator (AEO) status is governed by the Customs Code. However, to date, no economic operator has been granted it.

3.13. Customs duties and taxes are paid via an authorized bank, which issues an electronic receipt as proof of payment. It is also possible to provide a guarantee or security in the form of a clearing credit, which is renewable annually. This guarantee covers both duties and taxes and any penalties that may be incurred. In practice, the Collector of Customs generally requires a 25% surcharge on the security deposit amount to account for potential risks and fluctuations.

3.14. Once duties and taxes have been paid or a guarantee provided, Customs issues a "release note" authorizing the removal of the goods from the customs facilities.

3.15. In the event of a dispute, several avenues for administrative and judicial redress are open to operators. The system of appeals in customs matters is organized on a hierarchical basis. It provides, as a first step, for a preliminary administrative appeal to the customs authorities. An initial appeal,

⁶ Leganet.cd, Ordinance-Law No. 10/002, of 20 August 2010, setting out the Customs Code, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Dfiscal/Douanes/OL.10.002.20.08.2010.htm> (22/05/2026).

⁷ DGDA, SYDONIA, viewed at: <https://douane.gouv.cd/dgda/outils-informatiques/sydonia/>.

⁸ DGDA, *Procédures de dédouanement à l'importation en République Démocratique du Congo*.

which is mandatory, must be lodged with the competent customs authority within 30 days. For disputes relating to the tariff classification, value, or origin of goods, a second appeal may be lodged, within 10 days, with the Ministry of Finance, through the Customs Disputes Commission.

3.16. Should the dispute persist, the operator may bring legal proceedings before the Court of Appeal for administrative matters or before the High Court with jurisdiction over customs criminal matters, depending on the nature of the dispute, with the possibility of an appeal to the Court of Cassation. Customs disputes are subject to a specific procedural regime, with a 15-day deadline for lodging an appeal and a two-stage process: an adversarial procedure, followed by the recovery of duties and taxes, which may give rise to the application of precautionary measures designed to safeguard the Treasury's revenue, as well as enforcement measures against customs brokers and the detention of goods. Furthermore, disputes may be resolved through alternative resolution methods, including amicable settlements, customs settlements, or recovery by means of a third-party debt order.

3.17. Since April 2017, the Electronic Cargo Tracking System (SYSEC) has been used to track cargo in transit. Using SIM card-equipped electronic seals fitted to containers, the system enables real-time satellite tracking of consignments and sends automatic alerts in the event of any unauthorized opening attempts, route diversions, or suspicious stops. SYSEC has reduced the average transit time from 10 days to 1.5 days between Matadi and Kinshasa, eliminated route diversions, ensured the complete security of goods, and reduced both costs and the security deposit required of carriers.⁹ This system is also applied along the Kasumbalesa–Lubumbashi and Sakania–Lubumbashi corridors.

3.18. In 2023 (the most recent year for which data are available), the DRC's Logistics Performance Index score was 2.5, placing the country 97th out of 139 (Table 3.1). However, the ranking was better than in 2016, when the DRC had a score of 2.4 and was ranked 127th out of 160. The rankings for the various components of the Logistics Performance Index are detailed in Table 3.1.¹⁰

Table 3.1 Logistics Performance Index, 2016 and 2023

	2016		2023	
	Score	Ranking	Score	Ranking
Overall logistics performance index	2.4	127	2.5	97
Efficiency of customs processes	2.2	123	2.3	101
Quality of infrastructure	2.0	146	2.3	108
Ease of arranging competitively priced shipments	2.3	135	2.5	102
Quality of logistics services	2.3	123	2.4	110
Ability to track and trace consignments	2.4	118	2.8	102
Adherence to scheduled or expected delivery times	2.9	102	2.5	98

Source: World Bank.

3.1.2 Rules of origin

3.19. The DRC has not notified its non-preferential rules of origin to the WTO. Ordinance-Law No. 10/002, of 20 August 2010, setting out the Customs Code sets out the application of non-preferential rules of origin.¹¹

3.20. As it has not implemented the provisions of the trade agreements it has signed, the DRC does not apply preferential rules of origin.

⁹ DGDA, *Suivi électronique des cargaisons en transit CVTFS/SYSEC*, viewed at: <https://douane.gouv.cd/dgda/outils-informatiques/suivi-electronique-des-cargaisons-en-transit-cvtfs-sysec/> (11/03/2026).

¹⁰ World Bank, Logistics Performance Indicators 2.0, viewed at: <https://lpi.worldbank.org/> (05/03/2026).

¹¹ Leganet.cd, *Ordinance-Law No. 10/002, of 20 August 2010, setting out the Customs Code*, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Dfiscal/Douanes/OL.10.002.20.08.2010.htm> (11/03/2026).

3.1.3 Tariffs

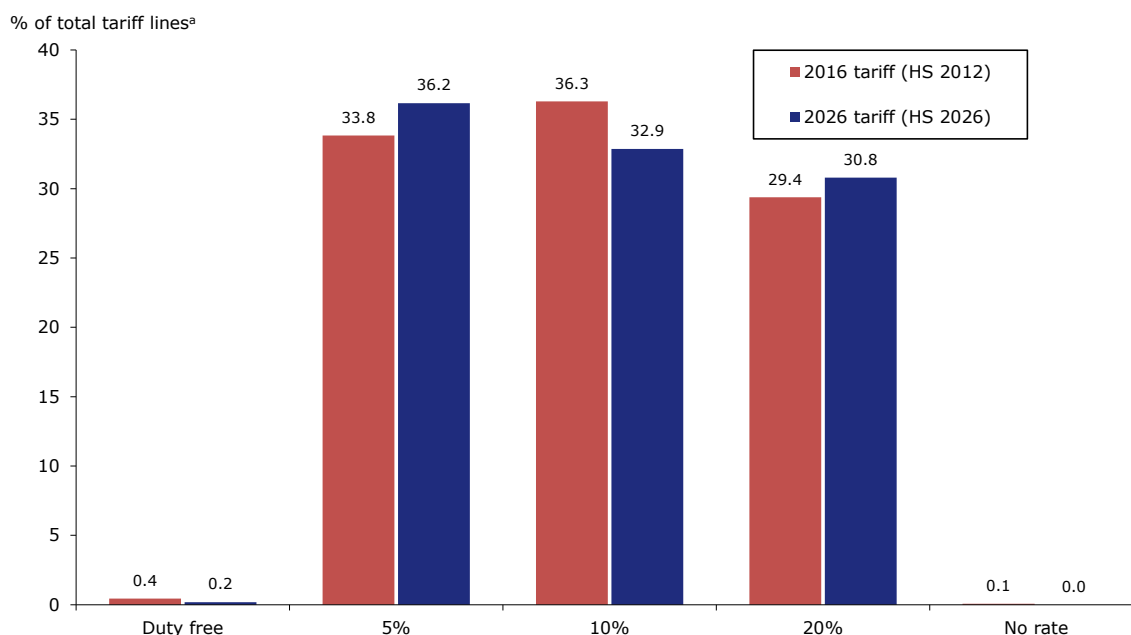
3.1.3.1 Structure and features of the MFN tariff

3.21. The DRC uses a tariff nomenclature based on the 2022 edition of the Harmonized System (HS). National customs tariffs consist of eight-digit tariff headings. The number of tariff lines rose from 5,842 in 2016 (according to the HS 2012 classification) to 6,522 in 2026.

3.22. In 2026, the DRC applied an *ad valorem* MFN tariff comprising three bands (5%, 10%, and 20%) across all 6,522 tariff lines.

3.23. The 5%, 10%, and 20% rates apply to 36.2%, 32.9%, and 30.8% of tariff lines, respectively, meaning that nearly 99.8% of products are subject to a customs duty of between 5 and 20% (Chart 3.1). By contrast, duty-free tariff lines remain marginal, accounting for only 0.2% of the total.

Chart 3.1 MFN duties, 2016 and 2026



a The total number of lines is 5,842 for 2016 and 6,522 for 2026.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data provided by the authorities.

3.24. In the DRC, the MFN tariff has remained unchanged since 1995. However, the tariff nomenclature has been updated on several occasions, moving from earlier HS versions to the edition currently in force, HS 2022. In 2026, the simple average applied MFN duty was 11.3%, compared with 11.2% in 2016. The average MFN rate remains higher for agricultural products (as defined by the WTO), at 11.5% (up from 11.1% in 2016), compared with 11.2% for non-agricultural products, a level unchanged from 2016 (Table 3.2). The highest rates apply to works of art, collectors' items and antiques, clothing, wood and articles of wood, and beverages and tobacco (Table 3.3).

3.25. The MFN duty has a coefficient of variation of 0.6, reflecting a relatively high dispersion of the applied rates around their average (Table 3.3).

Table 3.2 Structure of MFN and bound duties, 2016 and 2026

	2016 (HS 2012)	2026 (HS 2022)	Bound duty (HS 2022)
Total number of tariff lines	5,842	6,522	5,814
Bound tariff lines (% of total lines)	n.a.	n.a.	100.0
Duty-free tariff lines (% of all tariff lines)	0.4	0.2	0.0
Non- <i>ad valorem</i> duties (% of all tariff lines)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Non- <i>ad valorem</i> duties with no <i>ad valorem</i> equivalents (% of all tariff lines)	0.0	0.0	0.0

	2016 (HS 2012)	2026 (HS 2022)	Bound duty (HS 2022)
Tariff quotas (% of all tariff lines)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Simple average MFN rate	11.2	11.3	94.4
Agricultural products (WTO definition)	11.1	11.5	97.9
Non-agricultural products (WTO definition)	11.2	11.2	93.9
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing (ISIC Section 1)	10.0	11.9	97.6
Mining and quarrying (ISIC Section 2)	7.1	6.5	100.0
Manufacturing (ISIC Section 3)	11.4	11.3	94.0
National tariff peaks (% of all tariff lines) ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0
International tariff peaks (% of all tariff lines) ^b	29.4	30.8	98.5
Overall standard deviation of bound rates	6.1	6.2	20.6
Nuisance applied rates (% of all tariff lines) ^c	0.0	0.0	0.0

n.a. Not applicable.

a National tariff peaks are duties that are over three times higher than the overall simple average rate.

b International tariff peaks are duties that exceed 15%.

c Nuisance duties are rates higher than zero but less than or equal to 2%.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data provided by the authorities, and WTO Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) database.

Table 3.3 MFN tariff analysis, 2026

	MFN duty				Bound duty
	Number of lines	Simple average (%)	Range of rates (%)	Coefficient of variation (CV)	Range of rates (%)
Total	6,522	11.3	0 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
HS 01-24	1,067	12.1	5 - 20	0.4	15 - 100
HS 25-97	5,455	11.1	0 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
By WTO definition					
Agriculture	874	11.5	5 - 20	0.5	15 - 100
- Animal products and meat	116	12.5	5 - 20	0.4	100
- Dairy products	25	11.0	5 - 20	0.6	20 - 100
- Fruit and vegetables	196	11.4	5 - 20	0.4	100
- Coffee, tea, cocoa, and spices	57	13.1	5 - 20	0.4	100
- Cereals and food preparations	92	9.8	5 - 20	0.4	15 - 100
- Oilseeds, fats, and oils	80	11.2	5 - 20	0.5	100
- Sugars and confectionery	20	11.8	5 - 20	0.4	100
- Beverages and tobacco	106	18.6	5 - 20	0.2	100
- Cotton, silk, and wool	25	5.0	5	0.0	100
- Other agricultural products	157	7.7	5 - 20	0.4	100
Non-agricultural products (including petroleum)	5,648	11.2	0 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
- Fish and fish products	262	12.4	5 - 20	0.3	20 - 100
- Minerals and metals	1,110	10.9	0 - 20	0.5	20 - 100
- Petroleum	30	8.8			
- Chemicals	1,175	7.9	5 - 20	0.6	15 - 100
- Wood, paper, and furniture	520	17.1	0 - 20	0.3	15 - 100
- Textiles	698	13.0	5 - 20	0.5	30 - 100
- Articles of apparel	211	20.0	10 - 20	0.0	100
- Rubber, leather, and footwear	170	13.3	5 - 20	0.4	100
- Mechanical, office and computing machinery	530	6.4	5 - 20	0.5	5 - 100
- Electrical machinery and electronic equipment	332	11.7	5 - 20	0.5	5 - 100
- Transport equipment	204	8.9	5 - 20	0.6	5 - 100

	MFN duty				Bound duty
	Number of lines	Simple average (%)	Range of rates (%)	Coefficient of variation (CV)	Range of rates (%)
- Other manufactures	406	12.2	0 - 20	0.6	15 - 100
By ISIC sector^a					
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing	488	11.9	5 - 20	0.5	20 - 100
Mining and quarrying	149	6.5	5 - 20	0.6	100
Manufacturing	5,884	11.3	0 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
By HS section					
01 Live animals; animal products	379	12.5	5 - 20	0.4	20 - 100
02 Vegetable products	343	9.2	5 - 20	0.3	15 - 100
03 Animal or vegetable fats and oils	60	11.9	5 - 20	0.5	100
04 Prepared foodstuffs	285	15.0	5 - 20	0.4	20 - 100
05 Minerals	225	6.6	0 - 20	0.4	100
06 Chemicals	1,060	7.6	5 - 20	0.6	15 - 100
07 Plastics and rubber	239	10.3	5 - 20	0.5	100
08 Raw hides and skins, leather, furskins	73	12.7	5 - 20	0.4	100
09 Wood and articles of wood	319	19.4	5 - 20	0.1	100
10 Pulp of wood, paper	161	12.1	0 - 20	0.5	15 - 100
11 Textiles and textile articles	905	14.2	5 - 20	0.5	30 - 100
12 Footwear, headgear, etc.	51	17.7	5 - 20	0.2	100
13 Articles of stone	164	15.8	5 - 20	0.3	20 - 100
14 Precious metals and precious stones	93	18.1	0 - 20	0.2	100
15 Base metals	683	10.4	5 - 20	0.5	20 - 100
16 Machinery and mechanical appliances	853	8.3	5 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
17 Transport equipment	207	9.0	5 - 20	0.6	5 - 100
18 Precision instruments	217	9.5	5 - 20	0.6	50 - 100
19 Arms, ammunition	18	11.1	0 - 20	0.7	100
20 Miscellaneous manufactured articles	168	16.0	5 - 20	0.3	15 - 100
21 Works of art, collectors' pieces, and antiques	19	20.0	20	0.0	100
By stage of processing					
Raw materials	937	9.9	5 - 20	0.5	20 - 100
Semi-finished products	2,248	9.8	5 - 20	0.6	15 - 100
Finished products	3,337	12.6	0 - 20	0.5	5 - 100

a ISIC classification (Rev.2), excluding electricity, gas, and water (one tariff line).

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data provided by the authorities.

3.1.3.2 Preferential tariffs

3.26. The DRC does not apply preferential tariffs, despite being a party to several regional trade agreements (Section 2.3.2).

3.1.3.3 Tariff bindings

3.27. The DRC has bound all its tariff lines. The simple average bound rate is 94.4%. The rates are 97.9% for agricultural products (WTO definition), 93.9% for non-agricultural products, 97.6% for agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing (ISIC Section 1), 100% for mining and quarrying (ISIC Section 2), and 94% for manufacturing (ISIC Section 3) (Table 3.2).

3.1.3.4 Tariff quotas

3.28. The DRC has not established any tariff quotas.

3.1.4 Duty and tax concessions

3.29. The Customs Code, the Investment Code, and various other pieces of legislation in the DRC provide for the granting of preferential arrangements to certain enterprises and product categories. These measures primarily take the form of exemptions from import duties, to which may be added, in certain cases, an exemption from VAT (Section 2.4). For the authorities, these measures serve as incentives designed to stimulate investment, boost domestic production, support strategic sectors, and underpin public interest initiatives, while defining eligibility criteria and implementation procedures.¹²

3.30. The Mining Code provides for a preferential customs regime for companies in the mining sector (Section 4.4.2). Imports related to mining activities enjoy reduced customs duties, set at 2% during the exploration phase, then 5% (for fuels and lubricants intended for mining activities) and 10% (for all intermediate goods and other consumables intended for mining activities) during the operational phase, depending on the nature of the goods.

3.31. Special schemes, notably strategic partnerships on value chains and special economic zones, provide for exemptions from import duties and taxes (Section 3.3.1).¹³

3.32. The Investment Code provides for full exemption from import duties and taxes on machinery, new materials and tools, and initial stocks of spare parts not exceeding 10% of the c.i.f. value of such equipment. Second-hand heavy machinery, vessels, and aircraft are admitted fully exempt.

3.33. Specific laws and regulations such as the Tariff Law, the Finance Law, and circulars issued by the Minister of Finance also grant concessions to certain sectors, notably agriculture and the electricity sector, and to imports of medium-knocked-down (MKD) and completely-knocked-down (CKD) vehicles intended for local assembly. These concessions take the form of total exemptions from or reduced customs duties, sometimes granted for a fixed, renewable period. Furthermore, exemptions apply to specific operational situations, such as supplies intended for ships or aircraft, or to transactions carried out in duty-free shops.

3.34. In 2024, the Government introduced a new category of exemptions that applies to imports for investment projects to recycle plastic waste.¹⁴ These exemptions resulted in an additional shortfall in revenue of CDF 9 billion.¹⁵

3.35. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in June 2020, the Congolese Government issued a decree exempting the import and sale of pharmaceutical inputs and products, as well as medical supplies and equipment related to the pandemic, from all duties, taxes, and levies. The decree set the initial duration of these exemptions at six months.¹⁶

3.36. The total value of tax exemptions increased in 2024 compared with 2023. This change is primarily due to the State covering part of the tax on petroleum products. By contrast, tax exemptions on petroleum products fell significantly, while those on other goods rose over the same period (Table 3.4). Revenue shortfalls resulting from exemptions by product category (excluding petroleum products) are set out in Table 3.5. Exemptions continue to be governed primarily by the Mining Code, although the proportion of total exemptions provided for under the Code fell between 2023 and 2024.

¹² DGDA, viewed at: <https://douane.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/LISTE-DES-EXONERATIONS-22-03.pdf> (26/11/2025).

¹³ WTO document [G/SCM/N/123/COD](https://www.wto.org/press/2024/01/24-scmt-n-123-cod), 9 January 2024.

¹⁴ Decree No. 23/123 of 19 December 2023, viewed at: <https://medd.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/DECRET-23-123-DU-19-DEC-2023-PORTANT-SUSPENSION-DE-LA-PERCEPTION-DE-LA-TVA.pdf> (11/03/2026).

¹⁵ DGDA, Annual Report 2024.

¹⁶ Decree of 10 June 2020, viewed at: https://www.droitcongolais.info/files/651.06.20-Decret-du-10-juin-2020-Produits-pharmaceutiques-covid_exoneration.docx-1.pdf (28/11/2025).

3.37. Furthermore, the amounts corresponding to the revenue foregone as a result of the implementation of Law No. 11/009, of 9 July 2011, on the fundamental principles relating to environmental protection, are set out in Table 3.6.¹⁷

Table 3.4 Total value of import exemptions, 2023 and 2024

(CDF billion)

	2023	2024
Part of petroleum taxes covered by the State	1,247	1,608
Exemptions on petroleum products	93	20
Exemptions on other goods	3,665	3,780
Total	5,005	5,408

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

Table 3.5 Total value of exemptions, by type, excluding petroleum products, 2023 and 2024

(CDF billion)

	2023		2024	
	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total
Mining Code	2,302	62.83	1,925	50.93
Government procurement with external financing	226	6.18	499	13.21
VAT exemption (pharmaceutical and essential goods, aviation equipment)	263	7.17	349	9.24
NGOs	109	2.99	228	6.04
Diplomatic missions	265	7.22	222	5.88
Investment Code	212	5.78	136	3.60
Electrical energy import/export products	80	2.19	109	2.88
Exemption for maize and maize flour	14	0.37	72	1.90
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	44	1.20	47	1.24
Exemption by derogation	31	0.84	34	0.89
Special economic zones	8	0.22	33	0.87
Government and other state institutions	32	0.88	23	0.60
Exemption for agricultural and livestock inputs	18	0.51	15	0.41
Duty-free shops	6	0.16	12	0.33
Cement industry	13	0.35	10	0.28
Other	42	1.11	66	1.7
Total	3,665	100	3,780	100

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

Table 3.6 Lost revenue following the implementation of Law No. 11/009, 2024 and 2025

(CDF)

Year	Lost import duty revenue	Lost VAT revenue	Total lost revenue
2024	2,140,959,299	6,551,419,150	8,692,378,448
2025	3,028,933,970	9,278,122,672	12,307,056,642

Source: Data provided by the authorities, Annual Report 2023 and 2024.

3.38. Imports are also subject to several other levies, many of which tend to increase the cost of imports and administrative complexity, thereby creating an additional barrier for economic operators, which discourages trade. This situation particularly affects SMEs and new entrants, which have more limited resources to absorb these costs and manage formalities. It may also reduce the

¹⁷ Law No. 11/009, of 9 July 2011, on the fundamental principles relating to environmental protection establishes the general legal framework for environmental protection in the DRC by defining the principles applicable to the sustainable management of natural resources, the prevention of pollution, and public participation. It also sets out institutional, procedural, and financial mechanisms, together with rules relating to environmental liability and to penalties for infringements.

predictability of the trade regime and increase transaction costs, to the detriment of competition and integration into international trade.

3.39. Moreover, in 2022, several taxes and levies on imports in place at the time of the last TPR in 2016 were abolished.¹⁸ These were revenue stamps; charges for the disinfection, decontamination, rodent control, and insect control of containers; the tax on the issuance of inspection certificates for animals, organic products, and veterinary products; the tax on phytosanitary inspection certificates for foodstuffs at border posts; and the administrative fees associated with the issuance of certificates.¹⁹

3.40. The tax on the loading of river and lake freight, the surcharge on coffee exports via the ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, the 2% levy on the c.i.f. value of imports into Katanga Province, the airport infrastructure development levy, the levy for the display (a daily charge imposed on traders) and inspection of petroleum products, the tax on cobalt concentrate in Lualaba Province, and the inland logistics levy on exports were also abolished.²⁰

3.1.4.1 Value-added tax (VAT)

3.41. Imports of goods are subject to VAT at the standard rate of 16%. The tax base for VAT is the value for customs purposes plus customs duty and, where appropriate, excise duty.²¹ VAT is payable upon customs clearance.

3.42. A social VAT rate of 8% applies to certain staple goods such as maize, maize flour, rice, salted fish, meat, poultry, powdered milk, vegetable oil, and dairy products for infants. It also applies to air tickets for domestic travel. In addition, exports are subject to a zero rate of VAT.

3.1.4.2 Excise duties

3.43. Since the last TPR, the Excise Code has been amended. The Law of 13 March 2018 on the Excise Code replaced that of 21 September 2012. One of the main changes is the extension of the scope of excise duties to certain services, particularly in the telecommunications sector, whereas the previous regime mainly covered specific products such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and petroleum products. The list of products subject to excise duty is set out in the Excise Code.²²

3.44. The 2018 Code also introduced changes to the tax base and collection methods for excise duties, specifying in particular that certain operations assimilated to sales or transfers, such as self-supplies or certain internal consumption, may be subject to excise duty. In addition, it provides for the possibility of establishing a special excise duty, the rate of which may be adjusted by regulations, as well as mechanisms designed to prevent double taxation of inputs used in production. These reforms are accompanied by a revision of the rate structure applied to certain products, including alcohol, tobacco, and beverages.

3.45. The tax rate is based on the pre-tax sales price in the case of domestically produced goods, the customs value plus customs duties in the case of imported products, or the average fiscal price at the border in the case of petroleum products.

3.46. The excise duty rates currently in effect range from 5% to 80%, depending on the product. However, Article 21 of the Finance Law for fiscal year 2025 amended the provisions of Article 3 of the Excise Code, notably in Annex XVIII. This reform raised the excise rate applicable to all tobacco

¹⁸ The abolition of these new taxes is mentioned in the minutes of the 62nd meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 19 July 2022.

¹⁹ *Radio Okapi* (2022), "RDC : liste complete des taxes à l'importation et exportation supprimées et rabattues par le Gouvernement", 12 July, viewed at: <https://www.radiookapi.net/2022/07/13/actualite/economie/rdc-liste-complete-des-taxes-limportation-et-exportation-supprimees-et> (25/11/2025).

²⁰ *Radio Okapi* (2022), "RDC : liste complete des taxes à l'importation et exportation supprimées et rabattues par le Gouvernement", 12 July.

²¹ Leganet.cd, Instruction No. DGDA/DG/DGA.T/dg/2011/005 of 28 December 2011, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Dfiscal/TVA/instructions.28.12.2011.htm> (11/03/2026).

²² Ordinance-Law No. 18/002 of 13 March 2018 on the Excise Code replaced Ordinance-Law No. 007/2012 of 21 September 2012. Viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Dfiscal/Accisices/Loi%2013.03.2018.html> (13/03/2026).

products to 100%, while water pipes (shisha) are now subject to a duty rate of 120%, as part of efforts to strengthen taxation on products considered harmful to public health²³ (Table 3.7).

3.47. The Code distinguishes between products subject to excise duty that are manufactured domestically and those that are imported. This distinction is based on the product's origin and the stage at which the duty is levied. For domestic products, excise duty is payable upon transfer or release for consumption by the manufacturer. However, for imported products, duties are levied upon clearance by the customs authorities.

Table 3.7 Excise duties

Product	Rate
Sulfuric acid; oleum	10%
Organic surface-active agents (other than soap)	10%
Denatured ethyl alcohol (≥80% vol) for medical use	5%
Other alcohol	10%
Builders' ware of plastics	10%
Other beverages ≤0.5% vol	15%
Other fermented beverages (>0.5% vol)	45%
Beer made from malt (<6%)	30%
Beer made from malt (≥6%)	35%
Electronic cigarettes	100%
Water pipes	120%
Spirits	80%
Cosmetic body care products	20%
Petrol and diesel	25%
Internet access	10%
Data	10%
Motor cars	5%
Liquefied natural gas, propane, and butane	15%
Other tobacco	80%

Source: Excise Code, 2018.

3.1.4.3 Administrative fees and charges

3.48. Fees are charged during customs procedures, including an administrative fee (2% of the customs value), an IT service fee (1% of the c.i.f. import value), a statistical tax, and a storage fee. According to the authorities, these fees are intended to cover the services provided by public agencies in connection with imports, but the number of such fees is being streamlined to facilitate trade. The IT service fee was introduced to fund the maintenance, development, and security of customs IT systems. It is collected in exchange for use of the electronic platform.

3.49. The duties applicable to imports, expressed as a percentage of the value of the goods, are taxes established by laws and regulations. They are collected by the customs administration through their integration into the ASYCUDA system, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 351 et seq. of the Customs Code.

3.1.5 Contribution of customs duties, VAT, and excise duty to government revenue

3.50. Between 2016 and 2024, government revenue was raised primarily from VAT and customs duties. VAT remained the main source of revenue between 2016 and 2024, but its share has declined since 2021 (Chart 3.2). The share of customs duties in government revenue rose sharply from 2022 onwards, reaching nearly 40% in 2023, meaning that customs duties are now the main source of government revenue. Excise duty accounts for a smaller and relatively more stable share of revenue,

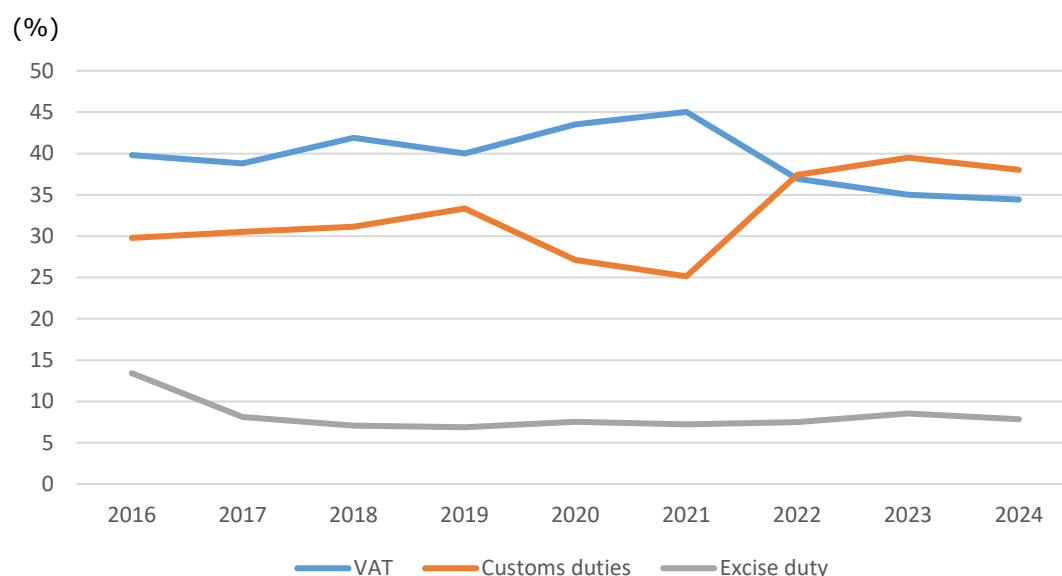
²³ Ministry of the Budget, *Projet de Loi de Finances pour l'exercice 2025, Doc. N°1*, viewed at: https://www.budget.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/budget2025/plf2025/document_num_1_projet_de_loi_de_finances_2025.pdf (26/05/2025).

at around 7% to 8%. This trend highlights an increased reliance on customs revenue and the need to step up efforts to mobilize domestic sources of tax revenue.

3.51. Between 2016 and 2024, revenue from VAT, customs duties, and excise duties in the DRC grew significantly. While VAT revenue grew steadily, customs duties increased at a faster rate, becoming the main source of revenue from 2022 onwards. Revenue from excise duty is also up (Chart 3.3). However, the growing share of customs revenue makes tax revenue volatile and sensitive to fluctuations in international trade. It may also increase the cost of trade and reduce the competitiveness of the country's businesses.

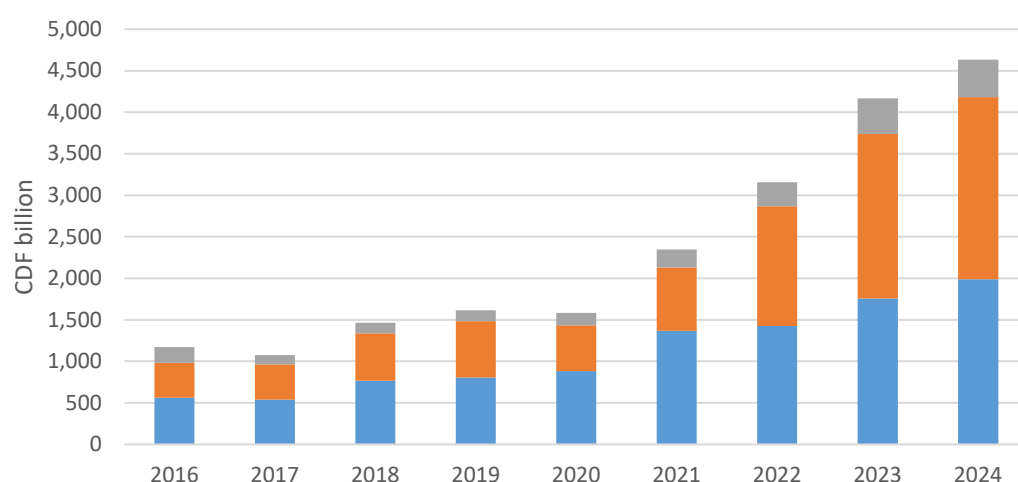
3.52. The increase in revenue from customs duties, excise duties, and VAT remains lower than the total revenue shortfall resulting from exemptions in 2023 and 2024.

Chart 3.2 Total revenue raised by customs duties, VAT, and excise duty, 2016-2024



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data provided by the authorities.

Chart 3.3 Revenue from customs duties, VAT, and excise taxes, 2016-2024



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data provided by the authorities.

3.1.6 Impact of customs duties and various taxes: the case of imported vehicles

3.53. The importation of used vehicles into the DRC is subject to various taxes: an import duty of 20% of the c.i.f. value, VAT of 16% applied to the c.i.f. value plus the import duty, community

levies of 2% (for instance, within the framework of the Economic Community of Central African States), a 1% statistical tax on the c.i.f. value, and a specific tax that varies depending on the vehicle's engine capacity. For example, for a vehicle with a c.i.f. value of USD 10,000, the total taxes payable are estimated to be between USD 4,500 and USD 5,500, depending on the engine capacity. Of this, the import duty is USD 2,000, VAT is USD 1,920 (using a calculation basis of USD 12,000), community levies amount to USD 200, and the statistical tax is USD 100. Added to these amounts are the fees paid to the customs broker and the costs of the preshipment inspection. Moreover, used commercial vehicles are subject to a 10% excise tax.

3.54. Thus, the cost of importing used vehicles into the DRC is significantly increased by the numerous taxes and fees imposed. All these levies, combined with related costs, raise the final price of the vehicle considerably, which is a major barrier to affordability for consumers and can impact the vitality of the automotive market.

3.1.7 Import prohibitions, restrictions, and licensing

3.55. The Ministry of Foreign Trade has the authority to restrict or prohibit the importation of certain products, primarily for reasons of public health, national security, environmental protection, and the protection of the local economy.²⁴

3.56. During the period under review, the list of products subject to restrictions changed slightly compared to the previous TPR.²⁵ The complete lists of restricted and prohibited products are set out in Table 3.8 and Table 3.9, respectively.²⁶

Table 3.8 Products requiring authorization from the Ministry of Foreign Trade prior to importation

Products
Hunting ammunition
Commemorative coins
Second-hand equipment intended for investment
Explosives (for mines and quarries)

Source: Ministerial Order No. 033/CAB/MINETAT-COMEXT/2018.

Table 3.9 Prohibited imports

Products
Goods that infringe industrial property rights, intellectual property rights, or copyright
Counterfeit or imitation goods
Counterfeit notes and coins
Silver that does not meet standard specifications (weight or fineness)
Animals and animal products from areas affected by epizootic diseases
Plants from areas affected by phylloxera or other epiphytic diseases
Alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 45% by volume
Hazardous waste and its sale
Pharmaceutical and food products harmful to public health
Food products containing saccharin
Food products that do not comply with the law or are in poor condition
Pornographic publications and related products
Used vehicles over 20 years old
Non-iodized salt
Drugs
Goods that could be mistaken for those used by defence and security forces
Genetically modified or transgenic grains and seeds
Contaminated products unfit for consumption
Products originating from countries affected by foot-and-mouth disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or Ebola

²⁴ Special Law No. 73-009, of 5 January 1973, on trade, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/loi73.009.5.01.73.commerce.htm> (22/12/2025).

²⁵ Ministerial Order No. 033 CAB/MINETET-COMEXT/2018 of 27 February 2018, amending and supplementing Ministerial Order No. 022/CAB/MIN.COMPME/2011, viewed at: https://www.droitcongolais.info/files/651.02.18-Arrete-du-27-fevrier-2018_Marchandises-prohibees-a-l-exportation.pdf (13/03/2026).

²⁶ DGDA, viewed at: <https://douane.gouv.cd/entreprises/commerce-international/produits-soumis-a-reglementation-particulieres-embargos/> (27/11/2025).

Products
DOT pesticides
Pharmaceuticals and chemicals withdrawn from circulation
Raw ivory tusks
Antique artifacts

Source: Ministerial Order No. 033/CAB/MINETAT-COMEXT/2018.

3.1.8 Anti-dumping, countervailing, and safeguard measures

3.57. The DRC's legislative framework governing trade defence measures has not changed since the last TPR. The country has neither legislation on this matter nor a competent authority to initiate or conduct investigations in relation to such measures. However, the Ministry of Foreign Trade is responsible for implementing anti-dumping, countervailing, and safeguard measures aimed at protecting the domestic industry from unfair or massive imports. In 2020, the DRC notified the WTO that it had not taken any countervailing actions.²⁷

3.58. However, Law No. 14/023, of 7 July 2014, establishing rules and procedures for rescuing an industrial enterprise in difficulty²⁸, and Decree No. 0011, of 22 January 1997, establishing a commission responsible for monitoring imports of protected goods, provide for the adoption of safeguard measures to protect and promote domestic production.

3.59. In 2024, the DRC's Ministry of Foreign Trade implemented several temporary measures to restrict or ban imports of various products in order to support domestic production in the face of foreign competition, reduce dependence on imports, and combat fraud. These measures included the temporary suspension or cancellation of imports of tiles and earthenware, iron bars, electrical cables, and stainless steel cathodes, as well as of beer, soft drinks, grey cement, and clinkers, generally for a period of 12 months, with the possibility of conditional exemptions in certain areas where access to local products is limited. The Ministry has extended these measures through 2025 and 2026.²⁹ They have not been notified to the WTO.

3.60. The authorities have indicated that these import restrictions were part of a government strategy aimed at promoting the "Made in Congo" policy and strengthening the competitiveness of the domestic industry. These measures are intended to protect local production facilities from unfair competition from imported products, particularly in sectors where domestic production capacity is deemed sufficient or is expanding. They were also driven by several other factors, including the growing influx of imported products that could undermine the competitiveness of local businesses, the need to preserve and create jobs, the crackdown on customs fraud and the undervaluation of goods, and a desire to encourage the local processing of raw materials and the country's industrialization.

3.61. Furthermore, a specific measure temporarily prohibits the importation of hygiene products (such as nappies, wipes, toilet paper, and tissues) and ethyl alcohol (ethanol) into the western part of the DRC, in order to protect the local processing industry. Lastly, an order issued in April 2025 also introduced, for a period of 12 months, temporary restrictions on the importation of bags and packaging for cement and minerals in the south-eastern part of the country.³⁰

3.62. The DRC has also implemented a ban on the import of used vehicles older than 20 years, food products containing saccharin, and alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 45%. Moreover, imports of plants and plant products are subject to prior phytosanitary authorization.

²⁷ WTO document [G/SCM/N/202/COD](#), 7 July 2020.

²⁸ DRC, Law on rescuing an enterprise in difficulty, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/Loi%2014.07.07.2014.htm#:~:text=LOI%20N%C2%B0%2014%2F023,L'ENTREPRISE%20INDUSTRIELLE%20EN%20DIFFICULTE&text=Titre%20I%20%3A%20Des%20dispositions%20g%C3%A9n%C3%A9rales,Des%20dispositions%20transitoires%20et%20finales> (30/03/2026).

²⁹ Ministerial Order No. 002 to 008/CAB/MIN.COMEXT/KKJ/01/2026, of 15 January 2026 and No. 040/CAB/MIN.COMEXT/KKJ/01/2025 of 22 December 2025, viewed at: <https://fec-rdc.com/enjeux-sur-la-protection-de-lindustrie-locale-et-du-renouveaulement-des-mesures-de-restriction-dimportation/> (12/03/2026).

³⁰ Ministry of Foreign Trade, viewed at: https://commerce.gouv.cd/details_alaune?id=6 (11/12/2025).

3.2 Measures directly affecting exports

3.2.1 Customs procedures and requirements

3.63. In the DRC, export procedures are similar to import procedures (Section 3.1.1). All goods leaving the country must therefore be declared to customs and assigned a customs procedure, even in cases of exemption.

3.64. The repatriation of export or re-export earnings is a legal obligation imposed on exporters. The repatriation of total export or re-export earnings for merchandise exported from the DRC must take place no later than 60 calendar days from the date the goods leave the national territory for a final destination or are shipped from an African country.³¹ For services, the repatriation of export earnings must take place no later than 30 calendar days from the date the services are rendered. Lastly, for artisanally-produced gold and diamonds, repatriation must take place no later than 20 days from the date of export.³²

3.2.2 Taxes, charges, and levies

3.65. In the DRC, exports are subject to various duties and taxes. Exports of fresh water and electricity are subject to a 5% tax. Export taxes are set at 5% for processed or sawn timber and 10% for logs.³³ In addition, exports of certain types of timber (forest species to be promoted) are subject to a charge of 2% of the ex-works value per cubic metre of wood in the rough exported.

3.66. Mineral exports are subject to duties and taxes that vary depending on the type of mineral and the method of extraction. Exports of strategic minerals are subject to the following tax rates: 10% for cobalt and coltan; 1.5% for artisanally-produced gold and diamonds and 3% for those produced on a large scale; 1% for iron and ferrous metals, industrial minerals, and solid hydrocarbons; 3.5% for non-ferrous and/or base metals; and 6% for precious and coloured gemstones.³⁴ Revenue generated by these taxes increased between 2017 and 2023 (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10 Revenue from duties and taxes on mineral exports, 2017-2023

(CDF million)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total taxes	524	2,765	2,718	2,166	3,372	3,666	2,617

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

3.67. Exports are subject to a 0% VAT rate (Article 93 of the 2010 VAT Code).

3.2.3 Export prohibitions, restrictions, and licensing

3.68. In the DRC, goods prohibited from import are also prohibited from export (Section 3.1.7). The list of products subject to prior export authorization by the Ministry of Foreign Trade includes scrap metal (ferrous and non-ferrous), rare earths, historical art objects, wood (logs and wood products), rubber, green coffee, cocoa, non-timber forest products (such as honey, caterpillars, and mushrooms), fresh water, charcoal, and tobacco and its derivatives.³⁵

3.69. During the period under review, the DRC implemented measures to suspend cobalt exports and then imposed quotas on them. On 22 February 2025, the Regulatory and Control Authority for

³¹ Regulations of the Central Bank of the Congo (BCC), Law No. 004/2001, of 31 January 2001, on the regime governing transactions in national and foreign currencies in the DRC, as amended on 28 March 2014.

³² Central Bank of the Congo, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/operations-et-marches/reglementation/reglements/reglementation-du-change-en-republique-democratique-du-congo-mars-2014> (27/11/2025).

³³ ANAPI, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article133&lang=fr> (27/11/2025).

³⁴ Leganet.cd, viewed at: <https://leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/Code%20Minier/Mo.18.001.09.03.2018.html> (27/11/2025).

³⁵ Ministerial Order No. 033/CAB/MINETAT-COMEXT/201, viewed at: https://www.droitcongolais.info/files/651.02.18-Arrete-du-27-fevrier-2018_Marchandises-prohibees-a-l-exportation.pdf (30/03/2026).

Strategic Mineral Substances (ARECOMS) temporarily suspended cobalt exports for an initial period of four months. According to the authorities, this measure, prompted by a persistent supply surplus on the global market, was intended to rebalance market conditions. The suspension was extended on 21 June 2025 for an additional three months, and then again on 20 September 2025, until 15 October 2025. At the end of this period, on 16 October 2025, an export quota scheme came into force. This scheme establishes monthly and annual export ceilings, with a total volume set at 96,600 tonnes per year for 2026 and 2027, while providing for the possibility of reserving a portion of the volumes for purposes defined by the national authorities. According to the Congolese authorities, these measures seek to improve the management of cobalt supply, support value addition for mineral resources, promote the development of local processing activities, and strengthen the mining sector's contribution to the national economy.³⁶

3.2.4 Export support and promotion

3.70. The DRC has put in place several institutional mechanisms to support the development of its exports. Article 73 of the Basic Law on Agriculture of 2011 provides for a specific customs regime for agricultural products intended for export, which are exempt from duties and taxes. Under Ordinance-Law No. 10/001, of 20 August 2010, establishing value-added tax, exports are subject to VAT at a zero rate. In accordance with the Investment Code, total or partial exports of finished, semi-finished, or processed products from approved investment projects are exempt from duties and taxes.³⁷

3.71. Since the last TPR, the DRC has notified the WTO of these subsidy measures (benefits) under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, notably on 8 January 2024.³⁸ This notification covers the subsidies provided for in the Investment Code and the law on special economic zones. It also encompasses the strategic partnership on value chains, the fundamental principles relating to the agriculture sector, and the programme for rescuing industrial enterprises in difficulty.

3.72. Furthermore, the DRC's Export Promotion and Market Diversification Strategy (SPED-RDC) was adopted in 2024. It covers a six-year period, from 2024 to 2030. It aims to gradually expand the exportable supply by strengthening the performance of enterprises in the primary sector, and to initiate the DRC's transition towards a manufacturing economy in the medium and long term. The strategy comprises 16 sectoral objectives and 3 cross-cutting objectives, structured around 154 initiatives designed to stimulate production and promote exports, in particular thanks to fiscal, financial, and trade measures that encourage private investment and support the export sector.³⁹

3.73. The SPED offers tailored technical assistance to help businesses to comply with international standards and quality requirements. On the financial front, the Guarantee Fund for Entrepreneurship in Congo plays a central role within the SPED by mobilizing guarantee, credit, and export credit insurance mechanisms to facilitate SMEs' access to finance and to support industrialization and local value-added projects, complementing the partnerships developed with financial institutions such as the AfDB and EXIMBANK.

3.2.5 Export finance, insurance and guarantees

3.74. There is no official export financing scheme, but companies can access finance through traditional commercial and banking channels. Furthermore, the DRC does not have a public export credit guarantee and insurance scheme.

³⁶ *Mines.cd*, "RDC : ARECOMS prolonge la suspension des exportations de cobalt et adopte une politique de quotas", 21 September 2025, viewed at: <https://mines.cd/rdc-arecoms-prolonge-la-suspension-des-exportations-de-cobalt-et-adopte-une-politique-de-quotas/> (08/07/2026).

³⁷ DRC, Investment Code, Article 12, viewed at: https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/IMG/pdf/code_des_investissements.pdf (13/03/2026).

³⁸ WTO document *G/SCM/N/123/COD*, 9 January 2024.

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Trade, *SPED-RDC*, viewed at: https://commerce.gouv.cd/lib/SPED_Final_22_Janvier_22_.pdf (23/12/2025).

3.3 Measures affecting production and trade

3.3.1 Incentives

3.75. In 2024, the DRC submitted a notification on its subsidies to the WTO for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2023.⁴⁰ The notified measures seek to encourage production, foster a business-friendly environment, and promote entrepreneurship and business development.

3.76. These measures are based almost exclusively on fiscal, parafiscal, and customs incentives for businesses provided for under the Investment Code and the Customs Code, special economic zones, the strategic partnership on value chains, the fundamental principles relating to agriculture, and the programme for rescuing industrial enterprises in difficulty.⁴¹

3.77. The special economic zone regime is one of the cornerstones of this policy. Approved enterprises benefit in particular from tax exemptions on profits for a period of five years (renewable once, subject to assessment), a 50% reduction in the tax rate from the 11th year onwards, accelerated depreciation and total exemption from import duties and taxes on new or second-hand machinery, tools, and equipment, and on capital goods for 10 years. However, these benefits are intended for enterprises operating in agro-industry, the production of construction materials, metallurgical processing, and the production of packaging.

3.78. At the same time, the Law on Fundamental Principles Relating to Agriculture introduces tax and customs incentives designed to secure farms and promote public and private investment in the sector. The benefits include, in particular, the tax deductibility of costs associated with the maintenance of access infrastructure, preferential rates for water, electricity, and petroleum products, the possibility of setting aside tax-exempt provisions, and exemptions from import duties and taxes on agricultural inputs. In addition, there are exemptions from property tax and tax on rolling stock used exclusively for agricultural activities. The scheme is reserved primarily for domestic operators and applies for an indefinite period.

3.79. In addition, through the strategic partnership on value chains, enterprises benefit from significant tax and customs benefits. These include the suspension of VAT, both domestically and on imports, applicable to materials, construction materials, equipment, spare parts, inputs, and raw materials used in a project, together with intermediate or finished products and services provided by the enterprise. These benefits are reserved for enterprises that enter into a formal agreement with the State and commit to an investment of at least USD 15 million. Moreover, goods related to a project are exempt from import duties and taxes, there is a reduction in the taxes levied by various central government departments, and enterprises benefit from preferential energy tariffs per kilowatt/hour. These tax and customs benefits are granted for a period of four years, which may be extended depending on an assessment of the investments made and their depreciation schedule.

3.80. Lastly, the programme for rescuing industrial enterprises provides targeted tax and customs benefits to industrial enterprises in difficulty in order to support their recovery. These benefits include full exemption from import duties on new inputs, machinery, tools, and equipment, including initial stocks of spare parts, up to a maximum of 10% of the c.i.f. value, as well as an exemption from the related administrative fee. The scheme also provides for the application of declining-balance depreciation on capital goods, in accordance with the terms set out in a programme contract. Between 2019 and 2022, a total of 267 industrial enterprises were registered under this scheme, but no data have been provided on the financial extent of the support granted.

3.81. However, this type of targeted support for industrial enterprises in difficulty may distort competition and lead to an inefficient allocation of resources if it keeps structurally non-viable enterprises in business artificially. In some cases, the wide range of such support mechanisms may also encourage a culture of rent-seeking, where enterprises devote more effort to securing public benefits than to improving their efficiency and competitiveness, which increases the risks of the misappropriation of public resources and corruption.

⁴⁰ WTO document [G/SCM/N/123/COD](#), 9 January 2024.

⁴¹ WTO document [G/SCM/N/123/COD](#), 9 January 2024.

3.3.2 Standards and other technical requirements

3.82. Standardization policy in the DRC is set by the Ministry of Industry, while the adoption and implementation of standards to date have been governed by the Order of 27 October 2020.⁴²

3.83. In the DRC, standards are drawn up under the coordination of the National Standardization Committee (CNN), following a procedure that includes identifying the need, preparing a preliminary draft by the technical secretariat, examination and consensus-building within the technical committees established by the Minister for Industry, public consultation, and the approval and official publication of standards by ministerial order in the Official Journal. The process also includes mechanisms for dissemination and revision, and, where necessary, the withdrawal of standards that have become obsolete. Technical regulations, meanwhile, are drawn up by sectoral ministries on the basis of applicable national standards or international references. Furthermore, the DRC is continuing to establish a national framework aimed at strengthening good practices in the drafting of technical regulations and improving the consistency of the national standardization system.

3.84. The CNN, which operates under the authority of the Minister for Industry, is the body responsible for adopting and promoting national standards. It works to improve the quality of products and services, protect consumers, and strengthen the competitiveness of the Congolese economy. In addition, its remit is to ensure compliance with the official procedures for drawing up national standards, to resolve any disputes that may arise between the various Congolese bodies involved in standardization, and to examine draft standards prepared by *ad hoc* committees before they are forwarded to the State Commissioner for the National Economy, with a view to their submission to the supreme authority for approval and mandatory application throughout the country.

3.85. Enforcement of standards is primarily the responsibility of the Congolese Control Office (OCC), a public body tasked with inspecting, analysing, and certifying products. Operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the OCC is responsible for monitoring the quality, quantity, and compliance of imported, exported, and domestically produced goods. It also ensures compliance with existing standards. During the previous Review, it was stated that salt and salted fish were the only categories subject to technical regulations drawn up in the DRC. However, all products imported into the DRC must undergo an inspection, either at the border or prior to shipment from the country of origin by the company BIVAC.

3.86. According to the authorities, quality control, whether carried out during production or in a laboratory, helps to identify spoiled products and protect the public. In order to perform its monitoring tasks effectively, the OCC has a network of more than 96 specialist laboratories, comprising 23 microbiological testing laboratories, 25 agri-food laboratories, 18 chemical analysis laboratories, 9 petroleum product analysis laboratories, 4 pharmaceutical analysis laboratories, 2 environmental analysis laboratories, 6 material testing laboratories, 9 mining product analysis laboratories, and metrology laboratories.

3.87. According to the authorities, the OCC is a member of several standardization, metrology, and accreditation bodies at the national, regional, and international levels, including the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Standardization (SADCSTAN), the Codex Alimentarius, and the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO). In addition, the OCC has signed memoranda of understanding on cooperation in the fields of standardization and conformity assessment with counterpart organizations in South Africa, Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, so that quality certificates issued in one country are automatically recognized in another.⁴³ However, the OCC has not concluded mutual recognition agreements with other national and regional bodies.

⁴² DRC, Order No. CAB.MIN/IND/CJA/10/10/2020 of 27 October 2020, viewed at: <https://www.droitcongolais.info/files/583.10.20-Arrete-du-27-octobre-2020-Normes-nationales-sur-les-produits.docx.pdf> (12/03/2026).

⁴³ OCC, viewed at: [https://www.occ.cd/2022/08/13/gaby-lubiba-mampuya-dg-occ-a-la-conference-publique-de-la-sadc-tenue-a-kinshasa-sur-lindustrialisation-regionale/#:~:text=OCC%20est%20engag%C3%A9%20au%20plan,Arr%C3%AAt%20sur%20images%20\(22/11/2025\).](https://www.occ.cd/2022/08/13/gaby-lubiba-mampuya-dg-occ-a-la-conference-publique-de-la-sadc-tenue-a-kinshasa-sur-lindustrialisation-regionale/#:~:text=OCC%20est%20engag%C3%A9%20au%20plan,Arr%C3%AAt%20sur%20images%20(22/11/2025).)

3.88. During the review period, the number of standards increased significantly. According to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the DRC had 1,271 standards in force in 2026. It had 1,252 in 2025 but only 257 in 2016.⁴⁴ As a member of certain international and regional bodies, the DRC aligns itself with ISO standards but also with standards harmonized at the level of COMESA, ARSO, and SADCSTAN. For example, standards for cement are mainly aligned with European standards (EN), while standards for food products are primarily governed by COMESA standards and the Codex Alimentarius. All these national standards are mandatory (technical regulations).

3.89. The standards cover a wide range of industrial, technological, and environmental sectors, including the agri-food sector (245), cement works (12), steel (54), timber (13), and plastic packaging (6). The OCC also deals with electrotechnical (293), optical fibre (82), street lighting, and rural electrification (28) standards. Other areas covered include textiles (23), leather (12), matches (1), beer (1), soft drinks (1), cosmetics and detergents (38), paints and varnishes (26), human resources management, health and safety at work (11), and petroleum products (77).

3.90. In the DRC, certain products are subject to national technical regulations designed to ensure safety, quality, public health, and compliance with national standards. These include agri-food, pharmaceutical, industrial, and manufactured products, as well as products of animal and plant origin. Control mechanisms include administrative and documentary checks, inspections and audits of production facilities, laboratory tests and analyses carried out by the OCC, certification and standardization, import and export controls, and market surveillance, including the withdrawal of dangerous products and the imposition of administrative or criminal penalties.

3.3.3 Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements

3.91. In the DRC, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures are governed by Law No. 05/162, of 18 November 2005, establishing phytosanitary regulations.⁴⁵ Several ministries are responsible for defining and developing SPS standards: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

3.92. The importation of food and plant products is subject to formalities designed to protect health. Importers must obtain the necessary authorizations from the relevant authorities (Ministry of Agriculture), provide phytosanitary or health certificates attesting to the quality and safety of the products, and declare their goods to the DGDA.

3.93. To obtain a phytosanitary export certificate, the operator must submit an application to the Secretary-General of Agriculture and Food Security, with a copy to the Plant Protection Directorate (DPROTV) and the relevant provincial inspector, specifying the nature of the products, the quantities to be exported, and the country of destination. The relevant services then carry out an inspection of the storage facilities or crops in accordance with International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 23 of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Following this inspection, a report is submitted to the competent authority, which issues a tax assessment notice in accordance with the regulations in force. Once the fees have been paid at the designated bank and the receipt has been presented to the authorities, the phytosanitary certificate is issued to the exporter and then checked by the Plant and Animal Quarantine Service (SQAV) at the point of exit or at the border to verify that the export documents are in order. The cost of the certificate is set by regulation and does not depend on the quantities exported. It takes a maximum of one week to obtain the certificate.

3.94. The importation of an agricultural product is subject to the prior issuance of a phytosanitary export certificate by the country of origin.

3.95. The SPS standards applicable to imports and exports require, in particular, that foodstuffs, agricultural products, and products of animal or plant origin comply with quality, hygiene, safety, and traceability requirements, as evidenced by SPS certificates.

3.96. The Ministry of Foreign Trade is responsible for submitting SPS notifications to the WTO SPS Committee. It also acts as the secretariat and national focal point responsible for

⁴⁴ Ministry of Foreign Trade, viewed at: <https://commerce.gouv.cd/normes> (19/12/2025).

⁴⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, *Législation Agricole*, viewed at: <https://agriculture.gouv.cd/legislation.php> (23/12/2025).

coordinating and harmonizing SPS activities at the regional and international levels. This focal point has not been notified to the WTO.

3.97. Since the last TPR, the DRC has not notified the WTO of any SPS measures. Since its accession to the Organization, it has notified only two such measures. Furthermore, legislation relating to SPS measures has not been notified to the WTO.

3.98. On 11 March 2026, the DRC, with the support of international partners, formalized several national committees, including the SPS Committee, in order to strengthen mechanisms for notifying SPS measures and structure the National Coordination Committee, in accordance with WTO transparency requirements. At the same time, the country is benefiting from technical assistance and capacity-building programmes designed to support the implementation of WTO agreements, particularly in the areas of trade facilitation, SPS measures, and technical barriers to trade (TBT).

3.99. The Ministry of Agriculture is the main authority responsible for phytosanitary measures in the DRC. Through its technical departments, notably the Directorate of Plant Protection (DPROTV), it oversees the prevention and control of pests, the inspection of crops, and the issuance of phytosanitary certificates and permits for the import or export of agricultural products.⁴⁶ However, the health standards applicable to live animals, products of animal origin, and fishery products fall within the remit of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. That Ministry is responsible for the control of animal diseases, veterinary inspections, and the health certification of products intended for export, import, or domestic consumption.

3.100. The Ministry of Health plays a central role in ensuring the safety of processed foods, pharmaceutical products, and foodstuffs intended for human consumption. In particular, it is involved in monitoring biological and chemical contaminants, and in enforcing hygiene standards throughout the food chain.

3.101. The DGDA regulates these foodstuffs using a risk-based approach, combining documentary and physical checks depending on the level of risk, with the support of specialist departments such as the Plant and Animal Quarantine Service and the OCC.

3.102. Regarding animal health standards, the DRC is a member of the World Organisation for Animal Health, and in terms of phytosanitary standards, it acceded to the IPPC in 2015. It has also adopted the Codex Alimentarius standards for food safety. However, according to UNCTAD, the country is still far from meeting international standards in terms of SPS regulations, despite the efforts made to fulfil its commitments under the IPPC. According to UNCTAD, this situation is due to the weakness of the SPS control system and the overlapping responsibilities of several institutions. Furthermore, national phytosanitary legislation remains far from IPPC standards, and the DRC only partially complies with certain obligations, notably in terms of reporting.⁴⁷

3.3.4 Competition policy and price controls

3.103. Competition policy is governed by Law No. 18/020, of 9 July 2018, on free pricing and competition, which replaced the 1950 law in force at the time of the last TPR. The Law applies to all economic sectors and all production, distribution, and service activities that have an impact on the Congolese market, whether carried out by public or private entities. It enshrines freedom of trade, industry, pricing, and competition, subject to compliance with legal rules designed to ensure market fairness and transparency.⁴⁸

3.104. However, the application of competition law to state-owned enterprises (SOEs) involves certain important nuances. First, enterprises entrusted with public service obligations, particularly in the water and electricity sectors, may benefit from statutory monopolies or regulated tariff

⁴⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, *Les services centraux*, viewed at: <https://agriculture.gouv.cd/services.php> (23/12/2025).

⁴⁷ UNCTAD, *Etude diagnostique sur l'intégration du commerce: République démocratique du Congo* (23 September 2020), viewed at: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldcinf8_fr.pdf (22/12/2025).

⁴⁸ Law No. 18/020, of 9 July 2018, on free pricing and competition, viewed at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/Cng187507.pdf> (23/12/2025).

regimes, in which case their practices are assessed in the light of their legal obligations. Second, in accordance with Articles 9 and 10 of the Law, the State may regulate or restrict competition on grounds of public interest or in the event of a crisis or shortage. Lastly, in certain sectors such as energy, telecommunications, and water, public enterprises must answer to sector-specific regulatory authorities, in addition to complying with competition rules.

3.105. Competition policy is implemented by the Competition Commission (COMCO) under the supervision of the Minister for the National Economy. The Commission's remit is to ensure the smooth functioning of markets, and to protect consumers by safeguarding competition and combating anti-competitive practices. It also regulates economic concentrations and imposes sanctions in the event of infringements.

3.106. Examples of unfair competition include trade libel, the sabotage of rival businesses, slavish imitation, free-riding, and certain misleading sales practices. Moreover, economic concentrations likely to restrict competition are subject to prior scrutiny, with a requirement to notify the authorities and the possibility of conditional authorization or refusal.

3.107. The Law prohibits anti-competitive practices such as unlawful cartels, abuse of a dominant position, and the unfair exploitation of a situation of economic dependence. It also prohibits practices that restrict competition (imposing minimum prices, unjustified refusal to sell, discrimination) and strictly regulates the conduct of dominant market players.

3.108. Prices are set freely by economic operators, without prior approval, but are subject to *ex post* scrutiny by the Minister for the National Economy. Nevertheless, the State may regulate certain strategic prices (hydrocarbons, public transport, water, and electricity) or intervene in the event of a crisis, a *de facto* monopoly, or a serious market disruption.

3.109. According to the authorities, since 2017, the Congolese Government has intervened on several occasions to regulate or influence prices in strategic sectors. These interventions have taken the form of ongoing administration of the pricing structure for petroleum products, official revisions of prices at the pump, the establishment of fare pricing committees in the public transport sector, the adoption of pricing regulations for electricity, and recent measures to revise water rates. Furthermore, in response to supply crises and inflationary pressures, the Government has suspended VAT and certain duties on staple goods on several occasions in order to limit consumer price rises.

3.110. The Law imposes obligations regarding consumer information, the display of prices, and itemized billing. It prohibits resale at a loss (except in certain regulated cases), unlawful pricing, hidden charges, misleading representations regarding the quantity or quality of goods and services, and practices aimed at artificially creating shortages. An unlawful price is defined as "a price higher than that set in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 18/020 of 9 July 2018 and its implementing measures, or a price higher than the regulated price".⁴⁹

3.111. Retailers, manufacturers, agricultural producers, and craftspeople must document their stock levels, cost prices, and sales prices. In particular, the following are prohibited: unjustified refusal to sell, unlawful tying, commercial discrimination, the unlawful hoarding and withholding of stock, and the sale of products of unknown origin.

3.112. Price controls constitute an exception to free pricing. They are provided for in Law No. 18/020 of 9 July 2018 to address exceptional circumstances such as speculation, economic crises, sudden market fluctuations, and shortages of essential goods. According to the authorities, the main objective is to protect consumers from price gouging and to maintain access to basic goods and services.

3.113. The Law identifies the goods and services that may be subject to price controls. These are primarily basic necessities: staple foods, petroleum products, essential medicines, water, electricity, transport services, and certain social services. The competent authority may compile and update the list of price-controlled goods in line with changes in the population's needs and market conditions.

⁴⁹ Law No. 18/020, of 9 July 2018, on free pricing and competition.

This targeted approach ensures the greatest possible impact on citizens' well-being while limiting intervention across the market as a whole.

3.114. Hydrocarbon prices in the DRC are set by decrees issued by the Minister for the National Economy as part of the pricing structure for petroleum products, with prices varying according to supply zone (West, South, and East). In 2026, the observed prices per litre of petrol and diesel, respectively, were CDF 2,640 and CDF 2,635 in the West (Kinshasa), CDF 3,930 and CDF 4,435 in the South (mining region), and CDF 4,400 and CDF 5,600 in the East. These prices are revised periodically in line with changes in international oil prices, exchange rates, and logistics costs. To date, the hydrocarbons sector remains the main sector subject to a strict regime of regulated and publicly set prices.

3.115. Under the Competition Law, the State has several tools at its disposal to control prices: direct price-setting, regulation of profit margins, or *ex post* monitoring. These measures are implemented transparently and on a temporary basis, with regular monitoring of market developments. Price control decisions must be justified and clearly communicated to stakeholders.

3.116. The implementation of the price control policy falls within the remit of the Ministry of the National Economy and its decentralized departments, in collaboration with other public institutions. These bodies are responsible for data collection, market surveillance, the inspection of retail outlets, and the monitoring of price discrepancies. The Competition Law also provides for the regular publication of information to raise awareness among consumers and economic operators, thereby promoting transparency and predictability in interventions. Failure to comply with the provisions relating to price controls may give rise to penalties.

3.3.5 State trading and state-owned enterprises

3.117. The DRC has not yet notified the WTO of any state trading enterprises within the meaning of Article XVII of the GATT. Nevertheless, certain SOEs are commercially active and sometimes have monopoly status.

3.118. In 2026, the State's portfolio in the DRC comprised 77 companies listed by the High Council for the State Portfolio, including 29 public enterprises and 48 parastatal enterprises. SOEs are majority- or wholly owned by the State and operate in strategic sectors such as energy, transport, mining, telecommunications, and financial services. Parastatal enterprises, on the other hand, are mixed-ownership companies in which the State joins forces with private or institutional partners.⁵⁰

3.119. SOEs employ at least 44,000 workers, or 5% of all formal employees, with nearly 85% of SOE employment was concentrated in the transportation, energy, and mining sectors in 2023.⁵¹ In addition, in the same year, tax and non-tax revenue generated by SOEs accounted for 0.21% of GDP, compared with 0.19% in 2022.⁵²

3.120. However, Congolese SOEs show mixed financial performance. Many of them suffer from low capitalization levels, insufficient profitability, and a heavy reliance on debt financing. Personnel costs often consumed between 30% and 45% of turnover, which is higher than the averages observed in the private sector and in many comparable countries.⁵³

3.121. The debt stock of SOEs poses a significant fiscal risk to the Congolese Government. SOEs have accumulated substantial financial losses over the past decade, while their debt level has risen

⁵⁰ High Council for the State Portfolio, *Liste des Entreprises*, viewed at: <https://csp.cd/entreprise/liste-des-entreprises> (16/06/2026).

⁵¹ World Bank, *Rapport sur la situation économique de la République Démocratique du Congo, mars 2026: Du Parking à la Voie Rapide: Réformer les Entreprises Publiques* (Washington D.C., March 2026), viewed at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/4cd685cf-9d13-40c3-89c8-7ce3b8f50cd8/content> (16/06/2026).

⁵² Ministry of the Budget, *Rapport sur la situation financière consolidée des entreprises et établissements publics. Exercice 2023. Doc N° 12* (Kinshasa, September 2025), viewed at: https://budget.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/budget2026/plf2026/document_12_rapport_de_la_situation_financiere_consolidee_des_ep_2026.pdf (16/06/2026).

⁵³ World Bank, *Rapport sur la situation économique de la République Démocratique du Congo, mars 2026: Du Parking à la Voie Rapide: Réformer les Entreprises Publiques* (Washington D.C., March 2026).

from 5.7% of GDP in 2019 to 7.3% in 2023, accounting for nearly 42% of the country's external public debt. This situation particularly affects a few large strategic enterprises, notably the National Electricity Company (SNEL), which alone accounts for about three quarters of the total SOE debt.⁵⁴

3.122. Beyond their explicit financial debts, these enterprises also have significant tax and wage arrears, revealing persistent problems with governance, financial management, and operational performance. This vulnerability is placing growing pressure on public finances and highlights the urgent need to strengthen governance, transparency, and restructuring mechanisms for SOEs in order to reduce macroeconomic risks and improve the quality of services provided to the population.

3.123. The governance of SOEs remains a major concern. The authorities have identified several shortcomings, including failure to comply with governance rules, difficulties in overseeing senior management, and the ineffectiveness of certain boards of directors. In response to these challenges, the general portfolio review meeting held in 2024 recommended modernizing management, strengthening governance, and reducing financial dependence on the State.⁵⁵

3.124. Since the last TPR, the DRC has not undertaken any significant privatization or sale of SOE assets. The approach adopted by the authorities instead prioritizes institutional transformation and the improvement of governance within SOEs, notably through the work of the Steering Committee for the Reform of State-owned Enterprises. This strategy is complemented by the use of public-private partnerships aimed at mobilizing investment and expertise from the private sector, while ensuring that the State retains majority control and ownership of strategic assets.⁵⁶

3.3.6 Government procurement

3.125. The DRC is not a party to the WTO's plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement, either as a signatory or as an observer.

3.126. Government procurement is regulated by Law No. 10/010 of 27 April 2010 on government procurement and its implementing texts.⁵⁷ This Law has not been amended since the last TPR in 2016. It provides a framework for the procedures governing the award, execution, and monitoring of government procurement, to guarantee equal access, and to strengthen governance. The Government Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP) plays a central role in regulating the system, supervising procedures, monitoring compliance, and preventing and addressing irregularities, thereby contributing to strengthening the integrity and efficiency of public spending. Article 1(4) of Law No. 10/010 of 27 April 2010 on government procurement enshrines the principles of free access to public procurement, the consideration of national expertise and skills, and equal treatment for domestic and foreign companies.

3.127. Procurement procedures take various forms, such as open tenders, restricted tenders, competitive tenders, or private agreements, depending on the nature and value of the contract. Open tenders remain the preferred method, allowing the public authority to select the most economically advantageous tender.

3.128. Under the Government Procurement Law, a restricted tender procedure may be used only with the approval of the Directorate-General for the Control of Government Procurement (DGCMP). A competitive tender is used when technical, aesthetic, environmental, or financial considerations necessitate specific research in order to design a work of art or an architectural project. Lastly, the use of a private agreement is subject to the criteria set out in the Law.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ World Bank, *Rapport sur la situation économique de la République Démocratique du Congo, mars 2026: Du Parking à la Voie Rapide: Réformer les Entreprises Publiques* (Washington D.C., March 2026).

⁵⁵ World Bank, *Rapport sur la situation économique de la République Démocratique du Congo, mars 2026: Du Parking à la Voie Rapide: Réformer les Entreprises Publiques* (Washington D.C., March 2026).

⁵⁶ Steering Committee for the Reform of State-owned Enterprises, *Reforme des entreprises*, viewed at: <https://www.copirep.cd/pages/reforme-des-entreprises> (16/06/2026)

⁵⁷ DRC, Law on Government Procurement, viewed at: <https://armp-rdc.cd/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Lois-relative-aux-marches-publics.pdf> (05/03/2026).

⁵⁸ See WTO document [WT/TPR/S/339/Rev.1](https://www.wto.org/Trade-Practices/TPR/TPR_S/339/Rev.1), 28 February 2017, Section 3.3.4, for a more detailed description.

3.129. Contracts awarded through a tender process must be preceded by the publication of a notice in the Official Journal, in a widely circulated newspaper in the DRC, and on the government procurement portal. When an invitation to tender is open to foreigners, it must also be publicized by appropriate means on the international markets.

3.130. Government procurement in the DRC is subject to approval by the competent authorities. This stage takes place after the evaluation of tenders and serves to verify that the procedure has been conducted properly, that funds are available, and that the successful tender is economically sound. The approving authorities include, in particular, the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Budget, the line minister, the boards of directors of commercial companies in which the State holds a majority stake, and the chair of the board of directors of public companies.

3.131. Articles 73, 74, 75, and 76 of Law No. 10/010 of 27 April 2010 on government procurement set out the remedies available and the time limits applicable to disputes relating to government procurement. They provide that any candidate, tenderer, or co-contractor who considers themselves to have been wronged may refer the matter to the contracting authority and, in the event of an unresolved dispute, bring the case before the competent court.

3.132. The total value of government procurement rose sharply over the period 2018-2022 (Table 3.11). This trend resulted in a substantial increase in the share of government procurement in capital expenditure, which grew from 21.8% to 92.3% over the same period. In addition, the share of government procurement in nominal GDP increased significantly, up from 0.8% in 2018 to 8.4% in 2022.

3.133. Moreover, the use of direct procurement in the DRC remains significant, although trends have been mixed (Table 3.12). In 2022, the value of such procurement rose considerably once again, reaching USD 852.24 million, against a backdrop of strong overall growth in government procurement.

3.134. In June 2020, the ARMP, with technical support from the World Bank and other technical and financial partners, carried out an assessment of the national government procurement system using the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS). This analysis led to the formulation of concrete recommendations aimed at improving transparency, efficiency, accountability, and alignment with international good practices.⁵⁹

3.135. The assessment findings revealed deep-rooted structural weaknesses within the DRC's government procurement system. According to the assessment, these shortcomings affect the entire process of awarding and executing contracts, causing long-term damage to the system's effectiveness, transparency, and credibility. The systemic and self-perpetuating nature of these shortcomings explains the poor overall performance of the government procurement system (Box 3.1).

Table 3.11 Share of government procurement in capital expenditure and GDP, 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government procurement value (USD million)	765.82	401.84	953.83	429.4	5,001.76
Government procurement as a percentage of capital expenditure	38.7	21.81	65.8	24.72	92.3
Government procurement as a percentage of nominal GDP	1.6	0.8	2.1	0.8	8.4

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

Table 3.12 Government procurement contracts awarded directly, 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government procurement value (USD million)	765.82	401.84	953.83	429.4	5,001.76
Direct procurement value	160.99	129.96	557.98	108.48	852.24
Direct procurement percentage	21.02	32.34	58.49	25.26	17.04

⁵⁹ ARMP, *Évaluation du système de passation des marchés publics de la République Démocratique du Congo – MAPS II: Rapport d'évaluation*, June 2020, viewed at: https://armp-rdc.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/DRC_MAPS_II_Final_Report_9juin2020.pdf (04/02/2026).

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

Box 3.1 Assessment of the national government procurement system in the DRC

The ARMP's MAPS II assessment of June 2020 shows that the DRC's government procurement system has deep-rooted structural weaknesses.

From a legal perspective, the regulations are deemed incomplete and outdated, particularly with regard to sustainability, record-keeping, the management of appeals, and the regulation of direct procurement. At the institutional level, the assessment reveals critical shortcomings: a lack of integration between government procurement and public financial management, the weak capacities within the relevant bodies (ARMP, Directorate-General for the Control of Government Procurement, Government Procurement and Project Management Unit), and the absence of a reliable procurement information system.

Procurement practices are characterized by poor planning, procedures that are often non-compliant, and limited use of standard documents. Fewer than half the contracts examined were fully compliant with the law. Contract management is also problematic: late payments, irregular amendments, insufficient monitoring of service quality, and virtually non-existent record-keeping. These shortcomings seriously undermine the efficiency of public spending and private-sector confidence.

The system suffers from a glaring lack of oversight, audit, and anti-corruption mechanisms. Civil society is only marginally involved. Audits are rare, carried out late, and have little impact, while ethical rules exist but are not effectively enforced. This situation fosters impunity and permanently undermines the governance of public procurement.

Given the scale of the shortcomings, the assessment recommends comprehensive and urgent reforms that go beyond isolated technical adjustments. The recommendations are structured around nine key priority areas, aimed at stabilizing the system, halting its deterioration, and gradually bringing it into line with international standards.

The priorities identified include, in particular, the development of a strategic reform plan, the clarification of the status and role of regulatory bodies, the effective roll-out of an integrated government procurement management and information system, capacity building and the professionalization of stakeholders, and the establishment of credible audit, oversight, and anti-corruption mechanisms. Communication, transparency, and the involvement of the private sector and civil society are identified as critical drivers for the sustainable success of the reform.

Source: ARMP, *Évaluation du système de passation des marchés publics de la République Démocratique du Congo – MAPS II: Rapport d'évaluation*, June 2020, viewed at: https://armp-rdc.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/DRC_MAPS_II_Final_Report_9juin2020.pdf (04/02/2026).

3.3.7 Intellectual property rights

3.136. Law No. 82-001 of 7 January 1982 governs industrial property in the DRC, covering patents, industrial designs, trade marks, trade names, geographical indications, and measures against unfair competition. The Law also sets out the conditions for the registration and exercise of these rights.

3.137. Copyright is governed primarily by Ordinance-Law No. 86-033, of 5 April 1986, on the protection of copyright and related rights, which protects literary and artistic works (musical, dramatic, cinematographic, audiovisual, visual arts, and fashion) from the moment of their creation. Collective rights are managed by the Congolese Society of Copyright and Related Rights (SOCODA), established in 2011 and responsible for registering works, collecting royalties from users, and redistributing them to creators. The term of economic rights protection extends for the author's lifetime plus 50 years after their death.

3.138. In practice, registering works with SOCODA helps to streamline the management and payment of royalties. In 2024, 206 authors, composers and producers received royalty payments, while in 2025, more than 300 artists received royalties as part of a distribution exercise (Table 3.13).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ *Radio Okapi* (2024), "Kinshasa : la SOCODA rémunère les droits de 206 auteurs-compositeurs, dramatiques et producteurs", 2 June 2024, viewed at: https://www.radiookapi.net/2024/06/02/actualite/culture/kinshasa-la-socoda-remunere-les-droits-de-206-auteurs-compositeurs?utm_source=chatgpt.com (01/04/2026).

Table 3.13 Distribution of copyright royalties, 2021-2025

Allocation period	Number of artists paid
First half of 2021	207
Second half of 2021	206
First half of 2022	205
Second half of 2022	206
First half of 2023	418
2024	206
2025	More than 300

Source: Data provided by the authorities; SOCODA.

3.139. The DRC is a signatory to several international agreements governing the protection of intellectual property rights and copyright. As a Member of the WTO, the country is required to implement the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which sets out minimum standards for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in international trade. In 2005, an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement was adopted at the WTO to permanently incorporate a provision on access to medicines for countries facing public health challenges. The amendment, which came into force in 2017, allows countries with pharmaceutical production capacity to export generic medicines produced under compulsory licensing to countries that lack such capacity. To date, the DRC has not yet formally accepted this amendment to the Agreement. It has until 31 December 2027 to do so, like the other Members that have not yet accepted the amendment.

3.140. The DRC is also a signatory to several instruments administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization. These include the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, which guarantees international protection for literary and artistic works, and the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, which establishes common principles for the protection of patents, trade marks, and industrial designs. The DRC is also a party to the Patent Cooperation Treaty, which facilitates the filing and international administration of patent applications. Together, these international commitments help to align the national legal framework with international standards on intellectual property.

3.141. The protection of industrial property rights is governed primarily by Law No. 82-001, of 7 January 1982, on industrial property, and by Ordinance-Law No. 86-033, of 5 April 1986, on the protection of copyright and related rights. The industrial property regime covers, in particular, inventions, trade marks, industrial designs, trade names, and geographical indications. These rights are protected both administratively, through recourse to the relevant authorities and the intervention of customs services to seize counterfeit goods, and juridically, before the competent courts, including commercial courts within the framework of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). The Congolese system thus provides for differentiated protection depending on the nature of the rights, with copyright offering the most extensive protection, while patents, trade marks, and other industrial property rights offer economic and commercial protection that is limited in duration and scope. As part of the efforts to combat counterfeiting, the DGDA has entered into cooperation agreements with certain rights holders, notably the company Vlisco, in order to strengthen the protection of textile products intended for the Congolese market.

4 TRADE POLICIES BY SECTOR

4.1 Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries

4.1.1 Overview

4.1. The share of the agricultural sector (agriculture, fisheries, livestock and forestry) in total employment remained high between 2016 and 2025, accounting for approximately 59% of the labour force in 2025.¹ Despite its major role in employment, the sector's contribution to GDP remained relatively limited. In 2024, it amounted to around 17.1%. During the period 2016-2024, the share of the agricultural sector in GDP formation fell slightly, from 18.6% in 2016 to 17.1% in 2024. This trend nevertheless occurred against a backdrop of volatility, characterized by a period of temporary growth between 2016 and 2021, during which the sector's contribution to GDP reached a peak, before declining in 2022 and continuing to decrease in subsequent years (Chart 4.1).

4.2. The DRC possesses considerable agricultural potential owing to its vast expanse of arable land and predominantly rural population. The country has a climate that is generally favourable to agriculture, with abundant and relatively well-distributed rainfall, providing suitable conditions for highly diverse agricultural production across landscapes ranging from forests and savannahs to plateaus and river valleys.

4.3. The territory of the DRC encompasses several distinct agro-ecological zones. The central basin, dominated by equatorial forest, receives abundant rainfall, often exceeding 2,000 mm per year, spread over most of the year. To the north and south of the basin, the climate is tropical, with two rainy seasons separated by a dry season and annual precipitation ranging from 1,200 mm to 1,800 mm. The eastern regions, characterized by high plateaus and mountainous areas, experience a more temperate climate with variable rainfall patterns influenced by altitude. The extreme south-eastern part of the country (Katanga) is drier, particularly around Lubumbashi, where the dry season is more pronounced and annual precipitation averages around 1,000 mm.

4.4. The DRC has approximately 80 million hectares of arable land and 4 million hectares of irrigable land, making it the country with the greatest agricultural potential in Africa. However, only around 10% of arable land is currently cultivated, while just 1% of irrigable land is cultivated. The country's agro-ecological diversity, ranging from forest areas and savannahs to plateaus and river valleys, allows for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops.²

4.5. The DRC also has considerable agropastoral and fisheries potential. Its vegetation cover could support an estimated livestock population of nearly 40 million head of cattle. The DRC's fisheries potential is estimated at over 700,000 tonnes of fish per year. If exploited optimally and sustainably, this agricultural potential positions the DRC as a strategic player capable of making a significant contribution to food security in Africa, and even globally, and of theoretically feeding up to 2 billion people.³

4.6. In 2024, 52% of the Congolese population lived in rural areas.⁴ This rural population relies primarily on subsistence farming and informal agriculture, and accounts for the highest poverty rate in the country. The poverty rate in rural areas stands at 72%, with these areas also facing significant food insecurity. In 2025, approximately 28 million people, representing 24% of the population, suffered from acute food insecurity.⁵ The situation remains critical, particularly in the conflict-affected eastern provinces, where disruptions to agricultural activities, soaring food prices, population displacement and economic instability have exacerbated food shortages.

¹ World Bank, *Data*, viewed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=CD> (20/04/2026).

² FAO, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/fao-en-republique-democratique-du-congo/le-pays-en-un-coup-doeil/zh/> (20/04/2026).

³ FAO, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/fao-en-republique-democratique-du-congo/le-pays-en-un-coup-doeil/ru/> (13/03/2026).

⁴ World Bank, *Data*, viewed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=CD> (17/03/2026).

⁵ World Food Programme, viewed at: <https://fr.wfp.org/communiqués-de-presse/en-rdc-linsecurite-alimentaire-saggrave-mesure-que-de-nouvelles-personnes> (17/03/2026).

4.7. Congolese agriculture faces a number of challenges, including the predominance of small family farms. The average farm size per household is around 0.54 hectares.⁶ This small area of land limits production and economies of scale, restricts the investment capacity of farming households, and keeps agricultural productivity and incomes relatively low.

4.8. Agricultural productivity in the DRC remains low, owing to multiple structural constraints. Access to modern inputs is very limited: fewer than 4% of farming households use improved seeds and have access to fertilizers. This situation is exacerbated by the low level of mechanization and the use of traditional agricultural techniques, which are often inefficient.⁷ These factors are compounded by the inadequate and poorly maintained transport infrastructure, the lack of training for farmers, and the limited development of agri-food value chains.

4.9. Between 2016 and 2022, the use of fertilizers in agriculture in the DRC remained generally low compared with peer countries (Table 4.1). Improving access to fertilizers and promoting their efficient use remain key levers for increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening food security in the country.

4.10. Agricultural production is dominated by food crops intended primarily for subsistence consumption. Cassava is the main food crop and a staple food in many parts of the country. Other crops, such as maize, rice, sweet potatoes, plantains, sorghum, millet, groundnuts and beans, also play an important role in household diets.

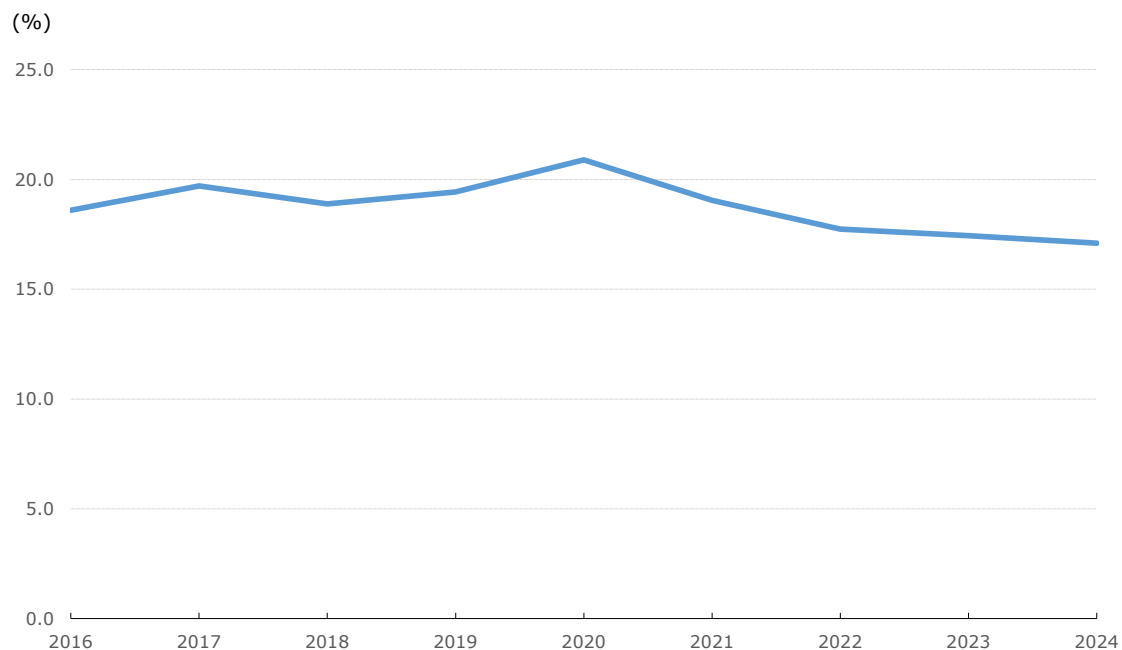
4.11. In addition to food crops, certain cash crops account for an increasing share of agricultural production. Coffee, cocoa, palm oil, cotton and palm nuts are cultivated in several regions, notably Kivu, Équateur and Bandundu. These products are intended for export and generate essential foreign exchange earnings for the country. However, production remains well below its potential owing to the lack of modernization.

4.12. Despite its substantial agricultural resources, the DRC remains a net importer of food products. Imports include cereals, sugar, meat, fisheries products and dairy products. The DRC spends around USD 3 billion annually on food imports, mobilizing a significant share of its foreign exchange reserves in a constrained macroeconomic environment.⁸ This heavy dependence on food imports makes the country particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices and shocks affecting global markets. It also limits the country's ability to mobilize resources to develop its domestic agricultural sector.

⁶ African Development Bank, *Rapport d'évaluation de projet 2024, RDC*, viewed at: <https://www.afdb.org/fr/documents/rdc-projet-dappui-au-developpement-des-chaines-de-valeurs-en-soutien-au-programme-de-transformation-de-lagriculture-padcv-pta-rapport-devaluation-de-projet> (13/03/2026).

⁷ African Development Bank, *Rapport d'évaluation de projet 2024, RDC*, viewed at: <https://www.afdb.org/fr/documents/rdc-projet-dappui-au-developpement-des-chaines-de-valeurs-en-soutien-au-programme-de-transformation-de-lagriculture-padcv-pta-rapport-devaluation-de-projet> (13/03/2026).

⁸ Africa24, *RD Congo : 3 milliards USD par an pour les importations d'aliments*, viewed at: <https://africa24tv.com/rd-congo-3-milliards-usd-par-an-pour-les-importations-daliments/> (13/04/2026).

Chart 4.1 Contribution of agriculture to GDP, 2016-2024

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations based on Central Bank of the Congo data, *Rapports Annuels* 2022, 2023 and 2024, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels-0> (15/04/2026)

Table 4.1 Fertilizer consumption, 2016-2022

(kg per hectare of arable land)

Year	DRC	Angola	Bangladesh	Cambodia	Cameroon	Kenya	Rwanda	Uganda	Zambia
2016	1.4	6.6	288.3	21.3	10.9	43.2	8.8	1.9	65.7
2017	1.6	9.8	302.5	39.8	13.0	59.5	17.4	2.1	72.1
2018	1.9	7.1	318.5	42.2	13.4	42.4	14.9	3.3	52.5
2019	2.4	6.7	320.4	42.8	13.4	50.1	25.0	3.4	67.6
2020	2.1	7.8	325.4	44.2	13.4	59.9	29.1	2.4	79.8
2021	2.0	5.6	395.5	49.6	13.4	54.6	23.9	2.4	63.9
2022	2.0	13.3	390.9	32.9	14.6	35.1	29.1	2.6	64.6

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on World Bank data.

4.1.2 Production and trade

4.13. During the review period, agricultural production in the DRC recorded a slight increase. Between 2016 and 2023, agricultural output in terms of volume increased by 17% (Table 4.2). In 2023, agricultural production was dominated by cassava, which accounted for 69.5% of total agricultural output, followed by plantains, sugar cane and maize (Table 4.3).

Table 4.2 Agricultural production, 2016-2023

Year	Production (millions of tonnes)	Annual growth rate (%)
2016	55.5	..
2017	56.7	2.0
2018	58.1	2.6
2019	59.7	2.7
2020	63.1	5.8
2021	63.1	-0.1
2022	64.4	2.1

Year	Production (millions of tonnes)	Annual growth rate (%)
2023	65.0	1.0

.. Not available.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on FAO data.

Table 4.3 Agricultural production in the DRC, 2023

Product	(percentage share)
Cassava	69.5
Plantains	7.5
Sugar cane	3.7
Maize	3.6
Oil palm fruits	3.4
Rice	2.8
Edible roots and tubers with high starch or inulin content	1.4
Bananas	1.3

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on FAO data.

4.14. Between 2016 and 2023, exports of agricultural products from the DRC recorded steady growth. Their value increased from USD 78 million in 2016 to USD 187 million in 2023, representing an increase of approximately 140% over the period (Chart 4.2). In volume terms, these exports also increased between 2016 and 2023 (Chart 4.3).

4.15. In 2023, the structure of agricultural exports from the DRC was highly concentrated around coffee and cocoa, which together accounted for more than 77% of such exports (Table 4.4). Cocoa, produced mainly in the provinces of Équateur and Bas-Uélé, accounted for approximately 60% of agricultural exports in 2023, while Arabica coffee, cultivated mainly in the Kivu regions, and Robusta coffee, produced in the north-west, represented around 18% of total exports. Other exported products included wheat bran, rubber, pyrethrum, raw organic materials, and food preparations based on flour, meal or malt extract. This composition highlights the country's strong dependence on a limited number of cash crops and underscores the need for greater diversification of agricultural exports.

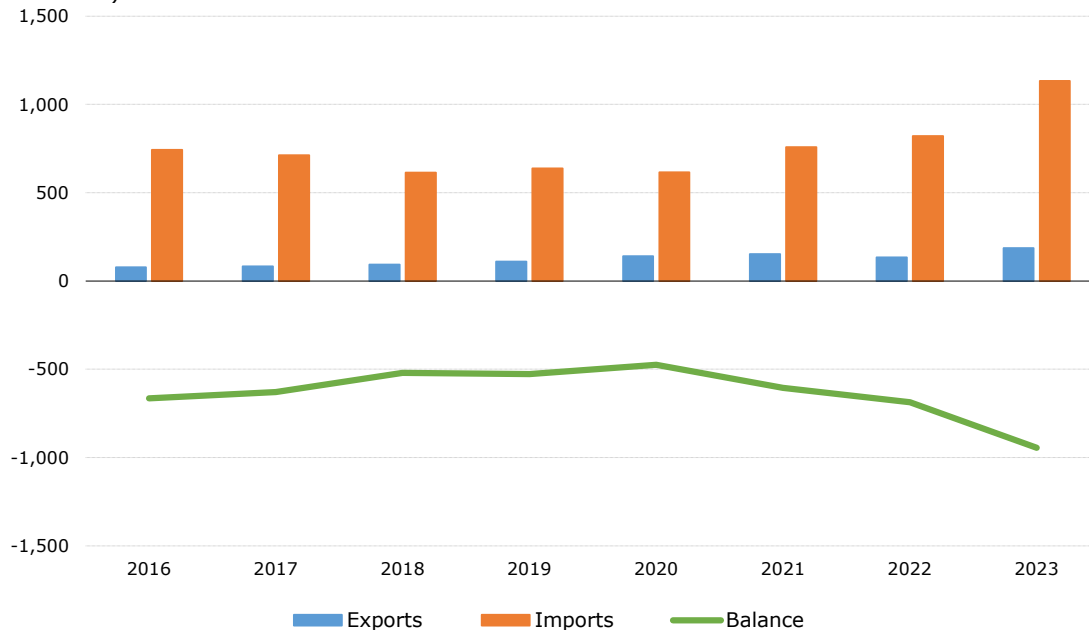
4.16. Imports of agricultural products into the DRC increased significantly between 2016 and 2023. In 2023, they reached an estimated value of more than USD 1.1 billion, compared with approximately USD 743 million in 2016 (Chart 4.2). In volume terms, agricultural imports almost doubled between 2016 and 2023, rising from 1.2 billion tonnes in 2016 to 2.2 billion tonnes in 2023 (Chart 4.3). In terms of composition, imports were dominated by food products, in particular rice, maize, sugar, dairy products and vegetable oils, reflecting the population's growing food requirements (Table 4.5). The increase in the value of imports was mainly attributable to higher international prices for basic foodstuffs and the country's heavy reliance on these staple products. For example, the international price for rice (Thai 5% broken) increased from USD 0.40/kg in 2016 to USD 0.55/kg in 2023, while the price of sugar rose from USD 0.40 to USD 0.52/kg over the same period. In March 2026, the price of Thai 5% rice stood at USD 0.38/kg and the price of sugar at USD 0.33/kg, representing a decline compared with 2023.⁹

4.17. Consequently, the agricultural trade balance of the DRC remains structurally in deficit, reflecting the country's heavy reliance on imports of food products. This agricultural trade deficit has increased over time, underscoring the need for policies aimed at revitalizing and modernizing Congolese agriculture in order to reduce imports, diversify exports and strengthen the country's food security.

⁹ World Bank, *Price of raw materials*, viewed at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/commodity-markets> (05/03/2026).

Chart 4.2 Exports and imports of agricultural products, by value

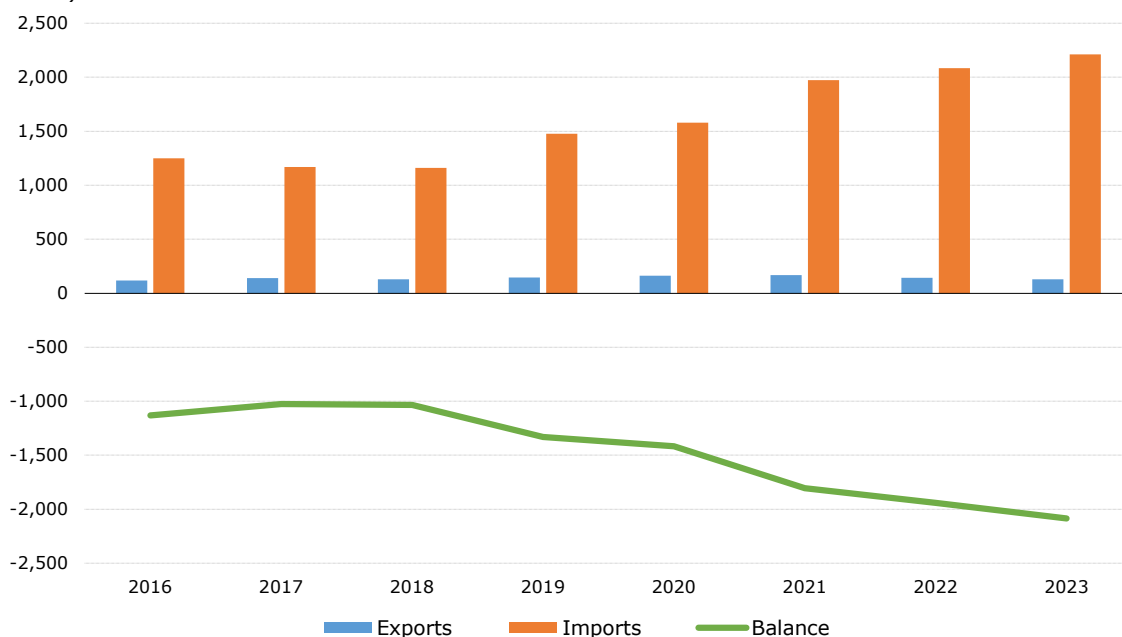
(USD million)



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data from the Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/2026).

Chart 4.3 Exports and imports of agricultural products, by volume

(Tonnes)



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAOSTAT, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/TCL> (14/01/2026).

Table 4.4 Structure of DRC agricultural exports, 2023

Ranking	Product	Value (USD million)	Share (%)
1	Cocoa beans	101.2	59.9
2	Coffee, green	29.9	17.7
3	Wheat bran	14.6	8.7
4	Natural rubber in other forms	6.8	4.0
5	Pyrethrum (dried flowers)	5.1	3.0
6	Raw organic materials	3.7	2.2
7	Food preparations based on flour, meal or malt extract	1.9	1.1

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on FAO data.

Table 4.5 Top 20 agricultural products imported by the DRC, 2023

Ranking	Product	Value (USD million)	Share (%)
1	Raw cane or beet sugar (centrifugal only)	158.0	8.8
2	Cornflour	133.3	7.5
3	Food preparations	132.2	7.4
4	Paddy rice (milled rice equivalent)	109.3	6.1
5	Wheat	105.2	5.9
6	Milled rice	93.3	5.2
7	Pastrycooks' products	78.9	4.4
8	Cigarettes	66.6	3.7
9	Sugar confectionery	53.1	3.0
10	Food preparations based on flour, meal or malt extract	51.9	2.9
11	Buttermilk powder	43.8	2.5
12	Chicken meat, fresh or chilled	42.5	2.4
13	Edible offal and livers of chickens and guinea fowls, fresh, chilled or frozen	39.7	2.2
14	Malt, whether or not roasted	39.0	2.2
15	Flour of wheat or of meslin	37.5	2.1
16	Whole milk powder	36.9	2.1
17	Wine	30.9	1.7
18	Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of less than 80% vol.; spirits, liqueurs and other spirituous beverages	29.3	1.6
19	Fruit juices	28.8	1.6
20	Edible offal of swine; fresh, chilled or frozen	27.3	1.5

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on FAO data.

4.1.3 Agricultural policy

4.18. Agricultural policy in the DRC continues to be governed by the Law of 24 December 2011 on fundamental principles relating to agriculture. The Law aims to promote public and private investment and the growth of agricultural production in order to ensure food security and rural development. It seeks to encourage the sustainable development of land resources, the modernization of agriculture, the local processing of products and the promotion of agricultural exports.¹⁰ Since the latest TPR, the Agriculture Law of the DRC has not undergone any amendments.

4.19. Agricultural land is allocated and developed in accordance with the Law. Applicants must be Congolese (natural persons or legal entities majority-owned by nationals), have a domicile or registered office in the DRC, be registered in the commercial register where applicable, demonstrate sufficient financial capacity and provide an environmental and social impact assessment.

4.20. The Agriculture Law guarantees equitable access to agricultural land and recognizes the customary land rights of local communities. It establishes a provincial agricultural land registry and strictly regulates the granting of concessions, which are primarily reserved for nationals or companies majority-owned by Congolese nationals, subject to sufficient financial capacity and an environmental and social impact assessment. Under the Land Code, foreign nationals may exploit

¹⁰ Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, *Agriculture Legislation of the DRC*, viewed at: <https://agriculture.gouv.cd/legislation.php> (05/03/2026).

agricultural land only through a concession right or an emphyteutic lease, i.e. a long-term lease for a term of up to 25 years, which may be renewed.

4.21. Three types of agricultural holdings are recognized by the Agriculture Law: family holdings, family-type holdings and industrial holdings. Concessions may be transferred or passed on, subject to certain conditions. The concession holder must also be Congolese (a natural person or a legal person majority-owned by nationals), have a domicile or registered office in the DRC, be registered in the commercial register where applicable, demonstrate sufficient financial capacity and provide an environmental and social impact assessment. The Law also governs rural leases and provides for a mandatory conciliation procedure before advisory councils prior to any judicial proceedings. In addition, it establishes a national agricultural risk and disaster monitoring system.

4.22. The National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA), launched in 2013, constitutes the strategic reference framework for the development of the agricultural and rural sectors. It seeks to mobilize and channel domestic and external financing in order to sustainably transform agriculture into a driver of economic growth, poverty reduction and improved food security. The initial cost of implementing the PNIA was estimated at approximately USD 5.7 billion over eight years.

4.23. The National Strategic Development Plan (PNSD) provides for the development of job-creating value chains, with an agricultural growth target of 2% to 6% by 2030. It is based on integrated actions: the promotion of agricultural systems that are resilient to the effects of climate change, the identification of productive potential, enhanced support for producers, improved infrastructure and production techniques, reduced food insecurity, facilitated access to land and finance, and improved sector governance.

4.24. In addition, agricultural policy is supported by several programmes complementing the PNIA. The Sustainable Agriculture Policy (PAD), adopted in 2022, promotes productive, inclusive and environmentally friendly agriculture.¹¹ As part of this approach, the second-generation National Rice Development Strategy (SNDR II), adopted in 2023, aims to increase domestic rice production, reduce dependence on imports and strengthen the competitiveness of the rice sector. It is complemented by the 2016 National Rice Seed Development Strategy (SNSDR), which aims to improve the availability, quality and accessibility of certified seed in order to sustainably support increased productivity and agricultural yields in the rice sector.

4.25. The Ministry of Agriculture plays a central role in defining strategic orientations aimed at increasing agricultural production, improving product competitiveness and promoting the country's integration into regional and international trade. It is responsible, in particular, for crop planning, the promotion of priority sectors and support for producers. From an international trade perspective, the Ministry works to enhance the value of exportable agricultural products and ensure compliance with the quality standards required by foreign markets.

4.1.4 Domestic support

4.26. The Agriculture Law provides benefits and incentives through a set of fiscal and customs-related measures covering agricultural activities, training and research, the financing and marketing of products, and environmental protection. It is complemented by agricultural programmes aimed at strengthening and supporting the development of the sector. No agricultural support measures have been notified to the WTO.

4.27. The National Agricultural Development Programme (PNDA), which has a total estimated budget of USD 300 million and covers the period 2022-2025, seeks primarily to contribute to food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and the promotion of sustainable economic growth.¹²

4.28. The AVENIR (Empowerment through the promotion of nutrition-sensitive, inclusive and climate-resilient agricultural and rural entrepreneurship) project forms part of the national agricultural development strategy spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture. Implemented with the

¹¹ FAO, viewed at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cng214543.pdf> (30/06/2026).

¹² Ministry of Agriculture, viewed at: [https://agriculture.gouv.cd/details.php?\\$n=MYNKMdRycPZAW4QZ1Xmqgrj2rP5MusxJX3v0yiQ2ittpxxf450vmls xmNgjBevNrx0yKQgBP00YPumkhh3exux8yehNgicC260LJCrtqbLLidINIF9PKpe0qzWvka8d&target=projet](https://agriculture.gouv.cd/details.php?$n=MYNKMdRycPZAW4QZ1Xmqgrj2rP5MusxJX3v0yiQ2ittpxxf450vmls xmNgjBevNrx0yKQgBP00YPumkhh3exux8yehNgicC260LJCrtqbLLidINIF9PKpe0qzWvka8d&target=projet) (20/04/2026).

support of technical and financial partners, the AVENIR project aims to strengthen agricultural and rural entrepreneurship and improve nutrition security. The project will run for a period of seven years, from 2023 to 2030. It is co-financed by the Congolese Government, which is contributing USD 213.5 million.¹³

4.1.5 Measures directly affecting imports and exports

4.29. In 2026, the simple average applied tariff on agricultural products was 11.5%, with rates ranging from 5% to 20%. This was slightly higher than the overall simple average applied by the DRC (11.3%) and the simple average for non-agricultural products (11.2%). However, significant differences exist across subsectors: beverages and tobacco products are subject to the highest average tariff rate (18.6%), followed by coffee, tea, cocoa and spices (13.1%) and animal products (12.5%), while cotton, silk and wool (5%), as well as other agricultural products (7.7%), are accorded relatively lower tariff protection (Section 3.1.3). Furthermore, the DRC does not grant export subsidies and has submitted no notifications to the WTO concerning export subsidies.

4.30. With regard to bound tariffs, commitments are generally high, with ceilings reaching 100% for most categories and bound tariffs ranging from 15% to 100% for agriculture as a whole.

4.31. Taxes and levies of 1% are imposed on coffee exports.

4.1.6 Trade policy by major product category

4.1.6.1 Fishing and aquaculture

4.32. The fisheries sector in the DRC plays an important role in food security, employment, and the livelihoods of rural communities. In 2020, according to the authorities, fishing accounted for 12% of agricultural GDP. According to government estimates, the DRC has between 200,000 and 400,000 small-scale fishers across all bodies of water, comprising both professional fishers and occasional or non-professional fishers.

4.33. Industrial sea fishing remains underdeveloped and poorly regulated. For over a decade, two Chinese companies operating in Boma and Banana have been fishing in territorial waters using around five trawlers, each about 20 metres long, without their catches being effectively monitored by the National Fisheries Promotion and Development Service (SENADEP). Overall, the country has only three companies operating along the Atlantic coast, which use trawlers fitted with semi-industrial nets limited to depths of 300 metres, during a main fishing season running from October to June. The targeted species are mainly swordfish and croakers, in a context characterized by the absence of formal management measures to regulate this activity.¹⁴

4.34. The fisheries sector relies mainly on small-scale fishing carried out in major river basins (the Congo River and its tributaries), lakes (Tanganyika, Kivu, Edward, Albert, and Mai-Ndombe), and Atlantic coastal areas. The DRC's fisheries potential is estimated at over 700,000 tonnes of production per year, but the country's current annual production remains low, at around 240,000 tonnes, or approximately 30% of its potential. This production comes entirely from small-scale fishers, who use canoes and beach seines, and corresponds to an average annual consumption of 5.5 kg of fish per capita.¹⁵

4.35. Aquaculture is based mainly on family-based, subsistence fish farming. Production is dominated by the farming of tilapia and catfish, despite the potential for producing other species. Domestic production remains insufficient to meet domestic demand, resulting in a heavy reliance on imports of fishery products. Major constraints include poor landing and storage infrastructure, limited access to inputs and finance, and the prevalence of informal marketing channels.¹⁶

¹³ Ministry of Agriculture, viewed at: [https://agriculture.gouv.cd/details.php?\\$n=d7QI7NaMx2TAmyFgdrI0j7J45uVtbeOSAlY%2FSEItLZkENMeIi3vrUPyXx%2B%2Bvdz%2F5gIJmf00c8X6%2B%2B87WSCO9IsMmcsFt%2FMc4zWQtaiVeTFfJfYoDAFHFFtituibJcABU&ta rget=projet](https://agriculture.gouv.cd/details.php?$n=d7QI7NaMx2TAmyFgdrI0j7J45uVtbeOSAlY%2FSEItLZkENMeIi3vrUPyXx%2B%2Bvdz%2F5gIJmf00c8X6%2B%2B87WSCO9IsMmcsFt%2FMc4zWQtaiVeTFfJfYoDAFHFFtituibJcABU&ta rget=projet) (20/04/2026).

¹⁴ FAO, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/fishery/fr/facp/cod> (20/04/2026).

¹⁵ ANAPI, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article63&lang=fr> (08/01/2026).

¹⁶ ANAPI, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article63&lang=fr> (08/01/2026).

4.36. In addition, the DRC faces profound weaknesses in the governance of fishing and aquaculture, namely the absence of regulatory frameworks and operational development programmes, coupled with limited knowledge of fishery resources. The sector also suffers from a lack of planning and of monitoring, control, and surveillance mechanisms, poorly structured research, and the absence of an incentive framework for private investment and effective data collection and sharing systems. Added to this are major operational constraints, notably red tape; excessive tax burdens; unregulated fishing and the overexploitation of resources; the weak organization of fishers; difficulties in accessing inputs, high-quality fry, markets, and marketing infrastructure; and insufficient consideration of the needs of grassroots stakeholders.¹⁷

4.37. The National Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (ONPA) was established in June 2023 as a public body responsible for promoting, regulating, and fostering the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. To date, the Office has yet to commence its activities and is therefore not yet fully operational.

4.38. The technical assistance project for the establishment of the fisheries and aquaculture value chain (PICAGEL), which ran from July 2019 to June 2021, sought to provide technical assistance to reduce post-harvest losses, promote aquaculture, and strengthen community-based co-management and monitoring of spawning grounds. The project targeted approximately 5,000 beneficiary households in the Bukavu-Uvira-Fizi-Kalemie corridor, including 1,700 fishers, 1,800 fish farmers and 1,000 vulnerable families, through the development of action plans, capacity building for industry stakeholders, the establishment of fish farming infrastructure and equipment, the facilitation of market access, and the conduct of hydrobiological, nutritional, and market studies to support the sustainable and integrated management of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.¹⁸

4.39. The DRC ratified the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on 11 July 2025.¹⁹

4.40. The fisheries sector was subject to an average duty of 12.4% in 2025. The rates range from 5% to 20% (Section 3.1.3).

4.41. To date, the DRC has not concluded any fisheries agreements with other countries.

4.1.6.2 Livestock

4.42. The livestock farming potential of the DRC is very significant, with around 125 million hectares of pasture capable of supporting up to 40 million head of cattle and generating a substantial meat yield, even under extensive farming systems. The national livestock population is also diverse, comprising around 11% cattle, 14% sheep, 15% pigs, and 60% goats, the last of which are found in all provinces thanks to their resistance to trypanosomiasis. However, despite these assets, production remains low and predominantly small-scale, relying on traditional, low-productivity systems and falling far short of national requirements.²⁰ During the 2021 agricultural season, a livestock population of 16 million ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats) and 25 million pigs and poultry was recorded.

4.43. Furthermore, over 95% of ruminant livestock farming relies on extensive pastoral systems, whether sedentary or transhumant, which face significant precarity due to the reduction in pastureland and access to water. This situation leads to an escalation of conflicts over land use, increased pressure on available resources, and persistent insecurity for livestock farmers and their animals, exacerbated by the presence of armed groups.

4.44. The livestock sector faces a number of challenges and weaknesses. According to the authorities, these include a heavy reliance on imports of breeding stock and semen, the high cost of inputs, the insufficient number and poor distribution of feed mills, a lack of reliable statistical data,

¹⁷ FAO, Profile of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the DRC, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/fishery/fr/facp/cod> (19/03/2026).

¹⁸ FAO, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/programmes-et-projets/nos-projets/zh/> (09/01/2026).

¹⁹ WTO, *La République démocratique du Congo accepte officiellement l'Accord de l'OMC sur les subventions à la pêche et l'Accord sur la facilitation des échanges*, viewed at: https://www.wto.org/french/news_f/news25_f/fish_11jul25_f.htm (12/01/2026).

²⁰ ANAPI, viewed at: <https://www.investindrc.cd/fr/spip.php?article63&lang=fr> (06/03/2026).

the absence of effective support mechanisms for livestock farmers in the event of disasters, and very limited access to financial services within the livestock sector. Added to these constraints are inadequate infrastructure, limited access to veterinary services, and a low level of investment in modern livestock farming techniques.

4.45. Between 2016 and 2024, livestock farming and animal production in the DRC saw modest growth. Animal production rose from 526,058 tonnes in 2016 to 575,958 tonnes in 2024 (Chart 4.4). According to the authorities, this production has remained largely small-scale and traditional.

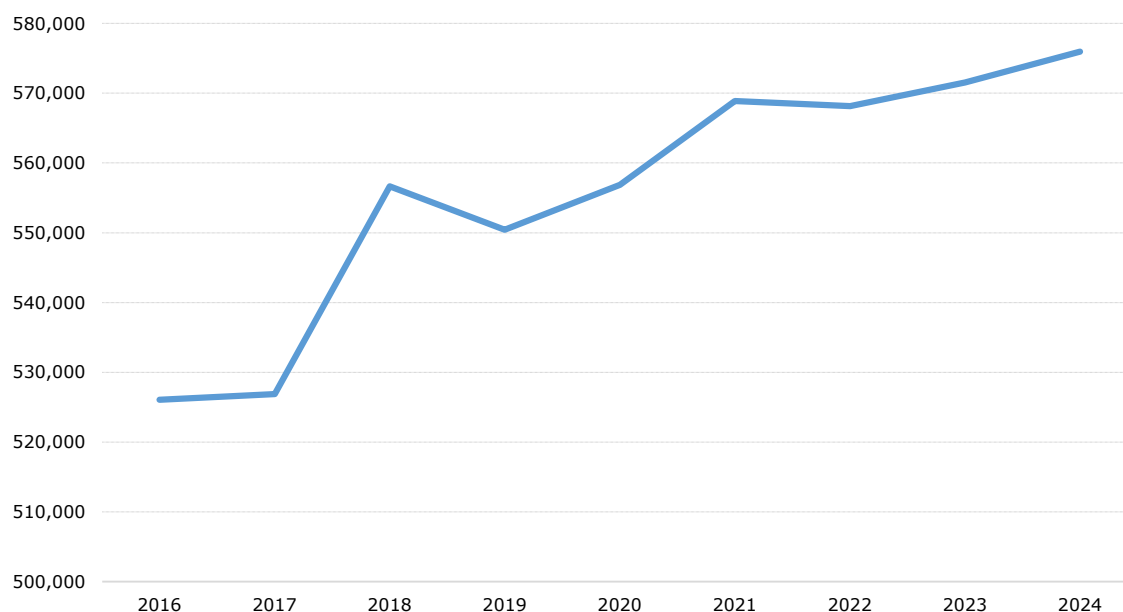
4.46. In 2024, animal production was largely dominated by hen's eggs in shell, which accounted for nearly half the total (48%). Game meat ranked second, followed by other meat of mammals (Table 4.6). By-products and complementary products, such as raw milk of cattle, chicken meat, offal, animal fats, and skins and hides, account for smaller but essential shares of the overall value of animal production. Overall, the structure of livestock farming in 2024 appears diversified, with a strong predominance of poultry products and a significant contribution from the various sectors producing meat and animal by-products.

4.47. However, high production costs, combined with low productivity and limited local production, reduce the competitiveness of domestic livestock products and lead to a heavy reliance on imports of animal products.

4.48. The simple average tariff rate in the livestock sector stood at 12.5% in 2026, with tariffs ranging from 5% to 20% (Section 3.1.3).

Chart 4.4 Animal production, 2016-2024

(Tonnes)



Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAOSTAT, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QCL> (14/01/2026).

Table 4.6 Animal production, 2024

Ranking	Product	Value (tonnes)	Share (%)
1	Hen's eggs in shell, fresh	277,000	48.09
2	Game meat, fresh, chilled or frozen	90,695.34	15.75
3	Other meat of mammals, fresh or chilled	78,858.28	13.69
4	Bone-in beef, fresh or chilled	27,812.36	4.83
5	Bone-in pork, fresh or chilled	27,760.29	4.82
6	Goat meat, fresh or chilled	18,299.58	3.18
7	Raw milk of cattle	10,373.77	1.8

8	Chicken meat, fresh or chilled	10,000	1.74
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Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on FAO data.

4.1.6.3 Forestry

4.49. In the DRC, forests cover around 67% of the national territory, amounting to more than 170 million hectares. They account for nearly 60% of the forests in the Congo Basin, making the DRC the largest tropical forest country in Africa and the second largest in the world.²¹ This vast forest cover, spread across several provinces, forms a vital ecological continuum that promotes the movement of species and the stability of major natural balances. Congolese forests are also home to more than 300 species of timber and represent a major component of global biodiversity.

4.50. From an environmental perspective, Congolese forests store more than 30 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to around three years' worth of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the Congo Basin as a whole absorbs nearly 1.5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.²² Congolese forests are home to exceptional biodiversity, including iconic species such as the okapi, the bonobo, and the lowland gorilla. They play a crucial role in regulating the climate, protecting soils, and maintaining hydrological cycles, thereby contributing to both regional and global ecological stability. To provide a framework for this sector, the Government has established a national carbon market regulatory authority, along with an environmental intervention fund (FIPE), in accordance with the law on environmental protection.

4.51. The DRC nevertheless has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world, generally ranking just behind Brazil. In 2024, the country reached a record high, with around 590,000 hectares of primary forest lost according to satellite data from Global Forest Watch, confirming an upward trend observed over several years. In total, the loss of forest cover, including primary and secondary forests, is estimated at around 1.38 million hectares for the year. This trend is mainly driven by structural factors such as subsistence farming (particularly slash-and-burn agriculture), heavy reliance on charcoal due to limited access to electricity, illegal logging, and the expansion of artisanal mining, compounded by persistent insecurity in the east of the country, which encourages informal activities and complicates territorial control.²³

4.52. Illegal logging in the DRC is largely fuelled by strong international demand. According to an ENACT investigation, valuable timber species such as redwood and whitewood are being illegally harvested in protected areas and nature reserves, despite the existence of legal frameworks designed to regulate logging. This activity is made possible by organized criminal networks that exploit governance failures, local corruption, and weak controls in forest areas and at borders.²⁴

4.53. The consequences of this illicit trade are manifold, ranging from accelerated deforestation in the Congo Basin to a loss of tax revenue for the DRC, in addition to global climate impacts. To address this, experts recommend strengthening traceability mechanisms, in particular through timber DNA databases, alongside increased international cooperation among producer, transit, and consumer countries.²⁵

4.54. According to the authorities, the forestry sector accounts for around 4% to 6% of national GDP and generates more than 500,000 direct and indirect jobs. It also plays a vital role in the livelihoods of more than 40 million Congolese people, through the production of timber, charcoal,

²¹ Ministry of the Environment, National Forestry Policy, 2025-2035, viewed at: <https://medd.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Politique-Forestiere-Nationale-Finale-Mise-en-forme-finale.pdf> (18/06/2026).

²² United Nations Environment Programme, viewed at: <https://www.unep.org/fr/actualites-et-recits/recit/des-ecosystemes-essentiels-les-tourbieres-du-bassin-du-congo%23:~:text=La%20for%C3%AAt%20mar%C3%A9e%20tourbeuse%20du%20bassin%20du,terres%20du%20Programme%20des%20Nations%20Unies%20> (21/04/2026).

²³ Mongabay, *En 2024, la RDC a battu un record de déforestation, selon les données satellites*, viewed at: <https://fr.mongabay.com/2025/12/en-2024-la-rdc-a-battu-un-record-de-deforestation-selon-les-donnees-satellites/> (13/04/2026).

²⁴ ENACT, viewed at: [Tracing illegal timber from the DRC's forests to Asian markets | ENACT Africa](#) (21/04/2026).

²⁵ ENACT, viewed at: [Tracing illegal timber from the DRC's forests to Asian markets | ENACT Africa](#) (21/04/2026).

and non-timber forest products such as honey, mushrooms, and medicinal plants. Small-scale production predominates, and local processing remains limited.

4.55. The law governing the forestry sector in the DRC has not undergone any major changes since the previous TPR. The Forestry Code of 29 August 2002 and its implementing regulations continue to form the basic legal framework for the sector.²⁶ Nevertheless, in April 2026, a new national forestry policy was technically approved by the National Forest Advisory Council (CCNF) and is expected to be submitted shortly to the Council of Ministers for adoption. This strategic document marks the launch of a process to revise and update the Forestry Code and its implementing regulations, incorporating current priorities and innovations in the forestry sector. Furthermore, in July 2022, the Government adopted a law on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous pygmy peoples. This law guarantees easy access to justice and basic social services, recognizes the practices, customs, and traditional medicine of pygmies when these do not contravene the law, and ensures the full enjoyment of the land and resources located within their living environments.²⁷

4.56. Persistent insecurity in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu is fuelling the growth of illegal small-scale timber harvesting. Some of this timber is supplied to markets in neighbouring countries, notably Rwanda and Uganda. In addition, difficulties in collecting and transmitting information to the Central Government severely limit the availability of reliable data on this sector. This situation poses a major challenge for the monitoring, regulation, and governance of the sector in question.

4.57. Companies involved in timber harvesting are subject to a number of fees and taxes, including an area-based fee applied to forestry concessions, set at USD 0.5 per hectare, along with a tax on timber cutting permits amounting to USD 2.5 per hectare, and export duties linked to the issuance of a certificate of origin (USD 0.25/m³) and a phytosanitary certificate (USD 0.50/m³). Additionally, there is a reforestation levy equivalent to 4% of the ex-works (EWK) value per cubic metre of raw timber (exported logs) and 2% of the EWK value for species to be promoted, and a deforestation levy of USD 1,825 per hectare. Operators must also pay a felling tax equivalent to 1.25% of the EWK value of the relevant species.²⁸ Moreover, the costs associated with inspections carried out by the Congolese Control Office amount, for exports, to 0.85% of the f.o.b. value for sawn timber and veneer and to 1.2% of the f.o.b. value for logs, while for domestic sales from sawmills, these costs represent approximately 1% of the pre-tax market value.

4.58. According to the authorities, the Congolese forestry sector, despite its potential, faces numerous challenges: weak governance and corruption in the allocation of concessions; limited local processing capacity, with only 15 sawmills and one plywood factory; illegal logging and informal trade, accounting for nearly 60% of the volume harvested; limited production of sawn timber for export; and the virtual absence of plywood and veneers. Formal production has been declining since 2016 and is expected to stagnate until 2026, while the DRC accounts for only a marginal share (around 0.1%) of global exports. Added to this are human pressures (shifting cultivation, charcoal production, urbanization), insufficient funding and monitoring of forestry data, and low levels of participation by local and indigenous communities.

4.59. The authorities also noted that logging in the DRC remains heavily concentrated on a limited number of tree species: just 20 of the 91 commercially valuable species account for 98% of production over the past four years. Three species alone (*wengé*, *afrosciosia* and *sapele*) account for around 40% of production, while around 10 species make up nearly 80%, which explains the heavy pressure on a few key resources. The main logging areas are predominantly located near the Congo River and its major tributaries, facilitating access to, and the transport of, timber.

²⁶ Forestry Code of the DRC, Law No. 011/2002 of 29 August 2002, viewed at: https://medd.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Textes%20legaux%20-%20Forets/Lois/20020829_loi_011_code_forestier.pdf (16/03/2026).

²⁷ Law No. 22/030 of 15 July 2022 on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous pygmy peoples, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20Public/DH/Loi%2022.030%20du%2015%20juillet%202022.html> (16/03/2026).

²⁸ Ministry of the Environment of the DRC, viewed at: https://medd.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Textes%20legaux%20-%20Forets/Fiscalite/20100426_min_arrintermin_003_029_fixation_taxes_redevances_matiere_forestiere.pdf (21/01/2026).

4.60. The authorities have also stated that formal roundwood production has never exceeded 400,000 m³ per year over the past 15 years, with the bulk of this concentrated among a few major producers. The industrial logging licences issued allow the harvesting of volumes far in excess of actual production, which explains the discrepancy between quotas and actual harvesting. At the same time, nearly 90% of logging remains informal, small-scale or illegal, and is increasing sharply to meet domestic and regional demand. Legislation requires that 70% of logs be processed locally, but the country's industrial capacity, limited to around 15 sawmills and one plywood factory, remains insufficient to satisfy an expanding domestic market.

4.61. Almost all forestry concessions in the DRC (nearly 95% of the administrative area) are owned by foreign companies, while the number of domestic operators is very limited, with only two groups exceeding 10,000 m³ per year. In 2019, the industrial sector comprised around 15 active companies. There is no trade in logs among industrial operators at the national level.

4.62. The forestry sector's contribution to GDP stood at 0.3% in 2024, compared with 0.7% in 2016 (Table 1.1).

4.63. In 2016, industrial timber production stood at 206,000 m³, concentrated in the hands of four major producers. In 2025, it was estimated at 156,652 m³, reflecting a decline in production over the period in question. By contrast, in 2016, small-scale production reached approximately 3.4 million m³, a volume far exceeding that of the industrial sector, and was mainly destined for local markets. The trends in industrial timber production between 2016 and 2025 are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Industrial timber production, 2016-2025

Year	Log production (m ³)
2016	206,000
2017	204,557.7
2018	246,599.1
2019	278,884.2
2020	286,436.6
2021	247,056.5
2022	340,456.6
2023	189,412.3
2024	189,287.6
2025	156,653

Source: Data provided by the DRC authorities.

4.64. Timber exports increased by 27% between 2016 and 2024 (Table 4.8). China and Europe are the main export markets. However, illegal timber exports account for nearly 90% of raw timber in the DRC.²⁹

Table 4.8 Timber exports, 2016-2024

Year	Log exports (m ³)
2016	131,986
2019	707,270
2020	131,986
2021	131,986
2022	202,656.2
2023	141,929.5
2024	167,970.8

Source: Data provided by the DRC authorities.

4.65. The development of the timber industry requires investment. According to the African Development Bank, investment requirements amount to EUR 300 million per million m³ of additional logs; for a target of 6.6 million m³, this would represent EUR 1.9 billion, not including the funding needed for transport and energy infrastructure. Companies' limited access to bank financing,

²⁹ Mongabay, *Le secteur forestier informel, pilier de la déforestation en RDC*, viewed at: <https://fr.mongabay.com/2025/04/le-secteur-forestier-informel-pilier-de-la-deforestation-en-rdc/#:~:text=Le%20secteur%20forestier%20informel%2C%20pilier%20de%20la,comp%C3%A9tence%20des%20provinces%2C%20dont%20l'administration%20s'av%C3%A8re%20lacunaire> (13/04/2026).

due to the political context, high country risks, the lack of organizational structure within companies, and the banking world's lack of understanding of the sector, makes the role of public authorities, banks, and development institutions essential.³⁰

4.66. The DRC is committed to the sustainable management of forests and natural resources, and above all to environmental protection. In this context, several national and international initiatives are being implemented to promote sustainable forest management. For example, the DRC participates in REDD+, an international mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while promoting sustainable management, conservation, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Under the REDD+ mechanism, the DRC has set itself the target of maintaining forest cover representing at least 63.5% of its territory by 2030.³¹ In September 2022, the DRC launched the Sustainable Forest Management Programme (PGDF), which aims to implement the forest pillar of the national REDD+ strategy to combat deforestation and forest degradation through the sustainable and value-added management of forest resources.³²

4.67. In June 2025, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund approved its first project in the DRC, mobilizing USD 5.8 million to promote community-led conservation while improving climate resilience in the province of Tanganyika.³³

4.68. Furthermore, the DRC has identified several areas where technical assistance is required, within the framework of the National REDD+ Strategy and the Sustainable Forest Management Programme, to support its reforms: strengthening institutional capacity through training for government officials and local stakeholders in sustainable forest management; developing monitoring and evaluation tools, including information systems on forest resources and carbon emissions; supporting participatory governance to involve local communities and civil society; and funding innovative pilot projects in the areas of conservation and reforestation.

4.69. In the medium term (2025-2030), the DRC plans to implement the National REDD+ Strategy and the Sustainable Forest Management Programme at the national level, to build the capacity of local communities, and to mobilize climate finance for conservation and sustainable management. In the long term (2030 and beyond), the aim is to meet global biodiversity conservation targets (such as the 30x30 target), integrate the forestry sector into the green economy, promote inclusive governance with greater participation by local communities, and contribute to the fight against climate change through carbon sequestration and emissions reduction. These reforms are expected to enhance the sector's contribution to national economic development by increasing tax revenue, strengthening formal operations, diversifying production, developing new value-added models, managing productive capital, reducing deforestation, boosting domestic and international markets, supporting the development of transport infrastructure, and facilitating long-term private financing and investment.

4.70. The Integrated Project to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (PIREDD) supports the transition from shifting, slash-and-burn cultivation to more sustainable production systems, with a focus on agroforestry, agricultural intensification, and climate-smart practices.³⁴ This approach combines the integration of trees into food crop systems, the development of community agroforestry plantations, and the adoption of resilient agricultural techniques in order to alleviate pressure on forests. It also aims to limit the expansion of agricultural land at the expense of forest ecosystems by improving yields on land already under cultivation. For example, the Kwilu PIREDD, funded by the Central African Forest Initiative, explicitly supports these measures by promoting carbon sequestration and reducing deforestation through the dissemination of sustainable agroforestry practices.

³⁰ African Development Bank, viewed at: https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/developpement_integre_et_durable_de_la_filiere_bois_dans_le_bassin_du_congo_-_regional_0.pdf (16/03/2026)

³¹ Ministry of the Environment, viewed at: <https://cnredd.medd.gouv.cd/vision> (29/06/2026).

³² Ministry of the Environment, viewed at: <https://medd.gouv.cd/programme-de-gestion-durable-des-forets-de-la-rdc-pgdf/> (29/06/2026).

³³ FAO, viewed at: <https://www.fao.org/africa/news-stories/news-detail/USD--5.8-million-approved-for-community-based-conservation-in-tanganyika-province/fr> (29/06/2026).

³⁴ PIREDD, viewed at: <https://fonaredd-rdc.org/elementor-8043/> (20/04/2026).

4.2 Mining and energy

4.71. According to the authorities, mining accounted for 19.7% of GDP in 2024, compared to 19.3% in 2016. It also accounted for around 42% of government revenue in 2024.³⁵

4.72. The mining sector is overseen by the Ministry of Mining, which is supported by a number of specialized agencies responsible for the country's mining policy. The hydrocarbon sector falls under the Ministry of Hydrocarbons, which supervises the prospecting, exploration, production, refining, storage, and distribution of petroleum products. The Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity oversees all activities related to electricity generation, transmission, and distribution, while ensuring the production, transport, and distribution of water, as well as water quality control. Despite the abundance of natural resources, the DRC remains heavily dependent on imports, particularly of refined petroleum products, owing to limited local processing capacity and a lack of infrastructure.

4.2.1 Petroleum and gas products

4.73. The DRC has vast petroleum and gas potential. The hydrocarbon sector is governed by Law No. 15/012 of 1 August 2015, which distinguishes between upstream activities (prospecting, exploration, and exploitation) and downstream activities (refining, transport and storage, and distribution).³⁶

4.74. According to the authorities, government policy in the hydrocarbon sector seeks to strengthen the role of the State and the national petroleum company (SONAHYDROC) in petroleum activities, including through participation in contracts and operations committees.³⁷ It is focused on restarting the pre-exploration of all sedimentary basins, the development of gas resources (Lake Kivu gas and flare gas), basin promotion, compliance with environmental standards, and capacity-building for national experts.

4.75. The Law on the general hydrocarbons regime, or the Hydrocarbons Code, establishes the legal and institutional framework applicable to all activities in the hydrocarbon sector. The Hydrocarbons Code is supplemented by Decree No. 25/14 of 1 April 2025 on hydrocarbons regulations. The Code defines, *inter alia*, the legal and tax regime for the prospecting, exploration, exploitation, transport, marketing, refining, and processing of hydrocarbons, on the one hand, and for activities relating to the supply, transport, storage, distribution, and marketing of petroleum products, on the other hand, as well as relevant environmental protection rules.

4.76. The main means of granting hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation rights is a production-sharing contract or block service contract awarded through a tendering procedure. The sharing contract provides for hydrocarbon production to be split between the State and the company or group of companies in which the national company holds shares. It is concluded following a tendering procedure between the State, represented by the national hydrocarbons company, and one or more private partners, constituting the contractor. The sharing contract covers two distinct phases: exploration, the aim of which is to confirm the commercial nature of a discovery, and exploitation, which consists of development and production. The mechanism is based on the recovery of the costs incurred by the investor through a share of production (cost oil), while the remaining production (profit oil) is shared between the State and the contractor in accordance with the arrangements defined in the contract. This model makes it possible to attract investment while maintaining public control of resources.³⁸

4.77. The Law establishes direct state ownership through the national hydrocarbons company, which is required to be involved in upstream projects. This ownership share is set at a 20% minimum

³⁵ African Development Bank. Information viewed at: <https://www.afdb.org/fr/pays-afrique-centrale/republique-democratique-du-congo> (20/04/2026).

³⁶ DRC, Law No. 15/012 of 1 August 2015 on the general hydrocarbons regime, viewed at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cng154970.pdf> (17/03/2026).

³⁷ An operations committee is a joint body, formed of the Congolese State and contracting companies (petroleum operators), that is responsible for examining the direction and programming of petroleum works and monitoring progress.

³⁸ 2015 Law on the general hydrocarbons regime, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/Code%20Minier/Loi.15.012.01.08.2015.html> (20/04/2026).

and cannot be transferred. The private partner assumes the financial risks associated with exploration, which limits public budget exposure in the event of failure. If there is a commercial discovery, development costs may be reimbursed through the national company's share of production, within certain limits. The purpose of this mechanism is to ensure that the State has access to revenue and technical information, while benefiting from the knowledge and financial capacity of private operators.³⁹

4.78. In refining, supply, transport, storage, and distribution, the sectoral policy is aimed at modernizing and renovating infrastructure, revitalizing the supply system, and developing new refineries with modern technologies to replace SOCIR. It also covers the expansion of petroleum activities to disadvantaged areas, the promotion of independent operators, control of demand, uniform pricing within the national territory, the strengthening of the legal framework, particularly for liquefied petroleum gas, and the development of domestic expertise.

4.79. The DRC has three large sedimentary basins (the Coastal Basin, the Central Basin, and the East African Rift) where production is marginal. The country's petroleum and gas potential remains largely underexploited, particularly in the Central Basin and the East African Rift. Lake Kivu presents a major strategic challenge owing to its large, unexploited methane reserves on the Congolese side. The Coastal Basin is currently the only production basin; it is focused on offshore and onshore activities and has significant proven reserves of hydrocarbons, associated gas, and tar sands. However, production remains low and in decline.

4.80. The DRC has significant petroleum and gas potential spread across several basins. In the Coastal Basin, offshore reserves are estimated at 80 million proven barrels, 46.1 million probable barrels and 88.6 million possible barrels, while onshore concessions total approximately 20 million proven barrels. The ZERE King & King Ltd block alone has the potential for around 4 billion barrels. There are 30 billion m³ of associated gas reserves, spread across offshore and onshore deposits, in addition to the Mavuma tar sands, with a potential of up to 800 million tonnes. In addition, the vast, underexplored Central Basin, measuring 750,000 km², has significant potential in hydrocarbons and gas, as does the western branch of the East African Rift. Lake Kivu, in particular, is a strategic resource with approximately 50 billion Nm³ of exploitable methane. Despite promising signs and current production of around 20,000 barrels per day, much of this potential remains to be confirmed by in-depth exploration work.

4.81. The sector nevertheless faces chronic underexploration, a lack of investment, low domestic production, and an almost total reliance on imports. Refining, transport, storage, and distribution infrastructure are outdated, inadequate, and unevenly distributed, resulting in poor national coverage and the absence of strategic stocks.

4.82. According to the authorities, refining activity requires a contract to be signed between the Government and the refining company. The country only has one refinery, which is not currently operational owing to the obsolescence of its equipment and technology. Located on the Atlantic coast, it had an annual capacity of 750,000 barrels and has been converted into a petroleum depot, with a storage capacity of 182,000 m³. A project to build a sea-line between buoy 16 and Kinlau is currently under consideration.

4.83. A document issued by the Minister of Hydrocarbons or a permit issued by the Secretary-General for Hydrocarbons is a prerequisite for the import, storage, transport, and marketing of petroleum products, depending on the volumes of product handled. Authorization for transport and storage is issued by the Minister for volumes greater than 10 m³, while transport and storage permits are granted by the Secretary-General for Hydrocarbons for volumes below 10 m³. Import and marketing documents are valid throughout the national territory for a renewable period of 12 months. The applicant must submit a letter of request to the Minister of Hydrocarbons, with a copy to the Secretary-General for Hydrocarbons. This request must be accompanied by two copies of documents including a commitment to obtain and submit an insurance certificate, as well as the deed of ownership, the rental contract, or any other document certifying the availability of facilities

³⁹ 2015 Law on the general hydrocarbons regime, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/Code%20Minier/Loi.15.012.01.08.2015.html> (20/04/2026).

or means of storage. The applicant is also required to pay the administrative service tax and the costs of expertise provided for in the regulations in force.

4.84. The holder of an importation and marketing authorization for petroleum products is required to submit to the central government and provincial hydrocarbons divisions, on a monthly basis, statistics on the amounts of the various petroleum products imported and marketed. The holder is also required to apply the prices approved by the Minister responsible for the national economy and to maintain an operational stock sufficient to ensure the ongoing continuity of activities. At present, there are two categories of operators active in the DRC: 18 operators import petroleum products for their own use, while 228 operators are authorized to import and market these products for distribution on the market.

4.85. Annual administrative service taxes payable for the import and marketing of petroleum products are determined in accordance with the type of document held and the volumes handled. Regarding authorizations, the amount is set at USD 5,000 per year for Category A (100,001 m³ and over), USD 2,500 per year for Category B (from 50,001 m³ to 100 m³) and USD 1,500 per year for Category C (from 10,001 m³ to 50 m³). As for marketing permits, the annual administrative service tax is USD 500 for Category A (from 5,001 m³ to 10 m³) and USD 250 for Category B (from 1 m³ to 5 m³).

4.86. Supply activity is also contingent on a contract signed with the Government.⁴⁰ It consists of providing the country with petroleum products under the consignment regime in order to supply operators authorized to import, market, or use those products. There are three main supply routes (west, south, and east), whereas use is divided into four areas (west, north, south, and east), defined in accordance with a similar structure for the costs involved in determining suppliers' prices.

4.87. Storage infrastructure keeps pace with domestic consumption and is divided into two categories: large-capacity facilities integrated in the pump price structure (SOCIR (182,000 m³), SEP Congo (232,000 m³), LEREXCOM (52,000 m³), SPSA/COBIL (26,000 m³), KPS Logistics), and medium- or small-capacity facilities run by independent operators, mainly in the northern, southern, and eastern areas.

4.88. Large consumers, some of whom have their own storage infrastructure, are known to import for their own consumption. National annual consumption has risen sharply from about 1.15 million m³ in 2019 to over 3 million m³ today.

4.89. Pump prices are administered and are derived from the combination of the average commercial price at the border (PMFC), distribution costs, and taxation and parafiscal requirements, with ratios varying according to supply routes. In 2022, by the western route, the price of automotive gasoline consisted of 65% PMFC, 27% distribution costs, and 8% taxation and parafiscal requirements, whereas by the southern route, it was 72% PMFC, 13% distribution costs, and 15% taxation and parafiscal requirements, and by the eastern route, 76% PMFC, 13% distribution costs and 11% taxation and parafiscal requirements. The domestic market is dominated by four major private and public operators. The price structure applicable to petroleum products in April 2026 is shown in Table 4.9, which lists the prices used in the various parts of the country.

Table 4.9 Fuel price structure, as at 16 April 2026

Product type	Western route (USD/m ³)	Southern route (USD/m ³)		Eastern route (USD/m ³)		Northern consumer area (USD/m ³)
		Domestic fuels	Mining fuels	Domestic fuels	Mining fuels	
Gasoline	1,147.8	1,708.7	2,079.4	1,913	2,066	1,456.5
Diesel	1,145.7	1,941.3	2,427.9	2,434.8	3,100.7	1,497.8
Kerosene	1,130.4	1,532.6	2,097.6	2,173.9	-	1,317.4

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

⁴⁰ Supply activity consists of providing the DRC with petroleum products under the consignment regime with a view to making them available to holders of import and marketing authorizations for distribution, as well as to the holders of import authorizations for their own use.

4.90. Imports of refined petroleum products are subject to a customs duty of 10% of the average border price.

4.91. In 2023, overall revenue from the petroleum sector amounted to USD 234.3 million and was split into several main flows. The most significant were profits tax and the distributable margin from profit oil to the State as a public authority, followed by royalties paid to the State and the share of the profit oil accruing to the associated State (Table 4.10). Petroleum dividends, dividends from state-owned enterprises, and surface fees or passage fees are also important sources. Overall, this distribution shows that petroleum revenue is highly dependent on direct tax levies and production-sharing mechanisms.

Table 4.10 Petroleum revenue, 2023

Flow	Value (USD)
Profits tax (or special flat-rate tax)	79,986,382
Distributable margin (profit oil, State, public authority)	72,040,535
Petroleum royalties paid to the State	26,273,171
Share (profit oil, associated State)	20,296,177
Petroleum dividends	16,650,976
Dividends from state-owned enterprises	6,168,814
Surface fee/passage fee	5,859,109
Professional tax on remuneration and special tax on expatriate remuneration	2,252,488
Penalties paid to the Treasury	2,035,821
Penalties paid to the DGRAD	2,035,821
Compulsory social payments	600,000
Collection notice B	58,197
Signature bonus	43,185
Collection notice A	344
Grand total	234,301,020

Source: EITI (2023), *Rapport ITIE 2023 de la République démocratique du Congo*, viewed at: <https://eiti.org/fr/documents/rapport-itie-2023-de-la-republique-democratique-du-congo> (20/04/2026).

4.2.2 Mining products

4.92. Management of the mining sector is supervised by the Ministry of Mining, which is responsible for planning, granting permits, and regulatory oversight. The company Générale des Carrières et des Mines (Gécamines), a state mining company, plays a central role in investment and the joint management of projects. The sector is governed by the relevant legal framework, including the Mining Code, which was revised in 2018.

4.93. The mining sector in the DRC is rich and diversified, and based on the exploitation of strategic resources such as cobalt, copper, gold, diamonds, coltan, lithium and other minerals essential to the global economy. The DRC holds around 70% of the world's cobalt reserves and close to 8% of copper reserves, making the country a key player in the global supply of metal for clean technologies and batteries.⁴¹ The country is the world's leading producer of cobalt and a major producer of copper and gold. The mining industry is the heart of the national economy, supporting thousands of direct and indirect jobs and generating significant annual production volumes for international markets.

4.94. The mining sector dominates the DRC's foreign trade. It accounts for the majority of the country's export revenue and constitutes over 90% of total exports (Section 1.1). This heavy focus on the export of key raw materials generates significant foreign currency but also poses challenges in terms of local industrialization.

4.95. The Mining Code, originally established by Law No. 007 of 11 July 2002, was replaced by Law No. 18/001 of 9 March 2018 and its implementing regulations.⁴² This legal framework defines mining licences, rights, obligations, taxation, transparency, royalties, and right holders' responsibilities,

⁴¹ UNEP, *Les ressources minérales de la République démocratique du Congo peuvent-elles ouvrir la voie à la paix?*, viewed at: <https://www.unep.org/fr/actualites-et-recits/recit/les-ressources-minerales-de-la-republique-democratique-du-congo-peuvent> (20/04/2026).

⁴² Ministry of Mining, *Mining Code*, viewed at: <https://mines.gouv.cd/fr/legislation-miniére/> (20/04/2026).

while regulating procedures for granting permits and managing revenue. It also covers state ownership of up to 10% of the capital of mining companies, local content rules, and environmental and social obligations. The regulatory framework is supplemented by decrees, orders, and tax and customs codes that further structure governance and contractual relations between the State, private operators and local authorities.

4.96. Under the revised Mining Code, the State's free share of mining company ownership was increased from 5% to 10%. The Code also provides for the allocation of mining royalties: 50% of revenue goes back to the central government, 25% to the relevant province, and 15% to the decentralized territorial entity where the exploitation takes place, while 10% is paid to the Mining Fund for future generations.

4.97. The revised 2018 Code also introduced an increase in mining royalties and the definition of "strategic substances" (including cobalt, coltan, and germanium). The royalty rates vary according to the nature of the substances: 0% for commonly used construction materials; 1% for industrial minerals, solid hydrocarbons, and ferrous metals; 3.5% for non-ferrous, basic, or precious metals; 6% for precious stones; and 10% for strategic substances.

4.98. As regards tax and customs, the Mining Code provides benefits intended to enhance the sector's attractiveness for investment. As such, mining enterprises are subject to a profit tax rate of 30%, lower than the ordinary tax rate of 35% applicable to other companies. They also benefit from a preferential customs regime for the importation of equipment, machinery, and inputs needed for mining operations, helping to reduce the costs of installation and operation. Holders of mining rights must declare the goods, equipment, and inputs eligible for this preferential regime, the list of which is validated by joint order of the ministers responsible for mining and finance within 60 days.

4.99. The 2018 reform significantly strengthens the State's financial control over international mining flows. The Code imposes on holders of mining rights the obligatory repatriation of at least 60% of export earnings, and of 100% of revenue from export sales in the event of depreciation of their investment. Failure to comply with this obligation constitutes an offence punishable by a fine equivalent to 5% of the unreturned sum. In addition, mining companies are required to publish, on a monthly basis, the volumes produced, sold, and exported, as well as the amounts of taxes, duties, and fees paid, thereby enhancing the transparency and monitoring of financial flows.

4.100. Exports of mining substances and products are subject to a number of specific taxes and fees, including: the tax on the authorization of exceptional treatment of raw mineral substances outside the country; the tax on the export authorization of mineral raw materials, in particular gold and diamonds; the tax on the export authorization of mining products other than gold and diamonds; and the export tax on samples of a commercial nature.

4.101. In December 2025, the DRC and the United States signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement establishing a framework for cooperation on critical minerals, infrastructure, governance, and regional security. The Agreement seeks to strengthen the resilience of supply chains for critical minerals essential to energy transition technologies, cutting-edge industries, and national security, while promoting the sustainable economic development of the DRC and the Great Lakes region.⁴³

4.102. The Agreement sets out to promote US investment in the mining sector of the DRC by facilitating access to certain strategic projects, supporting the development of transport infrastructure, including the Sakania-Lobito corridor, and mobilizing public and private financing for the local processing of minerals, the development of national value chains, and industrialization. It also provides for mechanisms to secure US supplies of critical minerals.

4.103. Strengthening the governance of the mining sector is also a prominent element of the Partnership. It includes measures to improve transparency, regulatory and taxation frameworks, the traceability of minerals, the formalization of artisanal mining, and institutional capacity-building. The aim is to increase the mining sector's contribution to the economic and social development of the DRC, while promoting the sustainable and responsible exploitation of mineral resources.

⁴³ Strategic Partnership Agreement between the DRC and the United States, viewed at: <https://www.state.gov/strategic-partnership-agreement-between-the-government-of-the-united-states-of-america-and-the-government-of-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo> (24/06/2026).

4.2.2.1 Key subsectors

4.2.2.1.1 Copper and cobalt

4.104. The DRC has major copper and cobalt reserves, which are of strategic importance at the international level. It is the world's second biggest copper producer, with 8% of the world's reserves. Copper deposits are concentrated in the Haut-Katanga and Lualaba provinces, representing a significant proportion of global reserves. The DRC is the world's leading producer of cobalt, often extracted as a by-product of copper, and accounts for 76% of global production and almost 70% of global reserves.⁴⁴

4.105. Copper and cobalt are marketed primarily by major mining companies operating in the country, including through public-private partnerships and joint ventures. Exports constitute the bulk of sales, targeting international markets such as China, Europe and North America, with products exported to the electronics and automotive industries. National regulations require traceability and compliance with environmental standards, while the local market remains limited. Trade policy is also aimed at increasing local value added, including through the on-site refining of metals.

4.106. Between 2016 and 2025, there was steady and structural growth in copper exports. Volumes increased from 1,023,700 tonnes in 2016 to 3,403,000 tonnes in 2025. Momentum accelerated from 2020, hitting a record high in 2025 (Table 4.11).

4.107. Cobalt exports from the DRC more than doubled between 2016 and 2025, despite a one-off decrease in 2019 (Table 4.11). The strong acceleration seen since 2021 reflects the expansion of production capacities and the increasing global demand for batteries and energy transition.

4.108. Income from copper exports increased more than fivefold over the period, recording strong and steady growth. Similarly, income from cobalt exports more than doubled between the beginning and the end of the review period, despite significant fluctuations from year to year (Table 4.12).

4.109. The mining royalty from copper is 3.5% of the market value of gross output.

4.110. Cobalt exports were suspended by the Government of the DRC between February and October 2025. Since October 2025, they have been subject to quotas (Section 3.2.3).

4.2.2.1.2 Tin

4.111. Tin reserves are estimated at around 800,000 tonnes for cassiterite and 455,000 tonnes for lithium, with annual production reaching around 8,000 tonnes in 2024. The sector's policy seeks to formalize artisanal production, which accounts for almost 70% of the total amount mined. Marketing is subject to strict traceability and reporting requirements, with audits carried out on a regular basis. Export duties range from 5% to 10%.

4.112. Exports of cassiterite from the DRC have risen steadily, from 11,800 tonnes in 2016 to 46,300 tonnes in 2025 (Table 4.11). Income from the export of cassiterite has grown more than tenfold, marking one of the largest increases among the minerals studied (Table 4.12).

4.113. Tin is subject to a 5% tariff.

4.2.2.1.3 Coltan

4.114. Coltan reserves in the DRC constitute around 60% of global reserves and are mainly concentrated in the country's eastern provinces.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Mining, *Bulletin d'information des secteurs productifs*, viewed at: <https://plan.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Bulletin-dinformation-des-secteurs-productifs-.pdf> (20/04/2026).

4.115. Between 2016 and 2025, coltan exports were marked by high volatility, and declined during that period (Table 4.11). Similarly, income from coltan exports fell by more than half during the review period, despite a peak in early 2020 (Table 4.12).

4.2.2.1.4 Zinc

4.116. Zinc, of which the country is estimated to have over 7 million tonnes in reserves, is a developing resource with annual production of around 10,000 tonnes in 2024. Investment in the extraction and local processing of zinc, including through public-private partnerships, is encouraged in mining policy. Marketing is controlled to ensure the transparency of export volumes and the traceability of financial flows, with a requirement to repatriate at least 70% of revenue.

4.117. Zinc exports from the DRC fluctuated considerably between 2016 and 2025, while remaining relatively modest compared to exports of other strategic minerals. After a sharp decrease in 2018, they gradually recovered to reach relatively strong levels in 2020 and 2021. However, this trend was followed by a further decline in 2022 and 2023, before a marked rebound led to an exceptional high in 2025 (Table 4.11). Income from zinc exports more than tripled during the review period, but evolved in highly volatile manner (Table 4.12).

4.2.2.1.5 Diamonds

4.118. The DRC has 9% of the world's diamond reserves, which are estimated at more than 150 million carats.⁴⁵ The subsector is subject to the Kimberley Process, guaranteeing efforts to combat trade in conflict diamonds. Exporters must ensure the repatriation of 100% of revenue.

4.119. Diamond exports from the DRC fell considerably between 2016 and 2025. Despite several fluctuations and a slight stabilization in the middle of the review period, the downward trend continued until 2025, when exports reached their lowest level, reflecting a gradual weakening of activity in this sector (Table 4.11). Income from diamond exports also decreased by about three quarters, indicating a marked downward trend (Table 4.12).

4.2.2.1.6 Gold

4.120. Gold reserves are estimated to constitute around 10% of global reserves, according to the authorities. The sector's policy is aimed at formalizing the situation of artisanal miners and enhancing traceability to reduce smuggling. It is mandatory to repatriate 80% of revenue.

4.121. There was relative stability in exports of unrefined gold, with moderate variations between 2016 and 2025 (Table 4.11). However, income from exports of unrefined gold almost doubled during the review period, after several years of fluctuations (Table 4.12).

Table 4.11 Exported quantities of different minerals, 2016-2023

(Thousands of tonnes, unless otherwise indicated)

Year	Copper	Cobalt	Zinc	Diamonds ^a	Unrefined gold ^b	Cassiterite	Coltan
2016	1,023.7	68.8	12.6	14,746.4	30.2	11.8	2.4
2017	1,094.6	82.5	12.3	17,925	31.5	12.5	1.4
2018	1,225.2	109.4	1.1	15,635.4	36.2	13	1.4
2019	1,420.4	78	1.6	14,021.3	33.6	20	1.3
2020	1,601.2	86.6	15.3	12,214.4	30.6	29	2.5
2021	1,797.8	93	16.1	12,406.3	31.8	30.6	1.8
2022	2,394.6	115.4	13.6	11,683.4	28.3	32.9	2.2
2023	2,752.5	152.8	13.4	8,305.8	34.5	33.6	1.9
2024	3,100.2	198.8	43.6	9,240.7	27.9	43	2.8
2025	3,403	44.3	209.3	9,104.6	28.2	46.3	1

a Carats.

b Kilograms.

Source: Data provided by the DRC authorities.

⁴⁵ Makanisi, *RDC, 3ème producteur mondial de diamant industriel, malgré de fortes contraintes*, viewed at: <https://www.makanisi.org/rdc-3eme-producteur-mondial-de-diamant-industriel-malgre-de-fortes-contraintes/> (21/04/2026).

Table 4.12 Revenue from mineral exports

(USD million)

Year	Copper	Cobalt	Zinc	Diamonds	Unrefined gold	Cassiterite	Coltan
2016	4,982.9	1,807.2	27.7	229.3	1,219.5	64.1	54.8
2017	6,272.6	3,368.8	22	207.4	1,086.8	87.2	34.3
2018	7,436.1	6,350.7	2.1	188.5	1,100.9	101.2	60.9
2019	8,226.9	2,561.6	3	161.6	898.8	157.3	29.9
2020	9,412	2,244.5	27.4	113.4	1,207.8	210.9	51
2021	16,024.2	3,500.9	33.9	125.1	1,270.1	412.4	131.4
2022	19,977	5,977.4	33	146	1,104	-	-
2023	23,198	3,558.5	22.3	86.5	1,564	-	-
2024	27,709.4	3,812.4	92.5	89.1	1,532.3	513	46
2025	-	-	-	57.2	2,284.9	652.7	23.7

Source: Data provided by the DRC authorities.

4.2.3 Electricity

4.122. The electricity sector is governed by Law No. 14/011 of 17 June 2014 on the electricity sector.⁴⁶ This Law provides for the production, transport, distribution, import, and export of electricity through a licensing and concessions system. The institutional framework includes the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity, the Regulatory Authority for the Electricity Sector (ARE), which is responsible for technical and tariff regulation, and consumer protection, and the National Agency for Electrification and Energy Services in Rural and Urban Areas (ANSER), which is in charge of promoting access to electricity in unserved areas.

4.123. The DRC is a member of the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), which facilitates cross-border trade in electricity among southern African countries. There are also bilateral interconnection agreements with several neighbouring States in order to secure supply and promote regional energy integration. In the medium- to long-term, the development of the Grand Inga project, with total potential of up to 40,000 MW, is seen as a strategic step in making the DRC a major exporter of electricity in Africa.

4.124. The DRC has an estimated hydroelectric potential of around 100,000 MW, representing approximately 13% of the world's potential and almost 30% to 37% of African hydroelectric potential, mainly concentrated in the Congo River.⁴⁷ However, the actual installed capacity remains well below this potential. In 2024, the national installed capacity was estimated at around 3,646.5 MW, compared to 2,972.2 MW in 2020, of which almost 88% was hydroelectric, with the rest from thermal power plants and, to a far lesser extent, solar projects. The Inga hydroelectric complex, located in Kongo Central province, is the heart of domestic production with the Inga I and Inga II dams. Annual electricity generation increased from 12,460.4 GWh in 2020 to 13,625.4 GWh in 2024.⁴⁸

4.125. The rate of access to electricity in the DRC is among the lowest in the world. In 2024, it was 10.3%, up from 6.4% in 2020. The urban access rate is estimated to be between 35% and 41%, while in rural areas it remains extremely low, often below 1%. Frequent outages, high technical and commercial losses, and the inadequacy of the transport network hinder efforts to improve access. This situation limits industrial development, business competitiveness, and the integration of rural areas into the national economy. The Government, through ANSER and public-private partnerships, promotes the development of off-grid solar solutions and mini-grids to speed up electrification.⁴⁹

4.126. The National Electricity Company (SNEL) remains the dominant operator in large-scale electricity transmission and distribution. It continues to manage over 90% of national infrastructure

⁴⁶ DRC, Law No. 14/011 of 17 June 2014 on the electricity sector, viewed at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cng140374.pdf> (17/03/2026).

⁴⁷ Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity. Information viewed at: <https://mrhe.gouv.cd/> (20/04/2026).

⁴⁸ Regulatory Authority for the Electricity Sector (ARE), *Rapport Annuel 2024*, viewed at: <https://fr.scribd.com/document/896089579/Are-Rap-2024-Rapport-Annuel-2024-Vf-2> (19/02/2026).

⁴⁹ ARE, *Rapport Annuel 2024*.

and has around 2,498 MW of installed capacity, almost half of which is actually available. However, since the liberalization of the sector, several independent power producers (IPP) have been granted production licences, including to serve the mining sector and certain isolated areas. In 2024, almost 40 operators were directly interacting with the ARE, illustrating the sector's increasing attractiveness to investors. The ARE has also reviewed 37 applications for licences covering production, transport, distribution, importation, and marketing. These IPP mainly operate small and medium-sized hydroelectric power plants (between 5 and 100 MW), as well as thermal or hybrid plants. Despite this openness, the market structure remains highly concentrated, and competition continues to be limited.

4.127. Although it has considerable energy potential, the DRC imports electricity to offset production deficits. In 2023, it imported 414,226 MW of electricity, of which 99.9% came from Zambia, for a total value of USD 46 million.⁵⁰

4.128. The Interministerial Order of 15 March 2018 governs the setting of electricity tariffs. Under the Order, electricity tariffs are set according to the principle of truthful pricing, taking into account the operator's investment and operating costs, while ensuring equality and fairness of treatment between different categories of consumers, as well as the non-transferability of charges and compliance with those principles that may be subject to audits in accordance with the law.⁵¹

4.129. The law on the energy sector is based on a regulatory mechanism involving the ARE and the supervisory Ministry. Tariffs are differentiated by category of user (residential, medium voltage, high voltage) or by household or industrial consumption.

4.130. With a view to sustainably increasing domestic production and addressing the energy deficit, the DRC is making the Grand Inga project a strategic priority. Its first phase, Inga III, with a projected capacity of around 4,800 MW, is part of a long-term vision to gradually increase the site's total capacity to over 44,000 MW, making it one of the largest hydroelectric complexes in the world. However, its implementation remains conditional on the effective mobilization of financing, the establishment of robust partnerships, and the consolidation of a credible and stable institutional and contractual framework.

4.131. Electricity imports are subject to a customs duty of 10%.

4.3 Manufacturing

4.132. Despite the country's abundant natural resources, the manufacturing sector in the DRC remains weak. Between 2016 and 2024, the sector's share of GDP remained stable, changing from 18.3% in 2016 to 18% in 2024 (Table 4.13). The industrial system is characterized by low local value added, a high dependence on imports of intermediate and finished goods, and a strong geographical concentration around Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Matadi.

Table 4.13 Contribution to GDP and annual growth rate of the manufacturing sector, 2016-2024

Year	Manufacturing sector (% of GDP)	Manufacturing sector growth rate (%)
2016	18.3	-1.4
2017	19.5	3.4
2018	18.2	-0.9
2019	19.5	5.3
2020	19	9.2
2021	17.7	1.6
2022	17	5.5
2023	18	2.9

⁵⁰ WITS, *Congo, Dem. Rep. Electrical energy imports by country in 2023*, viewed at: <https://wits.worldbank.org/trade/comtrade/en/country/ZAR/year/2023/tradeflow/Imports/partner/ALL/product/271600> (20/04/2026).

⁵¹ Interministerial Order No. 009/CAB/MIN-ECONAT/2018 and Interministerial Order No. 013/CAB/MINENRH/2018 of 15 March 2018, viewed at: https://droitcongolais.info/files/751.03.18_Arret-du-15-mars-2018_tarif-electricite.pdf (17/03/2026).

Year	Manufacturing sector (% of GDP)	Manufacturing sector growth rate (%)
2024	18	4.2

Source: Data provided by the authorities and the World Bank.

4.133. The manufacturing sector is dominated by light industries, mainly agri-food, construction materials, and some common consumer goods. Agro-industry is a strategic segment because of the country's considerable agricultural potential, but it remains underexploited and dependent on imported inputs. The cement and construction material industries benefit from urban growth and infrastructure needs. In contrast, the textiles sector and other labour-intensive manufacturing industries have experienced a prolonged decline owing to competition from low-cost imports. In addition, local processing of minerals remains limited, despite initiatives to encourage refining and the development of high value-added activities in the mining value chain. The poor development of the manufacturing sector is the result of, *inter alia*, an unfavourable business climate. Since the previous TPR, several non-mining investors (such as Nestlé) have left the country.

4.134. Moreover, the formal manufacturing sector remains concentrated around a limited number of major players. There are more than 10 structured companies in the agro-industry and beverages subsector, of which 5 are in the breweries and beverages branch (Bralima, Brasimba, Bracongo, African Foods and Beverages, and IBC), and 8 are in agri-food and fast-moving consumer products (Agrico SA, Marsavco, AMC, Biscuiterie Prince, MIDEMA, Manitech, African Foods and Beverages, and Ghandour Foods Congo). The construction materials subsector consists of at least three major manufacturers (CILU, Congo Futur, and LafargeHolcim), in addition to five mining companies that undertake processing activities. This reflects a narrow and poorly diversified industrial base.

4.135. The simple average of tariffs applied in the manufacturing sector is 11.3%, ranging from 0% to 20%, which reflects differentiated levels of protection across industries. Finished products receive a higher level of protection (average MFN tariff of 12.6%) than semi-finished products (9.8%), reflecting a shift towards processed goods and local production with greater value added. Some industries are distinguished by particularly high protection levels, including beverages and tobacco (18.6%), and clothing (20%), while textiles have an average rate of 13%. In addition, sugars and confectionery products have an average protection level of 11.8%, with dairy products at 11%, and cereals and food preparations at a moderate level of 9.8%, with rates ranging from 5% to 20% for these categories overall.

4.136. There are a number of incentives in place to support and encourage manufacturing, including tax, parafiscal, and customs incentives (Section 3.3.1).

4.137. Several structural constraints are hindering the development of the sector. The energy deficit is a major obstacle: access to reliable and affordable electricity remains limited (Section 4.2.3). Inadequate transport infrastructure, high logistics costs, and weak trade corridors increase production costs, in addition to challenges related to the business climate, including legal insecurity, administrative complexity, fiscal pressure, and restricted access to bank financing for small and medium-sized industrial enterprises.

4.4 Services

4.4.1 Overview

4.138. The services sector in the DRC is central to the national economy. In 2024, it accounted for approximately 33% of GDP. In terms of employment, 33% of total jobs were in services in 2025, behind agriculture (59%) and ahead of industry (8%).⁵²

4.139. In terms of foreign trade, trade in services accounted for 9.1% of GDP in 2024. However, the DRC remains a net importer of services. In 2023, imports of services exceeded exports, resulting in a substantial deficit equivalent to 8.1% of GDP (Chart 4.5).

4.140. Since the previous Review, the balance of services has remained in deficit. Between 2016 and 2024, imports of services rose sharply, with an increase of approximately 194% over the review

⁵² World Bank, *Services*, viewed at: <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NV.SRV.TOTL.ZS?locations=CD> (18/03/2026).

period, while exports were more erratic, with a steep drop in 2023, but overall growth of around 152% between 2016 and 2024 (Chart 4.5). Services exports are mainly dominated by transport, business services, pensions and insurance, and utilities.

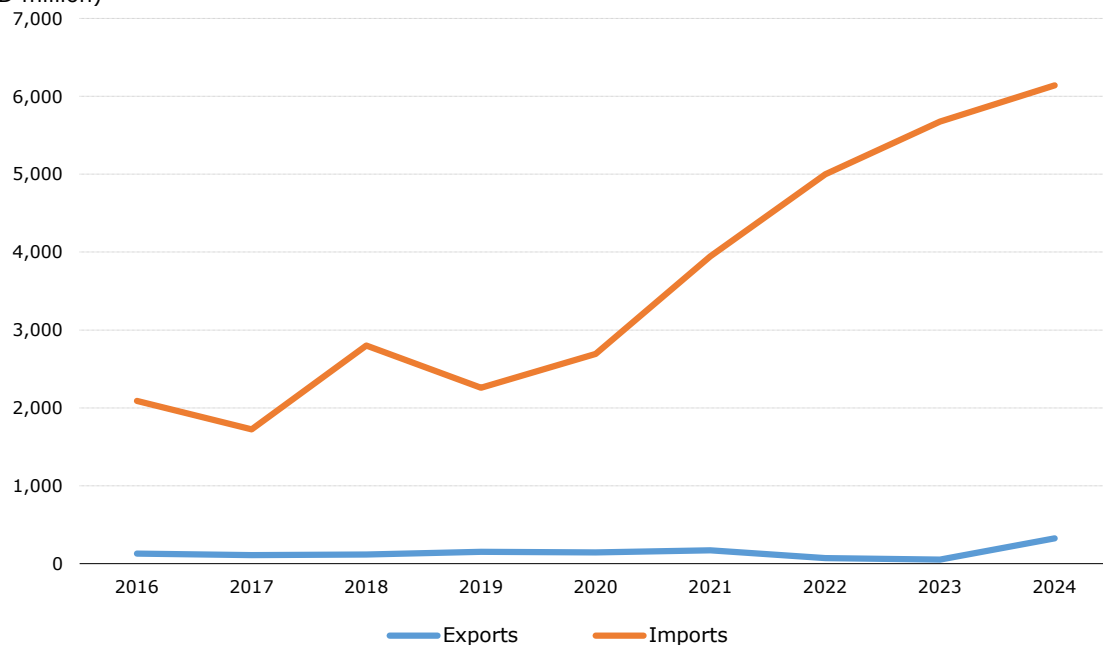
4.141. According to the 2020 WTO Services Trade Restrictions Index (STRI), the DRC maintains a relatively restrictive regulatory environment in key services sectors.⁵³

The highest levels of restrictiveness are seen in financial and professional services, followed by construction and related engineering services, and transport services. There were also significant restrictions on communications services, while more moderate levels of restrictiveness were recorded in tourism, health services, and computer and related services (Source: Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuel 2024*, p. 148, viewed at: https://resources.bcc.cd/publications/rapport-annuel/rapport_annuel_2024.pdf (15/04/2026)).

4.142. Table 4.14). Distribution services appear relatively more open.

Chart 4.5 Services exports and imports, 2016-2023

(USD million)



Source: Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuel 2024*, p. 148, viewed at: https://resources.bcc.cd/publications/rapport-annuel/rapport_annuel_2024.pdf (15/04/2026).

Table 4.14 Services Trade Restrictions Index, 2020

Sector	STRI
Professional services	62.8
Computer and related services	47.5
Communication services	56.1
Construction and related engineering services	59.5
Distribution services	42.1
Financial services	65.1
Health services	48.3
Tourism and travel-related services	49.7
Transport services	57.1

Source: World Trade Organization and World Bank, viewed at: <https://itip-services-worldbank.wto.org/SearchApplied.aspx> (20/04/2026).

⁵³ The Index is generally expressed on a scale from 0 (total openness) to 100 (maximum restrictiveness). The higher the value of the Index, the more restrictive the regulatory environment, which can limit competition, hinder the entry of new actors, particularly foreign ones, and affect both the efficiency and quality of services. Conversely, a lower value reflects a more open framework that is potentially more favourable to the development of the services sector.

4.4.2 Telecommunications

4.143. The mobile telephony market in the DRC continues to grow, with more than 73.9 million subscriptions in the fourth quarter of 2025, compared to 69.4 million active subscriptions in the second quarter of 2025, and a national penetration rate of approximately 65.9%. Market trends show greater use of data services and the growing role of mobile money in financial inclusion. Mobile money is another pillar of the sector, with over 34.3 million subscriptions and a penetration rate of around 30.6%.⁵⁴

4.144. Since the previous TPR in 2016, there have been significant changes to the sector's legal framework. The telecommunications sector is now mainly governed by Law No. 20/017 of 25 November 2020, which repealed and replaced Law No. 013/2002. This is supplemented by Ordinance-Law No. 23/010, of 13 March 2023, setting out the Digital Code.⁵⁵ The Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Congo (ARPTC), which is responsible for regulating and overseeing the postal and telecommunications sectors. The ARPTC ensures that operators comply with laws and regulations, allocates licences and frequencies, protects consumers' rights, and promotes fair competition in the market. It also plays a key role in issuing, suspending, and withdrawing authorizations, as well as in preparing related specifications, while fostering digital development and improving the quality of communication services at the national level.

4.145. In December 2025, the DRC introduced a unified licensing regime for the telecommunications sector. Since then, the Ministry of Postal Services, Telecommunications and New Information and Communication Technologies is responsible for issuing licences covering all electronic communication services, namely mobile, fixed, and Internet access services, regardless of the technology used, thereby establishing a technologically neutral approach to the regulatory framework.

4.146. The mobile phone market is made up of four operators licensed by the ARPTC: Airtel Congo RDC, Orange RDC, Vodacom Congo RDC, and Africell RDC. The four operators are all private companies, in which there is no state equity participation. Vodacom continues to have a dominant position in terms of market share, while Airtel and Orange maintain strong competitive positions, reflecting a concentrated but dynamic market. These operators provide voice telephony services, SMS messaging, and Internet access (data services) on 2G, 3G, and 4G networks, and account for the bulk of the consumer segment, as well as the majority of market shares in the mobile electronic communications segment at the national level.

4.147. Regarding postal services, the sector is mainly dominated by the Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Company (SCPT), a state-owned enterprise responsible for providing universal service. It continues to face significant structural challenges, including ageing infrastructure, limited territorial coverage, and increasing competition from informal services, as well as private courier services.

4.4.3 Tourism

4.148. The DRC has considerable tourism potential thanks to the vastness of its territory (2.3 million km²), its exceptional biodiversity, and the wealth of its cultural heritage. The country has around 1,000 identified tourist sites, including world-renowned national parks, unique natural landscapes, historical sites, and diverse local cultures. Protected areas are home to outstanding biodiversity, with more than 480 species of mammal, including iconic species such as mountain gorillas and bonobos. It also boasts 1,139 species of bird, more than 13,000 species of fish, 350 species of reptile, 220 species of amphibian, and over 11,007 species of angiosperm. This natural and cultural capital theoretically positions tourism as a strategic lever for economic diversification, capable of supporting local development and enhancement of the country's heritage.

⁵⁴ ARPTC, "Observatoire du marché de la téléphonie mobile: Rapport du 4ème trimestre 2025", viewed at: https://arptc.gouv.cd/app/uploads/2026/04/ARPTC_RAPPORT-T4-25_10-04-2026.pdf (20/04/2026).

⁵⁵ Law No. 20/017 of 25 November 2020, viewed at: https://www.labase-lextenso.fr/sites/lextenso/files/lextenso_upload/l.l.rdc.ndeg.20-017.25.nov.2020.pdf (20/04/2026).

4.149. Tourism in the DRC is regulated by Law No. 18/018 of 9 July 2018. Specifically, this Law governs the conduct of tourism-related activities (hotels, guides, agencies) through a prior authorization system, thereby encouraging investment and private-public partnerships.

4.150. Engaging in tourism-related activities, including hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, tourist guide services, the operation of tourist sites, and tourism associations, is subject to prior authorization or an approval issued by the competent authorities. The authorization procedure requires, *inter alia*, a Trade and Personal Property Credit Register (RCCM) number, a national identity number, a tax number, as well as a technical assessment by the Tourism Resources Directorate, in addition to information on the investment cost and its sources of financing. A site inspection report is also drawn up to determine the initial category of the establishment or activity in question.

4.151. Authorization is granted on the basis of the assessment of several criteria, including compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for infrastructure; the promoter's technical and financial capacities; compliance with hygiene, safety, and environmental protection standards; staff qualifications; and compliance with tax and social obligations. Moreover, under Article 25 of Law No. 18-018 of 9 July 2018, foreign investors are allowed to invest in the DRC's tourism sector, in accordance with the provisions of the Investment Code and domestic business legislation.

4.152. The tourism sector is governed by the Ministry of Tourism, which is responsible for drawing up and implementing the national policy. The National Tourism Office (ONT) promotes and markets tourism products. The Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) is responsible for nature conservation in protected areas, guaranteeing protection of fauna and flora and showcasing national biodiversity.

4.153. The regulatory framework provides for different categories of protected areas, which cover around 8% of the national territory, with the aim of gradual expansion to strengthen the protection of ecosystems and promote sustainable tourism.

4.154. The country has several world-renowned national parks that form the core of its tourism offering. Among the most iconic are Virunga National Park, thought to be the oldest national park in Africa and known for its mountain gorillas and active volcanoes; Salonga National Park, the largest protected tropical forest reserve in Africa; and Garamba National Park, famous for its vast savannahs and remarkable fauna. Kahuzi-Biega National Park is known as the home of eastern lowland gorillas, while Upemba National Park and Kundelungu National Park are famous for their plateaux, savannahs, and waterfalls. Other parks, such as Maiko National Park and Lomami National Park, also contribute to the protection of unique forest ecosystems and endemic species.

4.155. In addition to these protected areas of land, the DRC also has other outstanding natural sites, such as the Mangroves Marine Park, which protects a unique coastal ecosystem in the Congo River estuary.

4.156. Despite this potential, the contribution of tourism to the Congolese economy remains limited. Estimates indicate that the sector accounts for less than 2% of GDP. This poor performance reflects, *inter alia*, structural constraints, such as a lack of infrastructure, insufficient international promotion, security challenges in some regions, and the low level of investment in the sector.

4.157. Tourism's direct contribution to public finances remains low. Revenue from the sector is estimated at around USD 900,000 per year, including certain taxes related to tourism activities. Annual tourism revenue levels are shown in Table 4.15. The low level of income is partially explained by the limited number of tourists, which includes a significant number of business visitors.

Table 4.15 Annual tourism revenue, 2016-2025

(CDF million)

Year	Revenue
2016	143
2017	144.4
2018	287.3
2019	359.2
2020	394.8

Year	Revenue
2021	691.4
2022	1,503.8
2023	1,319.4
2024	1,683.4
2025	1,795.1

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

4.158. The taxes and fees levied by the Ministry of Tourism relate to the issuance of several administrative documents, including operating licences for hotels, accommodation, restaurants, and travel agencies; technical approval certificates for these same establishments; accreditation certificates; operating permits for tourist sites; and authorisation certificates for tourism associations. Operating licences, technical approval certificates, operating permits, and authorisation certificates are subject to renewal every three years, while accreditation certificates must be renewed annually, in accordance with the regulations in force.

4.159. The tourism sector faces many constraints that hinder its development. Hotel capacity remains limited, with a marked concentration in Kinshasa. The city of Kinshasa alone has around 1,544 hotels, ranging from unrated to five-stars. Moreover, the presence of international hotel chains remains very limited, which reduces opportunities for integration into international booking networks, and for collaboration with travel agencies and with other related services in the tourism sector. According to the authorities, the number of hotels in the DRC increased from 4,224 in 2020 to 5,408 in 2025.

4.160. The tourism sector is also faced with weak transport infrastructure, including for road, air, and river transport; the high cost of transport services and limited access to these services; and gaps in connectivity and basic services in several areas with strong tourism potential. In addition, the country remains insufficiently promoted as a destination at the international level, and the institutional and regulatory framework remains poorly structured. The sector also suffers from limited capacities to train and professionalize its stakeholders, as well as security concerns in some regions.

4.161. This is compounded by the low level of promotion of the DRC as a tourist destination in regional and international markets, ongoing insecurity in certain areas with strong tourism potential, and a lack of public and private investment in the development, modernization, and conservation of tourist sites, as well as a lack of reliable statistics to guide policy and strategic decision-making. The sector also suffers from a shortage of staff qualified in tourism and hospitality, which affects the quality of services and the visitor experience.

4.4.4 Financial services

4.162. The financial services sector in the DRC is governed by the Central Bank of the Congo (BCC), which is responsible for the regulation, supervision, and stability of the financial system, in accordance with Law No. 18/027 of 13 December 2018. This Law strengthens the BCC's independence, governance, and regulatory powers by protecting it against any undue influence from other entities, including through the ban preventing government officials and, more generally, any public officials from serving on its Board of Governors. The BCC has powers of authorization, prudential supervision, and oversight to ensure the soundness and stability of the sector.⁵⁶

4.163. The system includes commercial banks, microfinance institutions, savings and loan cooperatives (COOPEC), insurance companies, electronic money institutions, and foreign exchange bureaux.

⁵⁶ Law No. 18/027 of 13 December 2018, viewed at: https://www.bcc.cd/system/files/force/dsif/la_loi_18_027_organique_de_la_bcc_8.pdf (18/03/2026).

4.164. Law No. 22/069, of 27 December 2022, on the activities and control of credit institutions in the DRC, identifies two major categories of financial institutions under the supervision of the BCC: credit institutions and finance companies.⁵⁷

4.165. Credit institutions include banks, which provide traditional banking services, such as collecting deposits, lending, and making payments; microfinance companies, aimed primarily at populations excluded from the traditional banking system; COOPECs, based on a mutualist model that allows their members to save and borrow; and savings banks, which operate as cooperative banks that also provide full banking services.

4.166. Finance companies, in turn, comprise microcredit companies, specializing in the provision of small loans without providing all banking services; electronic money institutions, which manage digital transactions and electronic wallets; specialized financial institutions, whether public or private, mainly involved in financing and lending; foreign exchange bureaux, which normally engage in manual foreign exchange operations; and financial messaging institutions, which carry out transfers of payments.

4.167. The DRC's economy is characterized by a high level of dollarization. Over 90% of banking activity is conducted in United States dollars, including around 95% of loans and more than 91% of deposits. In 2022, the Congolese franc banknotes in circulation amounted to CDF 3,796.9 billion, or approximately USD 1.9 billion (nearly USD 20.5 per capita), illustrating the relatively limited role of local currency in economic transactions.⁵⁸

4.168. The formal financial system in the DRC consists of 288 institutions, split between several key segments (Table 4.16).

4.169. However, the Congolese financial system remains underdeveloped and highly concentrated around commercial banks, which accounted for almost 91% of the financial sector's assets in 2022. There are 14 commercial banks, spread over 392 service points, of which 296 are branches and 96 are *guichets avancés* (remote service counters), alongside a network of 23,955 banking agents. Most of these banks are subsidiaries of foreign groups, and 61.9% of the total assets in the sector are concentrated in the three largest institutions. Nevertheless, the electronic money institutions sector is evolving and now accounts for 4.3% of the financial sector assets supervised by the BCC, reflecting the gradual growth of digital financial services (Table 4.16).

4.170. Microfinance institutions and COOPECs play a key role in access to financial services for low-income populations. There are 116 active institutions, specifically 89 COOPECs, 19 microfinance companies, and 8 microcredit companies. However, these financial institutions account for only 3.2% of the sector's assets and remain largely concentrated in Kinshasa and North Kivu and South Kivu provinces (Table 4.16).

4.171. Financial inclusion remains limited. A small proportion of the adult population has an account in a formal financial institution, which is well below the regional average. The financial inclusion rate, which includes active accounts held with electronic money institutions, in addition to the banking penetration rate, has increased much more quickly. According to the authorities, it stood at 51.9% in 2025, compared to 38.5% in 2022. This increase is primarily of the result of the development of digital financial services and the rise of electronic money, which was introduced in 2012.

4.172. This situation is the result of the low density of the banking network, the high costs of financial services, the importance of the informal economy, and the predominance of cash transactions. Initiatives aimed at improving financial inclusion have been put in place, including the development of mobile money, the digitalization of financial services, and the strengthening of microfinance institutions.

4.173. Access to private sector credit remains limited. The private sector credit to GDP ratio continues to be among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa, standing at 7% in 2021 and 8.5% in 2022,

⁵⁷ Law No. 22/069 of 27 December 2022, viewed at:

https://www.conasafic.cd/static/documents/069_controle_etablissement_credit.pdf (23/06/2026).

⁵⁸ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

compared to a regional average of approximately 23% in 2021. In a context of extensive dollarization of the economy, 89.2% of the loan portfolio is denominated in United States dollars. Loans continue to be primarily granted to private companies (52%), followed by households (20%), while state-owned enterprises and SMEs each account for only 8% of total credit.⁵⁹

4.174. Constraints on access to finance are particularly pronounced for micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). According to World Bank estimates, 62% of MSMEs declare that they have unmet financial needs, generally ranging from USD 50,000 to USD 500,000, while the overall financing gap for this segment is estimated at 26% of GDP, well above the level observed in several comparable countries in the region. Access to credit also remains highly concentrated geographically, with almost 90% of credit located in Kinshasa and Haut Katanga provinces.⁶⁰

Table 4.16 Financial institutions in the DRC, 2025

Specialized financial institutions	Number of institutions	Total balance sheet (total assets) (USD million)	Number of accounts	Share of the system's assets
Credit institutions	123	24,901.4	13,457,434	94.89%
Banks	14	23,921.5	9,083,362	91.16%
Microfinance companies	19	602.8	3,319,680	2.30%
COOPECs	89	226.6	1,045,936	0.86%
Savings banks	1	150.5	8,456	0.57%
Finance companies	165	1,341.2	20,986,762	5.11%
Microcredit companies	8	4.07	32,093	0.02%
Electronic money institutions (active accounts)	4	1,135.8	20,954,669	4.33%
Specialized financial institutions	4	201.3		0.77%
Foreign exchange bureaux	67			
Financial messaging institutions	82			
Total	288	26,242.6	34,444,196	100%

Source: Data provided by the authorities.

4.4.4.1 Banking

4.175. In recent years, banking activity has grown significantly. According to the authorities, the total balance sheet of the sector (total assets) increased from 24% of GDP in 2022 to 32% in 2025. Banks' resources come primarily from deposits, which account for approximately 68% of liabilities, while their own funds constitute 12%. However, these deposits are mostly denominated in foreign currency and characterized by a relatively short maturity, which may limit the ability of the banking system to finance long-term investments.

4.176. The banking supervision system is based on continuous monitoring of the documentation submitted, supplemented by on-site inspections, to assess solvency, liquidity, asset quality, profitability, governance, and the internal control mechanisms of credit institutions. Supervision by the BCC is based on the basic principles of the Accords of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, with a gradual implementation of Basel II requirements with respect to Pillars I and III, and certain Basel III components, including solvency requirements.

4.177. In addition, since 2022, the BCC has implemented risk-based supervision, a prudential approach to identifying banking institutions that require enhanced monitoring and to prioritizing supervisory actions for those with the highest risk levels. To this end, it uses an evaluation mechanism that allows for an objective assessment of the situation of banks and for the identification of those within the DRC's banking system with the most serious vulnerabilities that could lead to their failure. This assessment covers the main risks inherent to the activity as well as to each

⁵⁹ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

⁶⁰ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

institution's specific environment, with the aim of identifying vulnerabilities and encouraging the banks concerned to implement appropriate remedies. It is thus aimed at preventing the occurrence of difficulties that may undermine the viability of the establishments in question and make it necessary to adopt provisional administrative or bank resolution measures.

4.178. The financial system is characterized by the strong dominance of the banking sector, which accounted for more than 91% of the total assets (total balance sheet) over the period 2022-2025, while the microfinance sector remained marginal, with a share of less than 4%.

4.179. The network of banking agents is a key lever for the expansion of access to financial services, particularly in zones insufficiently served by traditional banking infrastructure. Defined in BCC Instruction No. 29 as a natural or legal person acting on behalf of a financial institution in the performance of banking operations, the banking agent enables financial institutions to offer services outside their branches and service counters. This distribution channel has expanded rapidly among banks, with the number of agents rising from 9,706 in 2022 to 23,955 in 2025, representing an increase of 146.8%.

4.180. The growth of electronic money and financial technology (fintech) services has profoundly changed the financial landscape over the past decade. The introduction of electronic money institutions and the development of digital financial services have contributed to a rapid increase in the number of financial accounts, facilitating access to payment services for a large part of the population. According to the authorities, the number of customers registered with electronic money institutions increased from 37.3 million in 2022 to 61.71 million in 2025. This development occurs in a context marked by the widespread penetration of mobile telephony, which offers significant opportunities to expand access to financial services.

4.181. However, the use of electronic means of payment remains low. In 2021, only 22% of adults reported that they had made or received a digital payment, while 16% had a mobile account. This still limited adoption of digital payment systems reflects the supply-side constraints of digital financial services, the level of financial education, and the consumer protection framework. The network of electronic payment acceptance points remains relatively limited and highly concentrated in a few provinces.

4.182. In 2024, bank cards were the most used payment instrument, accounting for 41% of the total volume of transactions made by the various means of payment. They were followed by electronic transfers (22%) and physical transfers (21%). Cheques accounted for 17% of payments, reflecting relatively more limited use of this instrument.

4.183. The authorities have undertaken modernization efforts with a view to strengthening electronic payment systems. The initiatives put in place include the MOSOLO national monetary system, which is designed to handle card and electronic money transactions, and promote interoperability among different payment service providers. However, despite its potential, it remains little used owing to a low level of participation among financial institutions and a relatively small volume of transactions.

4.184. The use of payment cards and associated infrastructure also remains low. Devices such as automated teller machines and electronic payment terminals remain underdeveloped compared to the standards observed in other economies. Moreover, payment cards are mostly used for cash withdrawals rather than electronic payments.

4.185. The means of payment landscape in the DRC thus continues to be dominated primarily by the use of cash, both Congolese francs and United States dollars, as a result of which access to formal and digital payment instruments remains limited.

4.186. The banking penetration rate rose from 14.8% in 2021 to 17.4% in 2022, reaching 20.33% in 2025. This increase can be explained, *inter alia*, by the stabilization of the macroeconomic

framework, the simplification of procedures for opening accounts, and the payment of government officials and civil servants via bank account since 2011.⁶¹

4.4.4.2 Microfinance

4.187. The microfinance sector in the DRC is governed by Law No. 11/020 of 15 September 2011.⁶² Microfinance institutions play an important role in expanding access to financial services by targeting mainly low-income populations and small-scale economic operators often excluded from the traditional banking system. They therefore make a significant contribution to financial inclusion, even if their geographic coverage and operational capacities remain uneven at the territorial level.

4.188. In 2025, the microfinance sector had 116 institutions, of which 89 were COOPECs, 19 were microfinance companies, and 8 were microcredit companies, compared to 101 institutions in 2022, which consisted of 78 COOPECs, 15 microfinance companies, and 8 microcredit companies. The physical network of institutions remains limited, with 186 operating points, compared to 445 for banks, and their share of the financial system remains low, accounting for only about 3% of total assets (Table 4.16).

4.189. In terms of its share of the total balance sheet, the microfinance sector remains marginal. The share of the total assets of the entire financial system attributable to the microfinance sector increased slightly to 3.2% in 2025, compared to 2.9% in 2022, largely because of the banking sector and electronic money institutions.⁶³

4.4.4.3 Insurance

4.190. The regulatory framework for the insurance sector remained unchanged during the review period and continues to be governed by the Insurance Code of March 2015. The Code was a major reform that liberalized the market, ended the long-standing monopoly of the National Insurance Company (SONAS), and allowed private insurance and reinsurance companies to enter the market.

4.191. At the end of 2022, the market had 41 operators, including insurance companies, reinsurance companies, and intermediaries. Nevertheless, the insurance penetration rate remains relatively low, reflecting a limited use of insurance products by households and businesses.⁶⁴

4.192. Since it was liberalized, there has been significant growth in the sector. The value of premiums issued increased from USD 101 million in 2019 to USD 216 million in 2021. At the same time, the insurance market had 41 operators in 2022, including 10 insurance companies (3 life insurance companies and 7 non-life insurance companies), 29 insurance intermediaries, and 2 regional reinsurance companies, reflecting a gradual expansion of insurance service providers.⁶⁵

4.193. Despite that growth, the sector's level of development remains very low. Insurance density, measured by insurance premiums per capita, stood at USD 2.34 in 2021, compared to an average of around USD 55 in Africa. Similarly, the insurance penetration rate, which measures the insurance

⁶¹ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

⁶² Law No. 11/020 of 15 September 2011, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20economique/Banques/Loi.11.020.15.09.2011.htm> (20/04/2026).

⁶³ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

⁶⁴ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

⁶⁵ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

sector's share of the national economy, remains very low, at approximately 0.46% of GDP in 2022, up from 0.39% in 2021.⁶⁶

4.194. This low level of development is explained by several structural constraints. These include the general population's lack of confidence in insurance operators, often related to non-payment or delays in compensation; weak insurance culture; insufficient knowledge of insurance products; and the still limited level of financial education. These factors hinder the adoption of insurance products, particularly by low-income households and small businesses, and emphasize the need to promote appropriate solutions, including through the development of micro-insurance and agricultural insurance.

4.4.5 Transport services

4.4.5.1 Air transport

4.195. Air transport plays a crucial role in the DRC's territorial connectivity owing to its vast territory (over 2.3 million km²) and transport-related difficulties linked to the lack of land infrastructure. In many landlocked regions, flying is often the fastest, if not the only way, to ensure the movement of people, the transportation of high value-added freight, and the deployment of humanitarian operations. The main airport hubs are located in Kinshasa (Ndjili), Lubumbashi, Goma, and Kisangani, where the majority of domestic and international traffic is concentrated.

4.196. The legal framework for air transport in the DRC is based primarily on Law No. 10/014 of 31 December 2010 on civil aviation, supplemented by Law No. 23/001 of 12 January 2023. These laws govern the management, security, and use of national airspace.⁶⁷

4.197. The air transport sector is mainly overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority of the DRC (AAC/DRC), which is responsible for the regulation, air safety, and certification of operators. Airport infrastructure and air navigation services are managed by the *Régie des voies aériennes* (RVA), the state-owned enterprise responsible for national air space and airports. At the international level, the DRC is a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

4.198. The DRC's aviation market is characterized by the presence of several national and international companies. Congo Airways and Air Congo, both public companies, are the main domestic carriers operating internal flights. Other private companies also operate in the domestic market. On the international front, the DRC is served by a number of foreign companies including Air France, Brussels Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, Qatar Airways, Royal Air Maroc, Air Tanzania, Askya, South African Airways, TAAG Angola Airlines, and Air Côte d'Ivoire.

4.199. However, air traffic remains relatively limited for the size of the country.

4.200. Before 2025, the airport tax was USD 55 for international flights and USD 15 for domestic flights. This tax is paid directly at the airport and can only be paid in cash.

4.201. The DRC also participates in several regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the integration of African air transport, including the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). However, the sector continues to face a number of structural challenges, including the obsolescence of some airport infrastructure, the financial constraints of domestic companies, and the need to improve compliance with international safety standards.

4.4.5.2 Land transport

4.202. Land transport is the backbone of the DRC's logistics system, linking agricultural and mining production areas to urban centres and export corridors. It mainly consists of road and rail transport,

⁶⁶ Ministry of Finance, *Stratégie nationale d'inclusion financière 2023-2028* (July 2023), viewed at: <https://finances.gouv.cd/uploads/files/Strategie%20nationale%20d'inclusions%20financi%C3%A8res.pdf> (18/03/2026).

⁶⁷ Law No. 10-014, viewed at: <https://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/JO/2011/JOS.16.01.2011.pdf> (18/03/2026).

which account for the majority of internal passenger and cargo travel. However, the efficiency of the system is severely limited by the state of infrastructure and constraints associated with their maintenance.

4.203. The DRC's road network is estimated to comprise over 150,000 km of roads, but only a small proportion is asphalted and regularly maintained. Climatic conditions, including heavy rain, combined with a lack of regular maintenance, often result in rapid degradation of the infrastructure, increasing logistics costs, and limiting the market access of rural populations.

4.204. The institutional framework for road transport is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Territorial Integration. Several public institutions are involved in managing and maintaining the road network, including the Highways Office, which is responsible for managing national roads, and the National Road Maintenance Fund (FONER), which finances maintenance and rehabilitation.

4.205. Rail transport is another important element of the land transport system, although it is currently underutilized. The DRC's railway network, spanning 5,033 km, is mainly operated by the Congolese National Railway Company (SNCC), which operates primarily in the south and south-east of the country, particularly in the mining areas of Katanga. Historically, the network was developed to facilitate the export of natural resources to seaports and regional corridors.

4.206. In terms of passenger flows, rail activity remains relatively limited compared to its historical potential.

4.207. At the regional level, the DRC is integrated into several transport corridors connecting Central Africa to Southern Africa, including the corridors linking Katanga to Southern African ports. The country is also a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which promote the harmonization of transport regulations and the facilitation of cross-border trade. The road transport sector is open to foreigners. However, cabotage is not permitted.

4.4.5.3 River and maritime transport

4.208. The DRC has an important hydrographic network dominated by the Congo River and its numerous tributaries, which total more than 15,000 km of navigable waterways, several thousand of which are regularly navigable. This network connects many parts of the country, including those located in the Central Basin, where road infrastructure is limited.

4.209. The institutional framework for river and maritime transport is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport, with the support of a number of specialized agencies. The River Navigation Board (RVF) is in charge, *inter alia*, of maintenance of navigable waterways, buoyage, and navigation safety. The Congolese Transport and Ports Company (SCTP) manages several port facilities and logistics services related to river transport.

4.210. Matadi is the DRC's main port facility and the country's main gateway to international trade. Located on the Congo River, it handles the bulk of import and export flows, playing a strategic role in supplying the domestic market and transporting natural resources to global markets.

4.211. Freight management is entrusted to the Multimodal Freight Management Office (OGEFREM), which occupies a central position in the regulation and facilitation of international freight transport. OGEFREM ensures the traceability of cargo, the production of reliable statistical data, and the implementation of national logistics and foreign trade policies. It also acts as coordinator for the various actors in the multimodal transport chain, thereby contributing to improving operational efficiency and streamlining trade flows.

4.212. River transport is provided by a combination of public operators, private enterprises, and a large number of informal carriers. The main river routes link Kinshasa to Mbandaka, to Kisangani, and to several regional centres along the Congo River and its tributaries. The vessels used range from cargo barges to passenger boats and motorized canoes used for local travel.

4.213. The flows of passengers and cargo transported by river are significant, although often difficult to quantify owing to the size of the informal sector. In several parts of the country, this mode of transport is the main means of public transport and the movement of agricultural products to urban markets. It also plays a key role in the supply of major cities along the river.

4.214. The DRC has several sea and river ports that are vital entry and exit points for the country's trade. Matadi, located on the Congo River, is the main seaport and the most important for foreign trade as it deals with the bulk of imported and exported goods, and accounts for a significant share of the country's container traffic. Most of the DRC's ports are managed by the SCTP. However, logistics and port handling activities also involve private operators, such as the Italian-Swiss shipping company Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), which strengthened its presence in the DRC following its acquisition of the assets of Bolloré Africa Logistics in 2022.

4.215. In addition to Matadi, other ports play a role in foreign trade. The port of Boma, while more modest, contributes to regional trade in goods, particularly agricultural goods. The Matadi Gateway Terminal (MGT), known locally as Ledyia port, is a private container terminal that plays an important role in handling cargo and container traffic in the DRC. The port of Banana, which is currently under construction, will be the DRC's first deep-water port and of strategic importance as it will be able to accommodate large vessels.

4.216. Despite its strategic importance, the DRC's river and maritime transport continues to face a number of structural challenges. These include the lack of modern port infrastructure, inadequate navigable waterways, the obsolescence of certain vessels, and safety problems associated with overloading vessels. Increased investment in port modernization, the improvement of navigation systems, and the progressive formalization of operators are important priorities.

[illegible]

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 ^a	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
Other transfers	0	0	0	0	182	71	0	0	0
Financial corporations, non-financial corporations, households and NPISHs ^c	47	13	190	210	164	264	332	160	129
Debt forgiveness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other transfers	47	13	190	210	164	264	332	160	129
Net lending (+)/net borrowing (-) (I+II)	-1,550	-776	-1,235	-1,215	-426	-345	-2,610	-3,423	-1,991
III. Financial account									
Net lending (+) /net borrowing (-) (1+2+3+4+5)	-1,325	-927	-1,442	-1,516	-234	-680	-2,324	-3,362	-1,826
1. Direct investment	-932	-1,048	-1,408	-1,354	-1,498	-1,678	-1,409	-2,375	-2,915
Net acquisition of financial assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equity and investment fund shares	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt instrument	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net incurrence of liabilities	932	1,048	1,408	1,354	1,498	1,678	1,409	2,375	2,915
Equity and investment fund shares	1,205	1,340	1,617	1,488	1,647	1,870	1,846	2,576	3,113
Debt instrument	-272	-292	-209	-134	-149	-192	-436	-201	-198
2. Portfolio investment	13	11	38	46	39	48	35	3	15
Net acquisition of financial assets	13	0	31	27	34	45	36	4	15
Equity and investment fund shares	13	0	31	27	34	45	36	4	15
Debt security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net incurrence of liabilities	0	-10	-7	-19	-6	-3	1	0	0
Equity and investment fund shares	0	-10	-7	-19	-6	-3	1	0	0
Debt security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Financial derivatives (other than reserves) and employee stock options	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net acquisition of financial assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net incurrence of liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Other investment	197	135	-129	-644	1,515	-1,214	-2,581	-1,976	47
Net acquisition of financial assets	387	689	-52	1,251	2,600	2,586	-433	383	1,489
Other equity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Currency and deposits	387	689	-52	1,251	2,600	2,586	-376	374	1,468
Loans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance, pension, and standardized guarantee schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trade credit and advances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other accounts receivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	-57	8	21
Net incurrence of liabilities	190	554	77	1,895	1,084	3,800	2,148	2,359	1,442
Other equity	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,148	0	0
Currency and deposits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loans	-252	-202	-288	299	-75	1,677	0	2,211	702
Insurance, pension, and standardized guarantee schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,689	0	0
Trade credit and advances	444	757	362	1,593	1,165	1,398	0	149	734
Other accounts receivable	-3	0	2	3	-6	0	276	-1	6

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 ^a	2023 ^a	2024 ^a
Special drawing rights (net incurrence of liabilities)	0	0	0	0	0	724	182	0	0
5. Reserve assets	-603	-24	56	436	-290	2,164	1,632	987	1,027
Monetary gold	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special drawing rights	-226	-136	-72	35	-14	724	-778	-29	-81
Reserve position in the IMF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reserve assets	-378	112	128	400	-276	1,440	2,409	1,016	1,108
Currency and deposits	-378	112	128	400	-276	1,440	2,409	1,016	1,108
Claims on monetary authorities	-378	112	128	400	-276	1,440	2,409	1,016	1,108
Claims on other entities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Securities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net errors and omissions	225	-151	-207	-302	192	-335	286	-61	164

Note: Presentation according to the sixth edition of the IMF Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6) converting data from BPM5.

a Forecasted data.

b Government transfers, including gifts.

c Private transfers, including personal transfers. NPISH: Non-profit institution serving households.

Source: Central Bank of the Congo, *Rapport Annuel 2024, Balance des paiements*, p. 148, viewed at: <https://www.bcc.cd/publications/rapports-annuels-0> (15/04/2026).

Table A1.2 Structure of exports, by HS section and main HS chapter, 2016-2023

(USD million and %)

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Exports (USD million)	7,193	12,296	20,004	13,382	14,230	21,412	15,672	27,727
	(% of exports)							
01-Live animals; animal products	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
02-Vegetable products	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
HS 09 Coffee, tea, maté and spices	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
03-Animal or vegetable fats and oils; prepared edible fats	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
04-Prepared foodstuffs; alcoholic beverages, spirits; tobacco	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.6
HS 18 Cocoa and cocoa preparations	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5
05-Mineral products	16.0	14.9	10.4	10.7	8.2	8.0	1.5	9.7
HS 26 Ores, slag and ash	11.8	12.2	9.6	9.6	7.6	7.7	0.9	9.0
HS 27 Mineral fuels, mineral oils; bituminous substances	4.2	2.6	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.6
06-Products of the chemical or allied industries	23.2	40.0	52.3	29.5	22.2	26.6	13.8	17.2
HS 28 Inorganic chemicals; organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals	23.1	40.0	52.3	29.4	22.2	26.6	13.7	17.2
07-Plastics and rubber	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
08-Raw hides and skins, leather, furskins; travel goods, handbags	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
09-Wood and articles of wood	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2
HS 44 Wood and articles of wood; wood charcoal	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2
10-Pulp of wood or of other fibrous cellulosic material; paper and paperboard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
11-Textiles and textile articles	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
12-Footwear, umbrellas, artificial flowers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
13-Articles of stone, plaster, cement; ceramic products; glass and glassware	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
14-Natural or cultured pearls; precious or semi-precious stones; precious metals	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	5.1
HS 71 Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones; precious metals; imitation jewellery	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	5.1
15-Base metals and articles of base metal	58.2	43.6	35.0	56.1	66.7	63.4	82.4	66.9
HS 74 Copper and articles thereof	56.7	42.5	34.9	55.8	65.4	62.5	81.3	66.5
HS 81 Other base metals; cermets	1.2	0.8	0.1	0.3	1.0	0.7	1.0	0.2
HS 79 Zinc and articles thereof	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
16-Machinery and mechanical appliances; electrical equipment; image and sound recorders	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
17-Vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
18-Optical, photographic, precision or medical instruments; clocks and watches; musical instruments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
19-Arms and ammunition	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-Miscellaneous manufactured articles	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
21-Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/2026).

Table A1.3 Structure of imports, by HS section and main HS chapter, 2016-2023

(USD million and %)

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Imports (USD million)	5,492	5,803	7,930	8,825	6,938	7,214	11,407	25,529
	(% of imports)							
01-Live animals; animal products	4.9	4.2	2.7	2.2	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.1
HS 03 Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates	1.7	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.5
HS 02 Meat and edible meat offal	2.4	2.3	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.2	0.3	0.5
HS 04 Dairy produce; birds' eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
02-Vegetable products	4.6	4.3	2.8	3.1	3.5	4.9	3.5	1.8
HS 10 Cereals	2.9	2.6	1.8	2.2	2.5	3.3	2.1	0.9
HS 11 Products of the milling industry; malt; starches; wheat gluten	1.2	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.8
HS 07 Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1
03- Animal or vegetable fats and oils; prepared edible fats	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.1
04-Prepared foodstuffs; alcoholic beverages, spirits; tobacco	5.4	4.4	3.0	2.3	3.3	3.2	2.8	1.8
HS 19 Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks' products	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5
HS 21 Miscellaneous edible preparations	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.4
HS 17 Sugars and sugar confectionery	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.3
HS 24 Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	1.3	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
05-Mineral products	13.9	10.3	10.6	11.0	13.4	15.1	35.8	45.2
HS 27 Mineral fuels, mineral oils; bituminous substances	6.1	4.4	3.8	4.4	5.0	6.0	24.3	36.5
HS 25 Salt; sulphur; earths and stone; plastering materials, lime and cement	7.8	5.9	6.7	6.6	8.1	9.0	11.5	8.6
06-Products of the chemical or allied industries	12.9	11.7	12.1	14.6	11.7	13.2	10.8	5.8
HS 28 Inorganic chemicals; organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals	2.9	3.7	5.6	5.1	4.3	4.2	5.4	2.0
HS 30 Pharmaceutical products	5.8	3.4	2.7	5.8	2.5	3.6	2.1	1.2
HS 29 Organic chemicals	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.6
HS 38 Miscellaneous chemical products	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	0.6	0.6
HS 31 Fertilisers	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.5
HS 34 Soap, organic surface-active agents, washing preparations, waxes, polishing or scouring preparations, candles, modelling pastes	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
07-Plastics and rubber	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.4	5.4	4.1	2.8
HS 39 Plastics and articles thereof	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.4	4.1	3.3	2.2
HS 40 Rubber and articles thereof	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.3	0.8	0.6
08-Raw hides and skins, leather, furskins; travel goods, handbags	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
09-Wood and articles of wood	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
10-Pulp of wood or of other fibrous cellulosic material; paper and paperboard	10.9	23.1	24.4	20.9	18.1	6.3	1.2	1.1
HS 49 Printed books, newspapers, pictures and other products of the printing industry; manuscripts, typescripts and plans	10.2	22.5	24.0	20.5	17.6	5.8	0.7	0.9
11-Textiles and textile articles	3.6	3.5	3.0	2.8	3.1	3.7	2.8	1.9
HS 63 Other made up textile articles; sets; worn clothing and worn textile articles; rags	2.3	2.5	2.1	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.7	1.3
HS 62 Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2
12-Footwear, umbrellas, artificial flowers	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
13- Articles of stone, plaster, cement; ceramic products; glass and glassware	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.6
14- Natural or cultured pearls; precious or semi-precious stones; precious metals	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
15-Base metals and articles of base metal	6.4	6.3	7.4	8.4	8.0	8.2	7.8	8.6
HS 73 Articles of iron or steel	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.4	4.6	4.8	4.6	6.0
HS 72 Iron and steel	1.3	1.2	2.2	2.3	1.9	2.2	2.3	1.7
HS 78 Lead and articles thereof	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3
16- Machinery and mechanical appliances; electrical equipment; image and sound recorders	20.4	17.7	18.7	20.8	21.6	24.4	22.5	21.3
HS 84 Boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances	13.8	11.1	13.4	14.4	14.2	16.9	16.3	15.5
HS 85 Electrical machinery and equipment; sound or image recorders	6.5	6.6	5.3	6.5	7.4	7.5	6.3	5.8
17-Vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment	7.8	5.9	7.6	6.1	6.1	8.4	4.2	6.1
HS 87 Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock	6.5	5.5	7.2	5.6	5.6	7.8	3.7	5.7
18-Optical, photographic, precision or medical instruments; clocks and watches; musical instruments	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.5	0.9	0.8
19-Arms and ammunition	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
20- Miscellaneous manufactured articles	1.2	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.4
21- Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
22-Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/2026).

Table A1.4 Merchandise exports, by trading partner, 2016-2023

(USD million and %)

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Exports (USD million)	7,193	12,296	20,004	13,382	14,230	21,412	15,672	27,727
	(% of exports)							
Americas	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0
United States of America	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Other - Americas	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Europe	4.8	5.0	3.4	6.9	7.0	2.8	4.4	2.6
EU-27	2.0	1.5	1.2	5.9	1.3	0.7	0.9	0.5
Belgium	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.3
Netherlands	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Luxembourg	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
EFTA	2.8	3.4	2.2	0.9	5.7	2.0	3.5	2.1
Switzerland	2.8	3.4	2.2	0.9	5.7	2.0	3.5	2.1
Other - Europe	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Africa	78.5	66.3	66.7	51.4	34.1	30.6	23.1	20.6
South Africa	55.5	54.4	52.7	26.8	7.7	9.8	7.4	8.6
Mozambique	0.0	0.0	0.5	3.6	4.8	5.1	6.8	5.7
Tanzania	10.0	3.3	6.6	12.6	11.7	9.2	7.5	4.3
Zambia	8.4	5.7	5.7	6.7	8.8	6.0	0.2	1.2
Congo	0.2	2.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2
Central African Republic	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
Namibia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Côte d'Ivoire	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Angola	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1
Middle East	4.4	6.7	7.0	6.7	6.0	6.1	5.5	3.7
United Arab Emirates	4.3	6.6	6.9	6.7	6.0	6.1	5.5	3.7
Asia	12.1	21.9	22.9	34.9	52.6	60.4	66.9	73.0
China	11.4	15.7	18.2	26.6	41.0	45.0	47.1	57.6
Japan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other - Asia	0.8	6.2	4.7	8.3	11.5	15.5	19.8	15.4
Hong Kong, China	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.1	3.5	7.9	8.4
Singapore	0.1	4.8	3.5	5.2	7.3	9.1	8.7	4.9
Viet Nam	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.5	1.4
India	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2
Malaysia	0.2	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2

a Commonwealth of Independent States, including certain associate and former member States.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/2026).

Table A1.5 Merchandise imports, by trading partner, 2016-2023

(USD million and %)

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Imports (USD million)	5,492	5,803	7,930	8,825	6,938	7,214	11,407	25,529
	(% of imports)							
Americas	12.0	27.9	28.9	25.8	22.8	11.2	4.9	3.6
United States of America	9.5	25.8	27.4	24.2	20.9	9.2	2.9	2.4
Other - Americas	2.5	2.2	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.2
Brazil	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.5
Canada	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2
Argentina	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1
Europe	25.7	16.9	12.7	14.8	14.7	15.2	12.6	15.3
EU-27	17.8	14.0	10.2	12.5	12.1	12.6	10.1	11.3
Belgium	3.5	3.4	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.4	5.0
Germany	2.5	2.1	1.8	1.7	2.0	2.1	1.3	1.2
France	5.0	2.3	1.8	4.2	1.5	2.1	1.2	0.9
Finland	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8
Netherlands	1.5	1.7	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.7
EFTA	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.5
Norway	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7
Switzerland	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7
Other - Europe	7.4	2.5	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.7	2.5
United Kingdom	6.6	1.7	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3
Türkiye	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.1
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ^a	1.5	1.3	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.6	1.5	0.8
Russian Federation	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.7	2.6	1.4	0.6
Kazakhstan	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2
Africa	22.6	21.5	21.6	19.3	19.9	23.1	26.0	19.7
South Africa	12.8	12.4	12.4	10.7	9.4	13.6	11.5	8.2
Tanzania	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	4.5	3.5
Zambia	3.0	3.1	4.0	4.0	4.8	3.8	3.6	2.1
Eswatini	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.6	1.3
Côte d'Ivoire	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Togo	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.7
Zimbabwe	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5
Kenya	1.2	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.5
Angola	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4
Mauritania	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3
Middle East	6.2	5.7	5.0	5.2	5.7	7.7	18.6	23.1
United Arab Emirates	3.1	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.2	4.7	10.0	11.8
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	2.2	2.8	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.9	2.1	4.1
Bahrain, Kingdom of	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	3.2
Qatar	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.0	1.4	2.3	1.9
Kuwait, State of	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.0	1.7
Asia	31.9	26.4	29.6	32.8	35.1	40.2	36.4	37.5
China	16.6	15.5	19.3	23.3	25.6	26.9	26.5	26.5
Japan	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.0	1.4
Other - Asia	13.1	9.0	8.4	7.9	8.0	11.5	8.9	9.5
India	7.3	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.7	7.3	5.7	6.5
Hong Kong, China	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.6

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Australia	1.5	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.6
Singapore	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
Korea, Republic of	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.3
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

a Commonwealth of Independent States, including certain associate and former member States.

Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, Comtrade database, viewed at: <https://comtradeplus.un.org/> (10/02/2026).