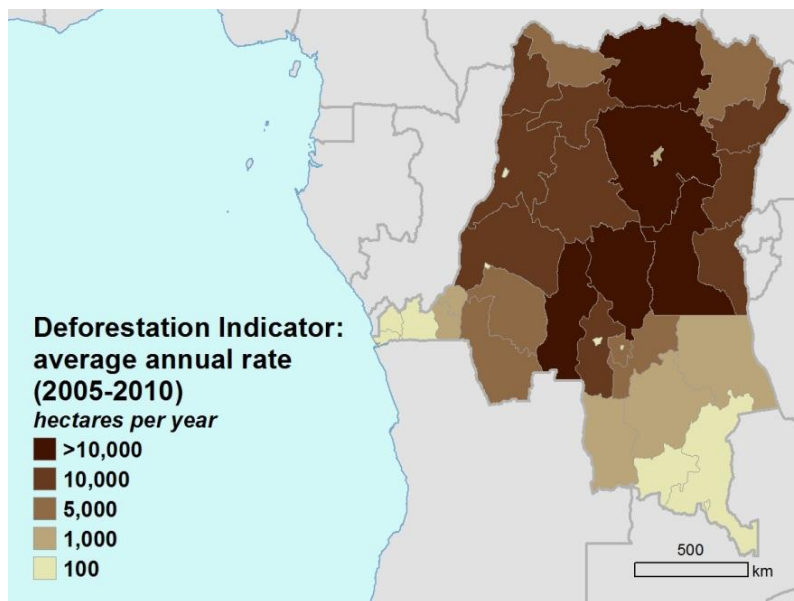


# Democratic Republic of the Congo



National deforestation estimates in percent per year are from FACET 2010, except for the period 1990-2000 from FAO and agricultural statistics are from FAO (2010). Mapped sub-national estimates of the Deforestation Indicator in hectares are indicative only, given the resolution of the data source, and are from FACET (see full citation below).

## Deforestation<sup>1</sup>

Forest area (2010): **68%**  
Primary forest area (2010): **46%**  
1990-2000: **-0.20 %y<sup>-1</sup>**  
2000-2005: **-0.22 %y<sup>-1</sup>**  
2005-2010: **-0.25 %y<sup>-1</sup>**

## Agriculture<sup>2</sup>

Agriculture as % of GDP (2009): **43%**  
Agricultural land (2009): **9.9%**  
Top 3 commodities, by footprint (2010):  
*Cassava: 1.9m ha*  
*Maize: 1.5m ha*  
*Groundnuts: .5m ha*  
Employment in agriculture: n/a but likely at least 50 percent of labor force

Sub-national Region	Hectares per Year (indicative)
Kasaï	15,249
Tshopo	14,379
Bas-Uele	11,996
Maniema	10,809
Sankuru	10,338

## Context

### Political Context

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has experienced several wars over the last century, including most recently, a succession of civil wars.<sup>3</sup> A history of political strife and instability has encouraged a mindset of short-term gain at the expense of long-term sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> DRC's government has very recently demonstrated a strong interest in protecting the country's forest, however, by giving legal protection of traditional users' rights, requesting mandatory sustainable management plans for production forests, expanding the protected area network and promoting payment for ecosystem services.<sup>5</sup>

### Socio-economic Context

DRC's population grows at a rate of 2.7% y<sup>-1</sup> and as much as 70% live in rural areas.<sup>6</sup> It's estimated that 54% of DRC's population depend directly on resources found in its forests.<sup>7</sup> DRC is widely known for being rich in much sought after resources such as gold, copper, cobalt, coltan, tin and diamonds.<sup>8</sup> Logging has been a major focus of government's economic development plans.<sup>9</sup> This richness in natural resources stands in stark contrast to the socio-economic reality of DRC's citizens. The 2011 Human Development Index rank DRC 187<sup>th</sup> out of 187 countries overall.<sup>10</sup> Political and economic instability have left the country vulnerable to resource exploitation.<sup>11</sup> DRC's mismanagement of natural resources is the result of a poor economy constrained by war and lack of infrastructure. It is suggested that current forest-related business enterprises exhaust the resource base and aren't sustainable in the long term.<sup>12</sup>

### Deforestation Drivers

DRC has an estimated 145 million hectares of forest cover and contains the largest tropical rainforest in Africa.<sup>13</sup> Although rates of deforestation are relatively low, DRC lost around 701,000 hectares of primary forest between 2005 and 2010.<sup>14</sup> Deforestation in DRC is being driven mainly by rural-related activities, including: commercial and slash and burn subsistence agriculture, artisanal wood exploitation, wood energy and charcoal production, and mining activities.<sup>15</sup> While those drivers are widespread in the entire country, industrial forest exploitation is concentrated in a few provinces (Equateur, Bandundu, Orientale and Bas-Congo).<sup>16</sup> Increased rural population in DRC stimulates agricultural expansion and shifting cultivation (the dominant farming practice in Central Africa).<sup>17</sup> A difficult economic environment associated with a weak institutional framework and the expansion of infrastructure are principal underlying causes of deforestation. The Congo Basin also has suitable soil and climate for growing palm, which is catching the attention of the agro-business sector. New palm oil cultivation (over 500,000 hectares) at industrial-scale is being implemented in the region.<sup>18</sup>

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