



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Man and
the Biosphere
Programme



United Nations
Development
Programme



Kingdom
of Belgium



European
Union



Democratic
Republic
of the Congo



University
of Kinshasa

ERAIFT

**Regional Post-graduate Training School
on Integrated Management
of Tropical Forests and Lands**



Photo: Danila Assise



Modern knowledge and know-how are critical components in seeking to manage the environment and its natural resources in ways that are scientifically sound, economically viable, socially equitable and culturally sensitive.

Today, worldwide, higher education continues to be largely based on the disciplinary and professional structure of the nineteenth-century university. At the national level, administrations tend to be organized along sectoral lines, with ministries and departments of agriculture, forests, health, education, and so on. But the challenges that we face in our contemporary world are rarely confined to a particular sectoral field or technical domain. Above all, the fight against poverty, one of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, calls for innovative approaches.

And on another plane, much of the tertiary training of African specialists continues to take place far-away from the reality in which these specialists are called upon to apply their expertise.

This potted scenario provides the context and rationale for the Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (ERAIFT), set up a decade ago under the aegis of UNESCO and located at the University of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The School draws on the approach of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Also on the experience of an earlier training programme on integrated pastoral management in the Sahel (FAPIS, after its title in French). This approach is thus interdisciplinary, participative, holistic and integrated, in other words systemic.

Using this approach to train a new type of specialist in the integrated management and development of tropical forest landscapes is the principal vocation of ERAIFT. The School recruits its students above all at the post-graduate level.

The approach of the School is



ERAIFT has its origins in the Declaration of N'Sele, adopted following the regional seminar on the strengthening of cooperation for the rational management of African tropical forests held at N'Sele, Kinshasa, in March 1991. Here, from left to right: Prof. Michel Maldague, First Director; David Matuka Kabala, representing the Director-General of UNESCO; and Samy Mankoto, Project Officer for ERAIFT at UNESCO.

Structures of ERAIFT

- **UNESCO is the implementing agency** of ERAIFT, through its Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences.
- **The International Supervisory Committee**, established by UNESCO upon the creation of the School, includes specialists nominated in a personal capacity, representatives of associated countries, donors and institutional science and research partners. The Committee has responsibilities at the political and relational level. Its mission is to ensure the overall direction and visibility of the School. It acts as advisory body to the Director-General.
- **The Administrative Council**, chaired by UNESCO, is the principal control mechanism. It comprises representatives of the government of the DRC, the University of Kinshasa, associated African countries, regional and international partners, the private sector, environmental NGOs as well as the teaching staff and the student body. The Director of ERAIFT ensures the strategic functioning and development of the School following the orientations given by the Administrative Council, with the systemic approach as the conceptual, scientific and pedagogic basis of ERAIFT.
- **The Academic and Research Council** coordinates and assures the quality of teaching and research, and oversees the recruitment of students and professors following international tendering and application. The selection is validated by the Administrative Council.

The funding of ERAIFT

Principal sources of financial support:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), from 1997 to 2001;
- European Commission (EC), from 2005 to 2014;
- Kingdom of Belgium, from 2001 to 2009.

Other contributors: Canada, France, Netherlands, among others. Cooperation agreements include those with WWF, the École nationale des eaux et forêts (ENEF) of Gabon and the Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature (ICCN).

interdisciplinary, participative, holistic and integrated, in other words 'systemic'.

ERAIFT in dates

- 1991:** Regional seminar of UNESCO on the strengthening of cooperation for the rational management of African tropical forests. N'Sele.
- 1995:** Adoption of the N'Sele Declaration by the UNESCO General Conference.
- 1997:** Financial support by UNDP for the first two promotions.
- 1998:** First meeting of the International Supervisory Committee.
- 1999:** Inauguration of ERAIFT at the University of Kinshasa. Start of first promotion.
- 2001:** Recognition of the DESS Masters degree of ERAIFT by the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) at its session in Abidjan.
- 2002:** Graduation of first two promotions.
- 2004:** First in-service training course on forest resources management (three weeks).
- 2005:** Protocol agreement between ERAIFT and WWF.
- 2007:** Inauguration of the School's new buildings (Mont Amba Campus, University of Kinshasa).
- 2008:** ERAIFT identified in the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves as regional flagship project for climate change mitigation. UNESCO Executive Board decision to promote the approach of ERAIFT in other countries of the region and to make the School a pillar of the intersectoral platforms on Priority Africa and Education for Sustainable Development. Donors Round Table.
- 2009:** Launch of South-South Cooperation by MAB Council. New funding phase of ERAIFT (2009-2014).

ERAIFT's working environment. In addition to their individual studies, the trainees – all specialists in their particular fields – benefit from close group supervision. Much of the work and interaction takes place within small groups, even during meal breaks in the cafeteria.

- Visit to WWF and work on Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Course on remote sensing and numerical mapping.
- Course on the methodology and implementation of integrated development: Elaboration and evaluation of projects.

ERAIFT in figures

- 4 promotions:**
1999-2001 (22 laureates)
2000-2002 (19 laureates)
2003-2005 (23 laureates)
2007-2009 (19 laureates)
- 83 specialists trained** in the first four promotions (83 Masters, three completing PhD).
- 12 countries of origin of students:**
Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Togo.
- 4 million euros** attributed to ERAIFT by the European Commission under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) (2009-2014).





Emblematic photo of the 'Château' of ERAIFT at the University of Kinshasa. The School's new look, with the new buildings completely renovated and equipped through the funds-in-trust of the European Commission and the World Bank.



Photos: Martin Mbemba



The students ...

The School's trainees have four or five years of university education followed by at least three years' professional experience.

The students come with backgrounds in the social and human sciences as well as the natural sciences: agronomy, economics, forestry, geography, hydrology, plant protection, rural development, sociology, veterinary medicine, etc.

One of the principal objectives of the School is to provide an opportunity for truly interactive work between specialists from different disciplines. The goal is to train a new type of specialist capable of promoting the exigencies of human and sustainable development at the strategic and policy-making levels. And this in the private as well as the public sector.

... and the professors

In terms of the teaching staff, the professorial body comprises a core of local professors (University of Kinshasa and shortly the University of Kisangani under a partnership of UNESCO/ ERAIFT-CIRAD-CIFOR/UNIKIS supported by the CE) and short-term contracted experts recruited regionally and internationally, having considerable African experience. The selection of professors is in accordance with the guidelines of CAMES. Within a system set up when ERAIFT was created, the students take part in the evaluation of professors, using criteria elaborated by the former Committee of University Affairs, now the Academic and Research Council.

Training

The training at ERAIFT focuses on the integrated planning and management of tropical forests and lands. Two qualifications are offered:

- **Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées** (DESS – Degree of Higher Specialized Studies);
- **Degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD).**

The DESS degree of ERAIFT was recognized by the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) at its regular meeting in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire, 2001). This degree is equivalent to a research Masters (Masters 2 of the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorate) system recognized in the Bologna process).

The programme is of 18 months' duration. It comprises four components:

Theoretical and practical laboratory work

Nine months	28 credits	Chairs 1 to 14 and 18
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Laboratory of integrated management and development

One month	4 credits	Chair 15
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Field course on integrated management and development

Two months	8 credits	Chair 16
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DESS dissertation

Six months	20 credits	
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One credit corresponds to 15 hours of coursework and 30 hours of personal study.
Programme total : 60 credits (18 months)

- In addition, the School organizes in-service training courses of 3-4 weeks' duration on subjects such as tropical land management.

Luki Biosphere Reserve,

(situated 550 km southwest of Kinshasa) provides one of the field locations for group training as well as the research site for the dissertations of some of the students.

Photo: Damila Assise

Photo: Martin Mbemba



their biological diversity can only be achieved by combating and eradicating poverty.

Training Programme

- Chair 1:** Basic concepts and systemic analysis applied to management and integrated development.
- Chair 2:** Population-forest-savanna interactions and environmental governance (ex situ in Luki BR).
- Chair 3:** Integrated land management including human settlements (towns, urbanization).
- Chair 4:** Remote sensing and digital cartography.
- Chair 5:** RADAR remote sensing, complemented by geodesy and GIS computing.
- Chair 6:** Intersectoral and integrated approach: forestry, agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries, tourism.
- Chair 7:** Terrestrial wildlife management.
- Chair 8:** Sustainable management and certification of tropical forests.
- Chair 9:** Management of aquatic fauna including the notions of limnology and hydrobiology.
- Chair 10:** Communication and sustainable development.
- Chair 11:** Environmental impact studies.
- Chair 12:** Climate change.
- Chair 13:** Legal aspects. International conventions. Decentralization policy and integrated development.
- Chair 14:** Nutrition and health planning.
- Chair 15:** Education and mesological ethics.
- Chair 16:** Methodology and implementation of integrated development.
- Chair 17:** Introduction to scientific research and project design.
- Chair 18:** Field work on integrated management and development.
- Chair 19:** In-service training.



Photos: Afoda Chamsoudine



Field training of students of the 4th promotion at Luki Biosphere Reserve, District of Lukula, Tsundi Sud.

- Incorporation of food plants in the forest system.
- Exchanging ideas on the provision of drinking water and options for improvement.
- Discussions with the local community leader and elders in Tsundi Sud.
- Community radio: an effective way of reaching the public in isolated rural locations.



A new type of specialist capable of promoting the exigencies of human and sustain



Presenting and defending the thesis

- by students of the 4th promotion and
- by the first three doctoral students of ERAIFT

Before an international jury comprising:

- Prof. Michel Maldague, Emeritus Professor, Université Laval, Québec, Canada;
- Prof. Joseph Lumande Kasali, Director of ERAIFT;
- Prof. Bernard Lututala Mumpasi, Rector of the University of Kinshasa;
- Dr Samy Mankoto, Project Officer of ERAIFT at UNESCO;
- Dr Jean Diamouangana, Congo.

Doctoral thesis subjects

- Systemic approaches to the conservation of the Mbanza-Ngungu caves: contribution to the study of cave biodiversity and proposal for creation of protected area (Dr Alexis Kimbembi, RDC).
- Integrated land use planning of Ouessou forest: participatory management of forest resources by the local populations in the zone of Ngombé, Pokola and Kabo (Congo) (Dr Albert Itoua, Congo).
- Multicriteria analysis applied to the evaluation of the principles, criteria and indicators of biodiversity management in the Congo Basin: case study of two protected areas in Congo Brazzaville (Dr Alphonse Batalou, Congo).



Photos: Afoua Chamsouidine

Photo: Danilla Assise

Photo: Martin Mbemba



Countries of origin of students:

Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Togo.

able development in strategic planning and policy-making.

Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves

(2008-2013)

Action 24.4: Carry out training courses for different ecosystem types related to climate change, in particular using the ERAIFT regional flagship project for tropical forests and certified forestry as a climate change mitigation approach.



Photos : Martin Mbemba

And after?

'Is there a demand?' is a question posed by all training programmes. For the students of ERAIFT, the very large majority would seem to have found a job or assignment corresponding to their new profiles. Some examples:

Njiang Antoine, Cameroon. Within the National Parks Service, responsible for the follow-up and implementation of national forest policy in respect to protected areas.

Ndotam Tatila Issac, Chad. Coordinator of the Health and Environment Support Office for Moyen-Chari region, Sarh.

Lefia Gérard, Congo. Head of Forest Inventories and Management.

Tra Bi Tra Jeannot, Côte d'Ivoire. Director of Iles Ehotilé National Park.

Kikeba Mbala Laurent, DRC. Director of Cabinet of the Provincial Governor of Agriculture (Banundu Province).

Nkey Ngono Chantal, DRC. Expert in the Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism.

Rakotoarijaona Andrianarisoa Mamy, Madagascar. Director of Studies, Cabinet Ebm-Sarl (Bureau d'études/consultancy firm).

Kondo Kao Ahihou, Togo. Head of Unit, Planning Department, Maritime region.

As is widely recognized, Africa must overcome many obstacles in meeting its development challenges. UNESCO remains convinced that the education of its human resources – the continent's riches – is the most effective approach. ERAIFT, with its integrated environmental and human-centred approach, represents one of the major projects of the region, which should serve as an example.

M. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO



ECOLE REGIONALE Post-UNIVERSITAIRE D'AMENAGEMENT ET
DE GESTION INTEGRES DES FORETS ET TERRITOIRES TROPICAUX

" ERAIFT "



Photo: Danila Assise

ERAIFT is faced by a number of important challenges.

At the national and regional level:

- Feasibility study aimed at providing ERAIFT with an appropriate legal status and ensuring institutional sustainability.
- Encouragement of the mobility of students and teaching staff in accordance with the 'Bologna process' and in line with the reform policy for higher and university education being undertaken by the Monetary and Economic Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and CAMES.
- Watching brief by Chair holders of advances in knowledge, in order to respond to the development needs of Africa and changing circumstances, such as those posed by climate change, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, etc.
- Reinforcement of in-service training and its series of short-term, targeted courses.
- In collaboration with the Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (OSFAC), and with the financial support of Belgium and the EC, completion of the renovation of the Laboratory of Remote Sensing and Numerical Mapping, with a view to creating an observation centre for the forested region of the Congo Basin.
- As a knowledge-based centre of excellence and as a flagship project of the MAB Programme for Africa, replication of the ERAIFT model in other regions, notably West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire).

At the international level, links will be strengthened with other initiatives such as:

- New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and its Environmental Action Plan;
- United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the international network of UNESCO Chairs;
- International Year of Forests (2011) (FAO).

A new initiative was launched by the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme in May 2009 to reinforce South-South Cooperation, with a key role to be played by ERAIFT.

ERAIFT's regional and international outreach has been boosted by the signature of an agreement to create the Network of South-South Cooperation for sustainable development in the three main humid tropical regions of the world. The agreement was concluded during the 21st session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme (Jeju, Republic of Korea, 28 May 2009). Shown here, representatives of the Federal University of Pará, Belém (Brazil, Amazonia), ERAIFT-University of Kinshasa (DRC, Congo Basin) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (South East Asia).



Photo: Miriam Querol

Associated countries: ■
Students: □

- Angola
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- CAR
- Chad
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- DRC
- Gabon
- Guinea
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Togo

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