



Central Africa Women's Initiative for Climate Action (WICA)

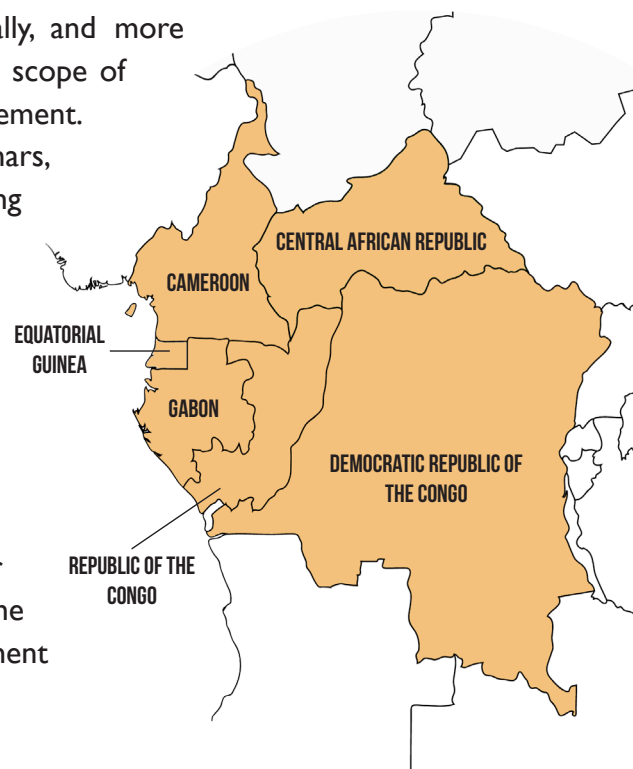
BACKGROUND

The U.S. Forest Service International Program (USFS) supports governments of Congo basin countries in their efforts to sustainably manage forest landscapes and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions thereby contributing to the improvement of livelihoods, conservation of biodiversity and stabilization of the global climate. Generally, throughout the region, there are a low number of women in technical roles related to the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action. To respond to this gap, USFS with funding from the US Department of State (DoS)'s Climate Fellow's Program, launched the Central Africa Women Initiative for Climate Action (WICA) in January 2021. Subsequent phases, WICA 2 and WICA 3 launched in February 2022 and July 2023, respectively, have been supported by the inter-agency U.S. Government technical assistance program SilvaCarbon and the U.S. Forest Service International Programs.

The initiative aims to strengthen the capacities and involvement of women from Central African countries in national climate change processes, generally, and more specifically, in accounting of GHG emissions and removals in the scope of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement. To meet these goals, the program is made up of a series of seminars, workshops, webinars, rigorous diploma program on GHG accounting and internships.

Four countries participated in the first phase of the initiative (WICA 1): Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, and Republic of the Congo (RoC). WICA 2 expanded to also include Central African Republic (CAR) and WICA 3 will further include Equatorial Guinea.

The program activities are carried out in collaboration with regional GHG experts, national partners and international partner institutions including, the GHG Management Institute (GHGMI), the Coalition for Rainforest Nations (CfRN), and the U.S. Environment Protection Agency (US EPA).



PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. National workshops to introduce participants to climate change
2. Series of webinars on specific topics related to GHG accounting and international reporting frameworks
3. GHGMI Diploma Program on GHG Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV)
4. Select internships with national institutions and organizations and international partners
5. Participation in regional and international climate meetings including UNFCCC COPs
6. Establishment of national and regional networks of young-women professionals in climate fields
7. Final close-out meeting for diploma holder individuals

WICA AT A GLANCE

WICA 1: January 2021 - November 2022

- 4 countries
- 104 fellows
- 35 GHGMI MRV diploma holders
- 21 internships completed

WICA 2: February 2022 – July 2023

- 5 countries
- 95 fellows
- 25 GHGMI MRV diplomas in progress
- 23 internship positions in progress

WICA 3: To be launched in July 2023

- 2 countries: Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea
- 40 fellows
- 10 GHGMI MRV diplomas



Top: WICA fellows visit IBAY SUP in Cameroon, an educational institution that specializes in environmental sciences.

Bottom: WICA fellows at the COP 27 IN Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 2022.

PROGRAM IMPACT

- Network of 199 WICA Fellows
- 35 GHGMI MRV diploma holders plus 25 in progress
- 8 fellows registered in UNFCCC roster of experts
- 14 fellows attended UNFCCC COP several participating in country delegations
- 43 internships completed or ongoing
- 9 out of 35 GHGMI MRV diploma holders employed in climate-related positions or enrolled in climate related higher studies since graduation of the program

TESTIMONIALS



WICA I fellows celebrate their achievements at the diploma ceremony.

“With my colleagues from the DRC, we want to create a new consultancy company working on greenhouse gas management, and we also envision that we will become future mentors to the next generation of climate experts. We also want to use our new expertise in greenhouse gas accounting to help our country further develop and implement climate adaptation and mitigation programs.”

Joidie Bilonda
WICA Fellow | DRC

“....I can confidently say that [WICA] transformed me from a climate action novice to having [sic] a more objective career pursuit. WICA forever has had a value-added effect on my career.”

Rinyu Mclaura Bekwake
WICA Fellow | Cameroon

“This training was very important because it helped me to understand different concepts related to climate change but also to apply the different methodologies of the IPCC to estimate the emissions and removals of greenhouse gases. For my thesis, this training will also allow me to estimate the emissions and removals related to the loss of forest cover and the gain in restored areas.”

Lisa Francine Louvouandou
WICA Fellow | RoC

“We are women—we are not just victims of climate change, we also hold the solutions.”

Madhy Poba
WICA Fellow | Gabon



Madhy Poba during the first WICA workshop in Gabon in 2021.

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