



# Integrated Country Strategy

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Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)

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**Table of Contents**

1. Chief of Mission Priorities ..... 2

2. Mission Strategic Framework ..... 3

3. Mission Goals and Objectives ..... 4

4. Management Objectives ..... 6

## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Our mission seeks to improve the historically difficult diplomatic relationship between the United States and the Republic of Congo (ROC) through balanced engagement, and in so doing, promote American national security and our economic and development goals in the Republic of Congo. U.S. engagement with Congolese officials seeks to encourage, prepare and support the Congolese in their efforts to bring an end to internal conflict, diversify the economy and harness the power of its blossoming youth population. Improving bilateral relations will create opportunities for U.S. investment and exports, facilitate cooperation on regional security and encourage the Government of the Republic of Congo (GROC) to address poor governance, weak institutions, the lack of economic opportunity, corruption, and persistent human rights abuses.

The Republic of Congo is a resource-rich country whose economy has deteriorated in recent years due to a drop in commodity prices, poor economic governance, and a lack of economic diversification. With 46 percent of the population living under the poverty line, the ROC's working population exhibits low education standards, little social mobility and operates mostly in the informal sector. Women's economic participation is very limited. Ranked 179 out of 190 countries worldwide for ease of doing business, ROC's exceptionally poor business climate poses major impediments to American companies seeking to expand trade and investment with the country. With this in mind, U.S. Embassy Brazzaville has made the diversification of the economy and an improvement of the business climate a key strategic goal. U.S. Embassy Brazzaville works with the GROC and the private sector to improve access to English language information about the Congolese economy, advance reforms that address the challenges of doing business in the country, respond to the needs of American investors, and improve bilateral trade flows. The Embassy provides in-country representation of non-resident U.S. government economic agencies including USAID and the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and coordinates closely with multilateral development partners such as the World Bank (WB) to achieve these goals in a comprehensive, flexible and targeted way.

Though 70 percent of Congo's population is under 35, youth face a failing education system, no political voice and very meager employment options. With few opportunities at home, Congo's youth often opt to emigrate to develop their skills and talents elsewhere. Our mission sees it as imperative to empower Congo's youth with 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills for greater socioeconomic mobility; and to achieve this, access to quality English language learning is a key factor for success. We seek to deepen partnerships with both public educational institutions and civil society organizations to promote youth vocational skills development and provide opportunities and alternatives to the next generation of Congolese leaders.

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## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

<b>Mission Goal 1</b>	Strengthen Bilateral Ties
<b>Mission Objective 1.1:</b>	The United States increases the frequency with which it engages established Congolese influencers in productive dialogue on substantive matters and generates meaningful relationships with young political leaders.
<b>Mission Objective 1.2</b>	The United States increases the number of security related topics on which it engages and the frequency with which it cooperates with Congolese armed forces thereby strengthening U.S. security cooperation with GROC.
<b>Mission Objective 1.3</b>	GROC improves coincidence of UN voting on key policy issues.
<b>Mission Goal 2</b>	Advance Economic Diversification and Improve Business Climate
<b>Mission Objective 2.1</b>	GROC increases economic activity outside its petroleum sector by increasing exports of priority products and services to the U.S.
<b>Mission Objective 2.2</b>	GROC achieves a net gain in U.S. business investment as a result of U.S. advocacy for and GROC's adoption of improved commercial policies, accurate and consistent information and stabilized investment conditions.
<b>Mission Goal 3</b>	Empower Congolese youth with 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills and knowledge
<b>Mission Objective 3.1</b>	GROC increases the number of those 35 years old and younger who enjoy regular access to English language training.
<b>Mission Objective 3.2</b>	The United States increases the number of Congolese, especially youth and women, who participate in entrepreneurship training and activities in an effort to amplify embassy efforts to expand and diversify trade.
<b>Mission Objective 3.3:</b>	As a result of sustained advocacy for and engagement with youth-focused civil society organizations, the United States increases the number of Congolese organizations capable qualifying for funding from donor organizations.
<b>Management Objective 1</b>	Embassy Brazzaville establishes and educates staff on processes that enhance management controls, increase communication, improve decision making, and ease administrative burdens.

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### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

#### **Mission Goal 1:** Strengthen Bilateral Ties

**Description and Linkages** The United States seeks stronger bilateral relations with the Government of the Republic of Congo to sustain productive dialogue and cooperation. This goal reflects pillars 1, 3 and 4 of the 2017 National Security Strategy. It also supports the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, goal 3, objectives 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. Consistent with the National Security Strategy and the Joint Strategic Plan, the Mission will seek stronger engagement in order to further American values and foreign policy goals.

**Mission Objective 1.1** The United States increases the frequency with which it engages established Congolese influencers in productive dialogue on substantive matters and generates meaningful relationships with young political leaders.

**Justification** Robust engagements with key influencers at the national and sub-national level will strengthen bilateral relations and allow substantive discussions on sensitive issues.

**Mission Objective 1.2** The United States increases the number of security related topics on which it engages and the frequency with which it cooperates with Congolese armed forces thereby strengthening U.S. security cooperation with GROC.

**Justification** Robust engagements with key influencers in the security sector will strengthen bilateral relations.

**Mission Objective 1.3** GROC improves coincidence of UN voting on key policy issues.

**Justification** Increased coincidence of UN voting will augment U.S. influence in the UN.

#### **Mission Goal 2** Economic Diversification and Improved Business Climate

**Description and Linkages** Investment conditions are improved and information on ROC's economy and investment requirements is readily available in order to attract U.S. investors and to facilitate American travelers' access to the ROC. This goal reflects pillars 2 and 3 of the 2017 National Security Strategy. It also supports the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, goal 2, objectives 2.1 and 2.3 as well as goal 3, objective 3.1. Consistent with the National Security Strategy and the Joint Strategic Plan, the Mission will seek stronger bilateral trade and investment relationship with GROC.

**Mission Objective 2.1** GROC increases economic activity outside its petroleum sector by increasing exports of priority products and services to the U.S.

**Justification** Increased economic activity results in economic growth and opportunities for U.S. businesses.

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**Mission Objective 2.2** GROC achieves a net gain in U.S. business investment as a result of U.S. advocacy for and GROC's adoption of improved economic governance and commercial policies, accurate and consistent information and stabilized investment conditions.

**Justification** Improved economic governance would allow for economic growth and trade.

**Mission Goal 3** Empower Congo's youth with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and knowledge

**Description and Linkages** The United States seeks to empower youth 35 years old and younger in urban and semi-urban areas with 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills for greater socioeconomic stability. This goal reflects pillars 1, 3 and 4 of the 2017 National Security Strategy. It also supports the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, goal 1, objectives 1.3 as well as goal 3, objectives 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. Consistent with the National Security Strategy and the Joint Strategic Plan, the Mission will seek increased interaction with GROC's youth in order to promote economic stability and empower women and youth.

**Mission Objective 3.1** GROC increases the number of those 35 years old and younger who enjoy regular access to English language training.

**Justification** Increased access to English language learning will promote youth socioeconomic mobility and increase the percentage of youth with English language proficiency eligible for Embassy exchanges and training.

**Mission Objective 3.2** The United States increases the number of Congolese, especially youth and women, who participate in entrepreneurship training and activities in an effort to amplify embassy efforts to expand and diversify trade.

**Justification** The United States seeks to stimulate entrepreneurship to help grow the Congolese economy and to expand trade.

**Mission Objective 3.3:** As a result of sustained advocacy for and engagement with youth-focused civil society organizations, the United States increases the number of Congolese organizations capable of qualifying for funding from donor organizations

**Justification** Effective youth-focused civil society organizations create conditions for increased economic opportunities.

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## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1** Embassy Brazzaville establishes and educates staff on processes that enhance management controls, increase communication, improve decision making, and ease administrative burdens.

**Justification** Increase efficiency to improve the productivity and morale of Mission Brazzaville staff and to ensure effective execution of foreign policy goals

**Management Objective 2** Embassy Brazzaville reduces service failures, performance related disciplinary actions, and error rates as a result of the improved professional and technical capacity of local management staff, particularly at the supervisory level.

**Justification** Successful execution of Mission objectives depends on a well-trained and competent support staff.

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