

Strengthening Relationships in the Congo Basin

October 28, 2026

Building cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo starts on the ground. After strengthening its footprint over the summer with a team member based in Kinshasa, Canopy Trust spent ten days in the field in October with the companies it supports and the institutions shaping the region's economic future.



The importance of Local Presence

The DRC holds roughly 60% of the Congo Basin's forests and accounts for nearly 70% of its deforestation, driven largely by low-productivity farming and charcoal production that meet everyday needs for food and energy. A key remaining question is how the population can meet its needs while preserving the tropical forest. Canopy Trust now has a physical presence in the country for the first time, through a representative based in Kinshasa. This marks a new phase of closer, day-to-day engagement with partners, developers and national institutions, and shortens the distance between local developers, the capital they need, and the policies that shape their markets. Canopy Trust focuses on value chains with the highest potential to address key drivers of deforestation and targets investments that can generate increased income for the local population.

“A physical presence in the DRC gives Canopy Trust institutional permanence and changes our day-to-day relationship with existing portfolio companies, promising founders and local partner representatives. Being close at hand builds trust faster, and we look forward to strengthening these partnerships in the months ahead.”

Julie Goerig, Programme Manager, Canopy Trust



Photo credits: Canopy Trust team during official workshop with Public Sector representatives, hosted at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence in Kinshasa.

Site visits and partners meetings

The field visits covered very different businesses with a shared logic: meeting demand for energy, food and income without clearing forests.

The team started with a visit of **CKID (Congo-Kinshasa Innovation Durable)**, a solar-powered cassava processing plant allowing a staple crop to be transformed close to where it is grown, adding value locally and reducing the pressure to open new land thanks to the industrial grade processing into cassava flour. The project is designed to modernize one of the DRC's most important agricultural value chains – cassava- while strengthening food security and reducing dependence on diesel-powered processing.



[PKT & Partners \(PKT\)](#) scales the production of charcoal briquettes and biochar fertilizers from locally sourced urban and agricultural waste streams. Despite growing demand for alternatives, access to affordable, deforestation-free cooking fuels remains limited by production capacity, infrastructure constraints, and investment gaps. PKT aims to significantly increase its production capacity with the procurement of a high-capacity carbonization reactor and investment in the company's logistic assets.



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“Local processing helps farmers move from subsistence farming to generating a real income. With CKID, cassava is processed close to where it is grown, so post-harvest losses fall and jobs and value stay in the community. Smallholders also farm food crops such as beans and vegetables alongside cassava on CKID’s land. The beans fix nitrogen and the ground cover suppresses weeds, improving CKID’s cassava yields while giving farmers additional food and income. Both sides gain, and the local economy grows with them”

—Emmanuel Claude, Investment Specialist at Canopy Trust

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The team also met [ASC Impact](#) team during the Brazzaville visit. ASC Impact, an experienced Germany based project developer, aims to implement a reforestation and agricultural production project in Gamboma, on a 104,000 ha degraded savannah concession, boasting local employment and development.

Finally, Canopy Trust team met with Texere Congo’s -another Canopy Trust Portfolio company- managing director Maurizio Solfrini, to discuss the readiness of the 10,000 ha regenerative farming project in Muanda, Kongo Central. This meeting managed to catch up on the local team’s capacity and status of discussions with key stakeholders in the project.

An Economic Hub in the Making

Alongside the site visits, the team met partners and national authorities, including DRC’s Ministry of Environment and Republic of Congo’s Ministry of Forest Economy, entrepreneurs, investors and financial institutions. Discussions centred on the Congo Basin journey towards becoming a strategic economic hub for the region, and on how private investment in agriculture, clean energy and land use can support that ambition.

The conversations confirmed a common shared direction. The country's strategy, national land-use planning and agriculture policies set the frame; local developers bring the models; early, risk-sharing capital helps the two meet.



Photo credits: Canopy Trust team and representatives from the German Embassy in Kinshasa, KfW and GiZ.