

Departure of the 6th Cohort of ERAIFT Students for a Professional Immersion Internship at Odzala-Kokoua-Lossi National Park in the Republic of Congo, on Tuesday, 30 September 2025.

Under the overall coordination of the Director of ERAIFT, a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO and based in Kinshasa, the students of the 6th cohort of the Regional Master's Programme embarked, on Monday, 30 September 2025, on a three-month mission to the Odzala-Kokoua-Lossi National Park (PNOK-Lossi) in the Republic of Congo. This mission includes in situ practical training as well as a Field Internship on Integrated Land Use Planning and Development (STADI). This immersion marks a major milestone in their training, providing students with direct and concrete exposure to the professional world of conservation and the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources in the Congo Basin. It has been made possible through funding from the European Union, with technical and financial management and coordination provided by PARTICIP.

This initiative represents a first in the history of ERAIFT and an exceptional opportunity for these students, who come from six COMIFAC member countries as well as Burundi. Over the course of three months, they will put into practice, in a natural setting, the theoretical knowledge acquired through ERAIFT's systemic approach – the guiding framework of its teaching and research – in close collaboration with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and professionals engaged in the management of protected areas, forests, and tropical territories in Africa.

ERAIFT expresses its sincere gratitude to the European Union and AGRINATURA for their financial support, as well as to PARTICIP for managing the funds and coordinating the Short-Term Assistance programme. It also thanks Her Excellency Rosalie Matondo, Minister of Forest Economy of the Republic of Congo, and the entire Congolese Government for their welcome and hospitality. Finally, ERAIFT thanks the Odzala-Kokoua-Lossi Foundation and African Parks Network for their scientific cooperation and hospitality.

