



RWANDA ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Your Quarterly Newsletter

July - September 2021



We are pleased to share with you REMA quarterly newsletter which features key stories and photos of our work these past months. We hope you will find it interesting and informative.

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LAFREC Project Leaves Lasting Legacy of Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Change Resilience



Rwanda launches real-time air quality app on International Day of Clean Air for blue skies



Young Rwandans Meet to Share Knowledge and Scale up Green Initiatives

Rwanda launches real-time air quality app on International Day of Clean Air for blue skies



Rwanda has an ambitious target to reduce 38% of emissions compared to business as usual

Rwanda launches the Air Quality Monitoring System, which provides access to real-time air quality information through a new website and mobile application.

The Rwanda Air Quality Monitoring System provides data on the quality of the air at 23 sites across the country. The system was developed through the Air Quality and Climate Change Monitoring Project, which has been funded by the Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA).

It was designed in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology and implemented by Rwanda Environment Management Authority and the Ministry of Education.

The system provides a real-time Air Quality Index (AQI) for each station in both numerical and color code format. The system highlights the dominant air pollutant responsible for air quality degradation during the reported period for each station.

The system strengthens Rwanda's existing field installed air quality monitoring network by providing

online access to pollution readings from each station as well as data management including data sharing mechanisms. It will also help Rwanda to compare ground observations with satellite data through remote sensing technology to verify their accuracy.

“We are all responsible for the quality of the air we breathe. Rwanda's new air quality monitoring system gives us the information we need to address air pollution, and provides information to citizens about the status of the air where they live and work. This new tool will help us to measure and boost the impact of the interventions we have introduced to reduce air pollution and ensure blue skies for all,” said Dr Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya, Minister of Environment.

As part of celebrations marking the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, Rwanda also conducted vehicle and industry emissions inspections in the City of Kigali and Rwamagana District on 5-6 September 2021. The inspections included mobile vehicle emissions testing in high traffic areas in the City of Kigali as well

as ambient air quality monitoring and multi-pollutant analysis of industry emissions in Rwamagana District.

A public virtual celebration was also hosted by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority on 7 September 2021 and featured presentations from scientists and school students researching air quality in Rwanda as well as effective responses to pollution.

It also included a panel discussion with representatives from government, academia and the private sector to discuss how Rwanda can continue to beat air pollution and improve the quality of the air we breathe.

This year, the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies is celebrated under the theme “Healthy Air, Healthy Planet.” For more information, visit www.cleanairblueskies.org.

Air Quality Monitoring System

Website: www.aq.rema.gov.rw

Mobile App (Android): <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=rw.gov.rema.aq>

REMA, Police and RSB in awareness on air pollution ahead of 'International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies'



A police officer is testing fuel emissions from a vehicle on the street in Kigali

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), Rwanda National Police and the Rwanda Standards Board have on September 5, 2021 launched a campaign to further raise awareness on air pollution and fuel emission control measures.

The awareness which also involves mass testing of vehicle emissions is in line with the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies which is marked annually on September 7.

"Research findings on the sources of air pollution show that the transport sector and wood and charcoal burning are the key sources of air pollution in Rwanda, followed by industries" says Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority

The campaign as well as testing fuel emissions aim to raise awareness of the sources and impacts of air pollution and joint efforts and innovation to improve air quality and to protect human health.

The Government of Rwanda and its partners have taken significant strides in identification of air pollution sources and air quality monitoring at national level, with a particular atten-

tion to Kigali, the capital city.

In 2018, electric motorcycles and electric cars were introduced to Rwandan market in line with clean transport through e-mobility initiatives, and now, two electric motorcycle companies (Ampersand Company Ltd and Safe Ltd) are registered to operate in Rwanda.

In the same year, electric vehicles debuted in Rwanda through a partnership between Volkswagen and Siemens under a pilot project. In addition to e-mobility, the Government is heavily investing in renewable energies (Hydropower plants, methane gas power plants and solar power systems).

The Kigali City Council also introduced the Kigali Car free days done twice a month and once a month in secondary cities where citizens engage in physical activity. In 2017, it was identified that PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations near car free roads reduced by approximately 50% on the car free days according to REMA's National Inventory on Sources of Air pollution.

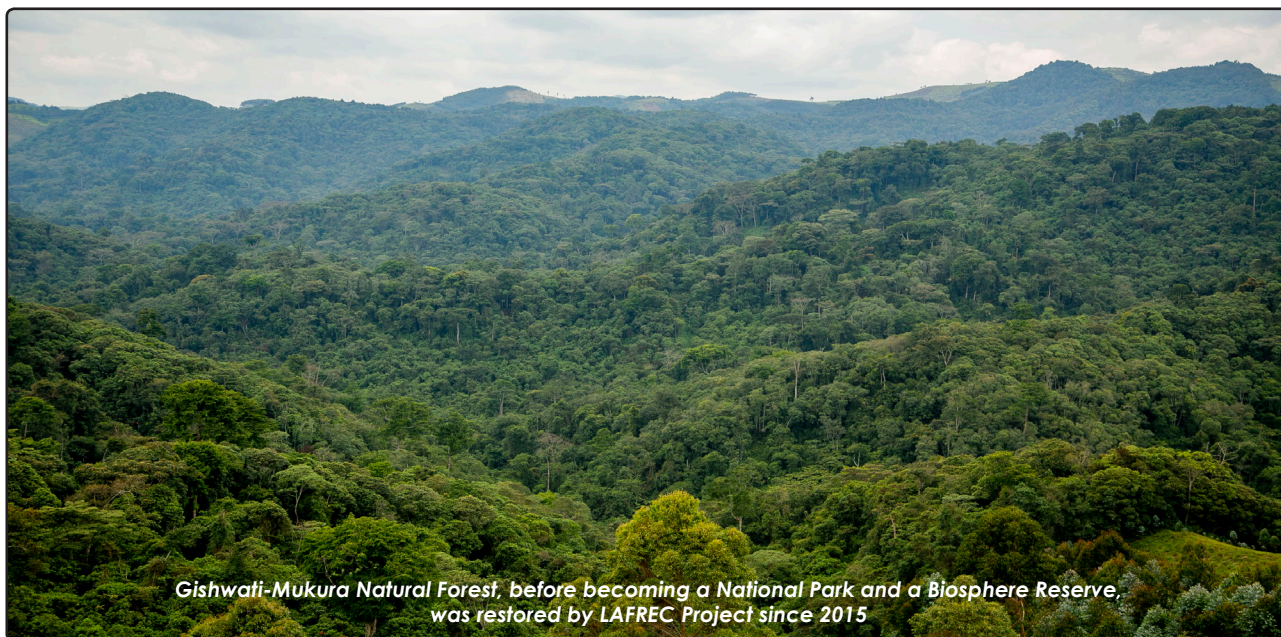
The Government of Rwanda's commitment to preserving air

quality and fighting air pollution has also led to the adoption of laws and regulations including the Ministerial Order N°003/16.01 of 15/07/2010 and the 2016 Air Quality Law. Air Quality Law in 2016 which sets the framework for regulation and the prevention of air pollution in Rwanda.

This law mandates REMA to regulate air quality and to improve the health and well-being for the people; and as stipulated, REMA is tasked to report on the status of air quality in Rwanda and strategies to address air pollution. It is supplemented by the Law on Environment and new 2019 National Policy on Environment and Climate Change.

National standards on air emissions, vehicle and industrial emissions have also been developed by Rwanda Standards Board (RSB). In addition, through Rwanda's NDC, Rwanda commits to build extensive and affordable public transport networks and increase progress on the electric mobility shift (e-moto & EVs). Implementation of the Environment and Climate Change policy actions aligned with Rwanda's Vision 2050 also remains a priority.

LAFREC Project Leaves Lasting Legacy of Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Change Resilience in Rwanda



Gishwati-Mukura Natural Forest, before becoming a National Park and a Biosphere Reserve, was restored by LAFREC Project since 2015

The Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC) Project is concluding after six years of transforming the Gishwati-Mukura landscape, resulting in the creation of a new national park and declared by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve directly improving lives of more than 40,000 Rwandans.

It has also enhanced wood fuel value chains, created new habitats and infrastructure, and made the country more resilient to climate change, among many other significant outcomes that have transformed Rwanda's northwestern region.

Since 2015, the Government of Rwanda through the Rwanda Environment Management Authority has implemented the Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC) project with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank. In 2017, the project was expanded with support of the Nordic Development Fund to improve the efficiency and sustainability of charcoal and wood fuel value chains.

Over the last six years, the LAFREC project has used a landscape restoration approach to rehabilitate

the Gishwati-Mukura landscape and bring forest ecosystems into better management to realise benefits for communities living in and around the park.

Through the project, 603 hectares of the Gishwati-Mukura National Park buffer zone have been restored, 32 hectares of illegal mining sites have been repaired, 900 hectares of woodlots have been improved and 446 hectares of farmland are now under the silvo-pastoralism which benefits both farmers and our environment. Tree seed centres were also rehabilitated or created and a cook-stove test laboratory was established to improve the country's ability to assess technology that aims to improve wood fuel use.

"LAFREC project has not only transformed the landscape by protecting and restoring biodiversity, it has also transformed the lives of thousands of Rwandans and demonstrated that investing in nature yields significant returns for both people and the planet" said Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority.

"We are grateful to the communities who have made the project a success, our implementing partners for their dedication and hard work, and our funding partners including the Global Environment Facility, the Nordic Development Fund and the World Bank for their generous support," Juliet Kabera added.



“Through this project, we supported Rwanda’s effort to harness the potential of forests and terrestrial ecosystems to reduce poverty, contribute to economic growth, and strengthen the environmental services they provide — locally and globally,” said Rolande Pryce, World Bank Country Manager, Rwanda.

The LAFREC project concludes today with a celebratory event that will showcase the results of the project, recognise best performers in the adoption of silvopastoralism as well as representatives from charcoal, seed collectors and woodlot cooperatives. Partners who have played an invaluable role in the success of the project will also be recognised, including the Global Environment Facility, Nordic Development Fund, World Bank, relevant ministries, Rwanda Development Board, Rwanda Forestry Authority, Rwanda Standards Board, Meteo Rwanda and the local district authorities.

About LAFREC Project

The Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC) project was a five year project implemented by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority

(REMA), with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank. The project rehabilitated the Gishwati-Mukura landscape through a landscape approach to bring



the forest ecosystems into better management and ensure multiple benefits for local communities. This was achieved through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, increased forest cover, climate change adaptation efforts together with combating land degradation and the provision of livelihood opportunities to communities.

The restoration of the previously degraded Gishwati-Mukura landscape has enhanced both its productive and environmen-

tal values. Thanks to the work of the project and previous initiatives, Gishwati-Mukura was gazetted as a national park in 2016 and designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2020.

LAFREC was co-financed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), also through the World Bank, which integrated the “Improving the Efficiency and Sustainability of Charcoal and Wood fuel Value Chains” initiative into the LAFREC project.

The NDF funded component of the project Improved woodlot management and tree seed quality, and provided technical assistance for more efficient charcoal production and biomass processing in Rwanda.

Rwanda Selected as Pioneer Country in Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance

Young environmentalists from across Rwanda are meeting today to share knowledge and ideas and participate in an exhibition that will scale up the impact of their green initiatives

The gathering has been organised by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) through UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Action and with support from the European Union.

The one-day workshop will equip young Rwandan entrepreneurs leading existing climate change, environment and natural resources initiatives with knowledge on environmental innovation and how to access green investment.



Young people have a critical role in protecting our environment, addressing the climate crisis and halting biodiversity loss. While not responsible for the environmental challenges they face, young

people have passion and ingenuity that can be harnessed to bring about behaviour change in their communities, create green jobs as well as foster tangible benefits for the natural world.

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"Young Rwandans are already coming up with exciting businesses that are solving complex environmental challenges, from organic compost and green pavers to sustainable furniture. We need to draw on their innovation and spirit of entrepreneurship to demonstrate and promote the benefits of linking socio-economic transformation with environmental sustainability," said Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority.

As part of the workshop, the participants will have the opportunity to showcase their initiatives through an interactive exhibition. The exhibition will allow attendees to learn and share experience and skills and encourage others to join in building a green Rwanda by creat-

ing green innovation initiatives and investments that promote the sustainable use of national resources for socio-economic development.

Participants of the workshop come from all 30 districts of Rwanda, and many have been awarded through green innovation competitions organised by REMA and UNDP since 2019. Upon completing the workshop, the young people will be linked to investment opportunities, including Made in Rwanda initiatives, and the most innovative initiatives will be promoted to expand their impact. "At UNDP, we recognise that youth play a pivotal role in driving innovations that help to protect the environment and use natural resources sustainably. We reiterate our commitment to support and accompany them

to find sustainable solutions to the growing challenges posed by the environment and climate change crisis, through green entrepreneurship," said Varsha Redkar-Palepu, Deputy Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme in Rwanda.

Young people play an important role in sustainable development and there is a need to empower them to take a stake in their future, be part of solving the challenges facing their communities and support them to create new opportunities for employment and green growth. The joint Rwanda Environment Management Authority, UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Action and European Union workshop aims to achieve this.

Rwanda celebrates World Ozone Day



Rwanda, on 16th September 2021, joined the rest of the world to mark the International Day for the preservation of the Ozone Layer. World Ozone Day raises awareness about the importance of the ozone layer and how we can all protect it. This year, the day is being celebrated under the theme: "Montreal Protocol - Keeping us, our food and vaccines cool."

The Montreal Protocol started life as a global agreement to protect the ozone layer, a job it has done well, making it one of the most successful environmental agreements to date. The hole in the ozone layer is healing, in turn protecting human health, economies and

ecosystems. Rwanda and all countries around the world joined forces in this effort and today around 99% of ozone depleting substances have been phased out.

This year's World Ozone Day highlights that the Montreal Protocol, through the Kigali Amendment, is now helping to slow climate change and boost energy efficiency in the cooling sector, which contributes to food security and effective vaccine delivery.

"Rwanda is proud to play a part in the ongoing success of the Montreal Protocol. To implement the Kigali Amendment, Rwanda created a ground-breaking National Cool-

ing Strategy in 2019. The strategy is ensuring the country's air conditioning and refrigeration systems are cooling our food and vaccines without contributing to the climate crisis," said Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority.

The effects of damage to the ozone layer on people include skin cancer, increased risk of cataracts, weakened immune systems, DNA damage as well as lung disease. Depletion of the ozone layer can also lead to food shortages as ultraviolet radiation from the sun disturbs developmental and physiological processes and decreases the productivity of crops.

The success of the Montreal Protocol, and the ratification of the Kigali Amendment by 125 nations to date, signals the strong global commitment to protecting the ozone layer and phasing out dangerous gases that are warming our planet.

Rwandans and business owners are encouraged to purchase Kigali Amendment friendly air conditioners, refrigerators and other cooling systems that are energy efficient and do not contain chemical products that are harmful to our environment and to us.

Rwanda will mark the fifth anniversary of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on 15 October 2021.

About the Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is an international treaty designed to reduce the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances (ODSs) in order to reduce their abundance in the atmosphere, and thereby protect the earth's fragile ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was agreed on 16 September 1987 and entered into force on 1 January 1989. The Protocol, now ratified by 198 parties, establishes legally binding controls on national production and consumption of ODSs. Production and consumption of all principal ODSs by developed and developing nations will be almost completely phased out by 2030. The Montreal Protocol was amended in 2016 to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Rwanda ratified the Montreal Protocol in 2003 and the Kigali Amendment in 2017. Since then, a

number of different activities have been implemented all in line with contributing to the noble cause of protecting life on earth through preventing use of ozone depleting substances.

Rwanda's Ozone Layer Protection Achievement

Rwanda ratified the Vienna Convention to protect the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol in 2003, and has since taken bold action to implement it.

In line with implementing the Montreal Protocol, Rwanda achieved zero use of chlorofluorocarbons and equipment that relies on such products in 2010.

Rwanda's outstanding contribution to the preservation of the Ozone Layer earned the country the UNEP 2012 Ozone Protection Award.

Rwanda has completed the first stage of its HCFC Phase-out Management Plan. The country met the 2013 freeze deadline and the 2015 10% HCFC reduction. In 2020, Rwanda consumed 1.71 tons of

ODP HCFCs - approximately a 65% reduction from the baseline, which exceeds the 2020 target of 35% reduction in HCFC consumption.

An online system for permitting the import and export of new, used, recycled, and reclaimed controlled substances and related equipment has been established here.

Rwanda has trained refrigeration technicians across the country on the safe use of flammable refrigerants such as hydrocarbons, trained customs officers on controlling and monitoring ODS trade, and demonstrated conversions from HCFCs to HC refrigerants.

Rwanda developed a National Cooling Strategy that promotes energy efficient appliances that comply with Minimum Energy Performance Standards and the Kigali Amendment.

In 2021, Rwanda received the Lifetime Commitment to Cooling Award from the Clean Cooling Collaborative.

Statement on Environmental Event of Concern - Wildfire Occurrence at Rugezi Wetland, Northern Province, Rwanda

On Monday September 6, 2021 at approximately 4:00PM, a wildfire broke out at the Rugezi Wetland in Gakenke Village, Ruconshe Cell, Rwerere Sector, Burera District in Rwanda's Northern Province.

The cause of the fire is now under investigation by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, and one suspect has been arrested by the Rwanda National Police in Burera District.

The wildfire at Rugezi Wetland was brought under control and extinguished at approximately 2:00 am by authorities from Burera District, the Rwanda Defence Force and rangers from the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association. They were assisted by local residents who helped to extinguish

the blaze.

It is estimated the wildfire burnt 50 hectares, causing significant

large greenhouse gas emissions and localised air pollution. Residents living nearby are encouraged to avoid the area, monitor



damage to the flora and fauna of the internationally significant wetland. The fire also caused

their well-being and seek medical care if they experience respiratory issues related to the smoke.

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Over the last five years, fire has broken out at the Rugezi wetland three times. Most instances have occurred in the vicinity of Rwerere and Rusarabuye sectors, and typically during the transition from the dry season and rainy season.

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority thanks all stakeholders who worked through the night and in difficult conditions to extinguish the fire.

A thorough investigation is now underway to examine the cause and impacts of the fire, and provide recommendations on the continued sustainable manage-

ment of the ecosystem. The investigation will be conducted with security institutions, district authorities and local conservation partners.

About Rugezi Wetland

Rugezi wetland is a peatland located in Burera and Gicumbi districts in Rwanda's Northern Province, covering 6,736 hectares and lying at an altitude of approximately 2,050 metres. It has been classified by Bird Life International as one of seven Important Bird Areas by hosting threatened bird species including the *Bradypterus graueri* and Grey Crowned Crane.

Rugezi wetland is one of Rwanda's strategic water resources and plays a critical role in regulating and filtering water flows into Lake Burera and Lake Ruhondo, which feed two of the country's largest hydropower plants, Ntaruka and Mukungwa.

Rugezi was designated as Ramsar site in 2006, meaning it is of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Rugezi benefits from full protection status under Prime Ministerial Order No 006/03 of 30/01/2017 establishing the list of swamps and their limits and regulating their management and use.

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