

## ERAIFT

Regional post-graduate training school of integrated land planning and management  
in tropical forests and territories

[www.eraift-rdc.org](http://www.eraift-rdc.org)

# Three new regional Master's Degrees at ERAIFT Starting with Academic year 2016-2017

## **I A brief introduction to ERAIFT**

The Regional Post-graduate training school of Integrated Land planning and Management in tropical Forests and Territories (ERAIFT) is a UNESCO Category 2 Centre established under a regional governing body. From its inception in 1999 until 2016, school activities were coordinated by UNESCO. At UNESCO's 38th session during its 197th General Conference held at Paris in October 2015, ERAIFT was confirmed as a Category 2 Centre placed under UNESCO's aegis. The school's novelty lies in its teaching approach: a systemic approach, which is cross-sector and multidisciplinary, hence global and integrated. These are ERAIFT's underlying teaching concepts by design.

The school provides post-graduate quality training (Master's and PhD degrees) for learners having completed three, four or five years of studies at a university level on various topics. ERAIFT's mission is to train high level African decision makers following a systemic approach, so they can:

- Design, state in detail and implement sustainable development projects;
- Make decisions when faced with complex situations, which are characteristic of development issues;
- Provide adapted solutions on issues of poverty and environmental degradation.

Learners at ERAIFT come from a wide range of professional backgrounds sharing a wealth of complementing experiences. They also come from many Central and West African countries, the Indian Ocean or further afield—Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, The Central African Republic, Chad, The Comoro Islands, The Democratic Republic of Congo, The Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, The Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Togo ...etc.

Today, the school is opening up to Anglophone Africa.

Its faculty comes from a variety of universities and research centres—the *Musée Royal d'Afrique Centrale (MRAC)*, the *Université Nationale du Bénin* (Cotonou), the *Université de Dschang* (Cameroon), the *Université de Kinshasa* (DRC), the *Université Catholique au Congo* (DRC), the

*Université de Marne la Vallée* (France), the *Université de Liège (Ulg Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech*, Belgium) the *Faculté Notre Dame de la Paix de Namur* (Belgium), the *CNRS* (France) ...etc.

Its key partners are the following:

- Financial partners

The DRC; the European Union; the Kingdom of Belgium, *Wallonie Bruxelles International (WBI)* and its *AWAC* office, the African Development Bank and the Economic Community of Central African States through their supports for the conservation of ecosystems in the Congo Basin, (*PACEBCO*); the United States Forest Service (*USFS-USAID*); *AFD*, the French international development office through its *Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)*; the *FAO*; *GIZ*, the German international development office; *JICA*, the Japanese international development office through its *RIFFEAC* educational programme for Central Africa; *PACODEL* from *ULG* in Belgium; *ACDI*, the Canadian international development office through the *Université Laval* ...etc.

- Technical partners

*ENEF* (Gabon), *HIST* (China), *ICCN* (DRC), the Indonesian Institute for Science (Indonesia), the *Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles* (Belgium), the *Jardin Botanique de Meise* (Belgium), the *Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale* (Belgium), *Nature+* (Belgium), the *OFAC*, *OSFAC*, *RAPAC* and *RIFFEAC* projects for Central Africa, the *ULG* (Belgium) and *Gembloux Agro Biotech (ULG*, Belgium), *UNESCO*, *UNIKIN*, *UNIKIS*, the *Université de Dschang* (Cameroon), the *Université de Paris-Est Marne la Vallée* (France), the *Université Laval* (Canada), the *Université de Yaoundé I* (Cameroon), the Para federal university (Brazil), the *Université Nationale d'Agriculture du Vietnam*, the *USTM* (Gabon), *WWF-DRC*, *WWF-Belgium* ...etc.

## **II Background to the organisation of three new Master's degrees**

With financial support from the European Union, *RAPAC*, the *Réseau des Aires Protégées en Afrique Centrale*, a network of protected areas in Central Africa, had commissioned ERAIFT to design and implement a regional professional curriculum for park wardens in charge of managing protected sites. The curriculum's design complies with requirements for a Master's degree, as set by the LMD system, and for it to be agreed, it meets *CAMES* criteria's.

To deliver on such an ambitious assignment, two regional workshops were held: one at Yaoundé on April 23rd, 2014 and one at ERAIFT's on December 3rd and 4th, 2014. The gatherings enabled the sensitisation of regional partners in order to seek their backing of the programme and they provided a wide platform too, to exchange ideas on the programme's design and its implementation. Hence, these platforms had provided an opportunity for a gathering of not only heads of regional institutions for higher education—Chancellors and General Managers—but also, more importantly, lecturers and scientists from those institutions.

Following the exchanges, the curriculum was established, the level of training required for candidate learners to apply as well as their profile were detailed and regional institutions entitled to deliver on curriculum and research were listed, after a thorough SWOT analysis of their Strengths and

Weaknesses and of the Opportunities and Threats that they face. The curriculum features in Appendix 1.

### III Subdivision of programmes leading to three Master's degrees

After talks during those two workshops and with *Université de Liège's* support to ERAIFT through its 'International Continuing Education' programme, the curriculum was detailed as such:

- A **Regional Master of Research** degree, focusing on the issues of **Integrated Land Planning and Management in tropical forests and territories**;
- **Two Regional Professional Master's** degrees:
  - One focusing on the **management of protected areas**; and
  - One focusing on **forest planning techniques**.

One has to bear in mind that the very concept of protected area has changed over time and that today personnel in charge must face situations that are far more complex than previously. Therefore, new skills are sought accordingly. In addition, when designing a training programme, some modules are optional, allowing learners to specialize in a number of fields—planning for a certified logging concession or for one in the process of being so; community forests management; game reserve management ...etc.

The development of modules leading to a Professional Master's degree was generally guided by the following principles:

- Training for the management of protected areas is conducted not so much from a classical conservation angle but rather from that of **land planning**, emphasising the need to involve local communities as well as other stakeholders;
- The **systemic approach** is at the heart of training with an emphasis on case studies;
- The curriculum stresses consideration for **wetlands**, which play a crucial role in protected areas;
- **Practical** training is favoured although theoretical concepts are revisited too;
- The importance of prerequisites is recognised—such as mastering **IT tools, data analysis** and the **statistical interpretation of findings**.

The implementation of Master's curricula is based on the LMD system, where lectures are given during six-month terms. As follows:

- A common core is at the centre of the **first two terms**, allowing learners to become familiar with the **systemic approach** by way of case studies. That common core will be delivered at ERAIFT, where recognised international expertise is available;

- From the **third term**, the three Masters unfold independently for specific disciplines. Those lectures will be given at regional higher education institutions according to their fields of expertise;
- The **fourth term** is dedicated to graduation fieldwork or thesis compilation or for internship.

With regard to regional training institutions, a number of them underwent SWOT analyses, followed by discussions during the regional workshops. After debates, the following higher education centres were selected on the grounds of their expertise in one or another field, i.e.,

- In Cameroon: the *Université de Dschang*, the *Université de Yaoundé I* and the *Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG)*;
- In Gabon: the *Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts* and the *Université des Sciences et Techniques de Masuku (USTM)*;
- In the DRC: ERAIFT and the *Université de Kisangani (UNIKIS)*.

For the implementation of the three regional Masters' curricula, an **Agreement** to collaborate was concluded between ERAIFT and the selected institutions. Afterwards, the lecture programme and training unit forms were shared among lecturers and scientists for harmonisation sake.

Finally, having set for goal that the three Masters' programmes would start in October 2016, to coincide with the beginning of the DRC's next academic year, three international calls for application were issued in April 2016. This should allow for the selection of 60 applicants, 20 for each Master's degree.

#### **IV Sustainable funding for the training programme**

One of the greatest challenges facing the sustainable and rational management of forest ecosystems and protected areas in the Congo Basin is training African decision makers. Training, one knows, is one of COMIFAC's strategic pillars in its Convergence Plan. Hence, demand for training, as expressed by forestry public services among COMIFAC members and by conservation authorities in the region covered by RAPAC, continues to grow, as it does among higher education centres that need to ensure academic renewal. To support the programme of three regional Master's degrees will effectively contribute to the civil management of tropical forests in the Congo Basin.

ERAIFT is sincerely grateful to its technical and financial partners who support it in training the 21st Century generations of African decision makers in the field of **forests & environment**. The estimated average cost of a full training year at ERAIFT and its six partner institutions, in the framework of these three Master's degrees, is **\$16,500 a year, i.e., \$990,000 a year to train 60 Masters**.

## Lectures Programme

(Gc = general competency; Sc = specific competency; 1 Ects = 25 to 30 hours of lecture—Ects = European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)

### 1st set of Training Modules for a Master's Degree

#### First Term

##### **Gc1: Systemic approach (13 Ects)**

**Gc1.1** The bases of the systemic approach (4 Ects)

**Gc1.2** Systemic analysis applied to land planning, landscapes and integrated development (3 Ects)

**Gc1.3** Cross sector and integrated approach: forestry, farming, livestock, fishing and tourism (3 Ects)

During the workshop held at ERAIFT on December 3rd and 4th, 2014, a number of changes with regard to some designations were adopted. For instance, in the designation '*Cross sector and integrated approach: forests, farming, livestock and tourism*', fishing and fish farming concepts were added. Hence the designation '*Cross sector and integrated approach: forestry, farming, livestock, fishing, fish farming and tourism*'.

**Gc1.4** Case study: the Man & Biosphere programme and its worldwide network of biosphere reserves (? Ects)

**Gc1.5** Planning and integrated management of wetlands—with the option of referring to specific competencies (3 Ects)

##### **Gc2: Information technology and communication (6 Ects)**

**Gc2.1** The theory of communication (2 Ects)

**Gc2.2** The tools of communication (2 Ects)

**Gc2.3** Desk research and scientific communication (2 Ects)

Proposal to create a statistics and data treatment unit

##### **Gc3: Remote sensing and digital mapping (9 Ects)**

**Gc3.1** The bases of remote sensing and GIS (4 Ects)

**Gc3.2** Practical remote sensing and GIS (5 Ects)

**Gc4: Elements of accounting, Administrative and financial management (3 Ects)**

**Gc4.1** Accounting and financial management (3 Ects)

A Business plan component has been added to the module

**Second Term**

**Gc5: Human resources management (6 Ects)**

**Gc5.1** General Information (2 Ects)

**Gc5.2** Personnel management (2 Ects)

**Gc5.3** Management of stakeholders (2 Ects)

**Gc6: Regional and international legislation on sustainable management of protected areas (4 Ects)**

**Gc6.1** Environmental rights (2 Ects)

**Gc6.2** National case studies (2 Ects)

**Gc7: Project planning, monitoring and evaluation (4 Ects)**

**Gc7.1** Basic concepts (2 Ects)

**Gc7.2** Project management methods and tools (2 Ects)

**Gc8: Procurement and contract management (4 Ects)**

**Gc8.1** Procurement and contract management (4 Ects)

**Gc9: Ecology applied to land and water ecosystems (8 Ects)**

**Gc9.1** Applied ecology (6 Ects)

**Gc9.2** Biodiversity and Health ecology (2 Ects)

2nd set of Training Modules for a Master's Degree
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**Third Term**

**I Lectures common to both Master's degrees**

**Sc10: Land and water ecological monitoring (6 Ects)**

**Sc10.1** Ecological monitoring in theory and in practice—case studies (6 Ects)

**Sc11: Interactions between people and tropical forests and grasslands and good governance (6 Ects)**

**Sc11.1** Interactions between people and tropical forests, grasslands and wetlands and *in situ* good governance; in theory and in practice (6 Ects)

**II Lectures for the Management of protected areas degree (18 Ects)**

**Sc12: Sustainable management of resources in protected areas (7 Ects)**

**Sc12.1** Sightseeing and cultural tourism, trophy hunting and fishing safari (2 Ects)

**Sc12.2** Slash and burn farming, non-wood forest products and community development (2 Ects)

**Sc12.3** Community forests (1 Ects)

**Sc12.4** Mineral resources (1 Ects)

**Sc12.5** Animal husbandry (1 Ects)

Theories and case studies

**Sc13: Management plans for protected areas and biosphere reserves (7 Ects)**

**Sc13.1** Protected areas management plans (7 Ects)

**Sc13.2** Biosphere reserves management plans

Case studies

**Workshops with invited field specialists**

**Sc14: Logistics (2 Ects)**

**Sc14.1** Logistics (2 Ects)

Case studies

**Sc15: Anti-poaching (2 Ects)**

**Sc15.1** Anti-poaching (2 Ects)

Case studies

**III Lectures for the Congo Basin Forest planning techniques degree (18 Ects)**

**Sc16: Basics of forest planning (4 Ects)**

**Sc16.1** Basics of forest planning (4 Ects)

**Sc17: Forest planning social component (8 Ects)**

**Sc17.1** Forest planning social component (8 Ects)

**Sc18: Monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity (6 Ects)**

**Sc18.1** Assessing biodiversity (3 Ects)

**Sc18.2** Monitoring biodiversity (3 Ects)

Thesis, Internship **Fourth Term**

Undergraduate and Postgraduate learners at ERAIFT  
Countries of Origin