

DRC Snapshot

Rail transport in Eastern DRC

Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Congo (SNCC)

SNCC is a public company operating in eastern Congo. The railways have approximately 3,641 Km (i.e. 858 Km electrified) network, single track line of 1,067 mm gauge in Katanga, Kassai and Maniema. The SNCC operated rail network has been built from 1902 to 1956 by various companies who were granted concessions by the Belgian colonial authority.



SNCC Locomotive

Historic overview

SNCC's monopolistic management on rail transport in the East is recent. In 1974, a first company, the Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer Zairois (SNCZ) was established. It has been replaced in 1995 by a Belgian-South African joint venture (SIZARAIL). In 1997, SIZARAIL was liquidated and SNCC was created and granted monopoly on rail transport in the East.

Geographic coverage

The rail network operated by SNCC is split into several regions

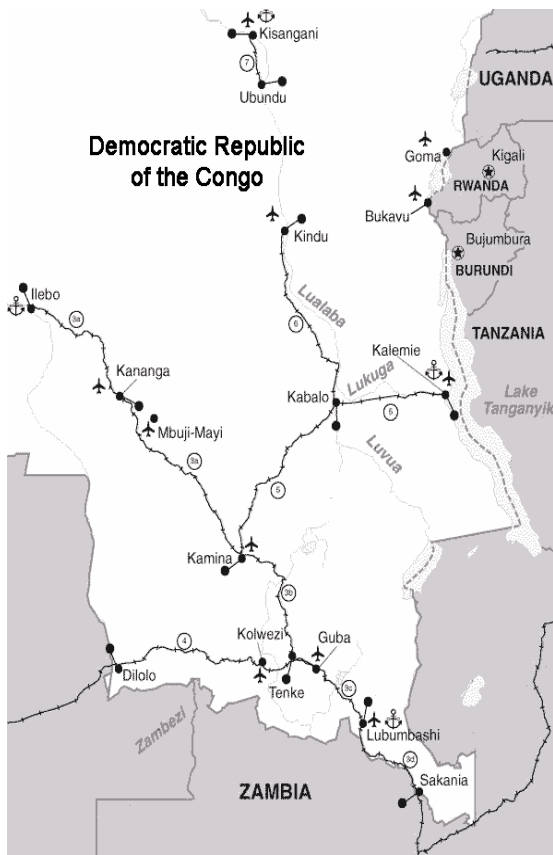
Lubumbashi area: It is made up of the rail sections from Sakania to Sofumwango (318 Km) and the connecting track from Munana to Kipushi (34Km), from Lubumbashi to Lubumbashi usines (5Km), Lubumbashi to Kalukuluku (11.4 Km) and Lukuni to Luswishi (70 Km)

Southern region: It is comprised of the rail sections from Sofumwango to Dilolo (694 Km) and the connecting track from Likasi to Kakontwe (19 Km) and from Divuma to Kisenge (28 Km)

Central region: It is made up of the rail track from Tenke to Kisamba and from Kamina to Kabongo (785 Km) as well as a connecting track from Kamina to the military base.(16 Km).

Northern region: It is made up of the rail tracks from Kabongo to Kongolo and from Kabalo to Kalemie(607 Km).

North-eastern region: Thanks to the reunification of the country, SNCC has resumed its operations on the Kabalo-Kindu, Ubundu-Kisangani and Kabalo- Kalemie rail sections since July 2004. However, the traffic on the Kabalo-Kalemie section is now stopped due to the collapse of the Nyemba Bridge.



Rail network in the East of DRC

SNCC equipments

SNCC equipment is made up of 17 locomotives, 23 SNCC owned diesel locomotives and 14 Spoor net owned diesel locomotives.

76 out of the 285 SNCC owned cars are operational and only 1,500 out of 4,694 wagons are operational. SNCC also operates 988 wagons belonging to rail operators from neighbouring countries.

Shortcomings of rail transport in the East

The use of rail transport in the east is hampered by various factors:

- The bad condition of the tracks: at the end of 2005, 1,614 Km out of 3,641 Km of tracks needed to be replaced. That reduces the average speed of SNCC operated trains.
- The SNCC catenary is 50 years old
- The locomotives are less and less available because of their outdated state. They have been operated for a

duration exceeding their useful life which stretches to 25 years.

Use of rail transport by humanitarians

The humanitarian community uses the rail transport to carry goods mainly to North Katanga. However, the use of that mean of transport is critically impeded by various factors:

The transport demand from mining companies entails increasing prices as well as a shortage of wagons. Indeed, many organisations have to wait for many months to have access to the wagons they booked. The unpredictable quality of services can also delay the delivery of humanitarian cargo.

Rehabilitation projects

The rail network of DRC is in general bad condition due to the lack of maintenance. Some donors are implementing rehabilitation projects. The main project is the rehabilitation of the Nyemba Bridge by the Belgian technical cooperation.

In December 1997, the Nyemba bridge located at 90 Km of Kalemie was swept away by severe flooding of the Lukuga river. The bridge used to link the city of Kalemie, on the edges of Lake Tanganyika to Kabalo- Kindu and Lubumbashi. The total budget of the project amounts to 2,500,000 Euros and the bridge should be completed by September 2006.



Nyemba Bridge (August 2004)



Nyemba Bridge under construction (June 2006)

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