

Horizontal bridge structure in Democratic Republic of Congo

Article Overview

The DRC features several notable horizontal bridge structures, including the Matadi Bridge, Kongolo Bridge, and numerous reinforced concrete and steel truss bridges across its major rivers.

Key Bridges

Matadi Bridge: Also known as the OEBK Bridge, this is a suspension bridge across the Congo River at Matadi. Completed in 1983 by a consortium of Japanese companies, it has a main span of 520 meters and was the largest suspension bridge in Africa until 2018. It is the only bridge crossing the Congo River proper, serving both road and rail traffic . **Kongolo Bridge:** Located near the town of Kongolo in eastern DRC, this cantilever bridge spans the Lualaba River. Constructed by the Belgians in 1939 and reconstructed in 1968, it accommodates both rail and road traffic and is one of only two major bridges crossing tributaries of the Congo River basin . **Brazzaville-Kinshasa Bridge (planned):** This future road-rail bridge will connect Brazzaville in the Republic of the Congo with Kinshasa in the DRC. The project aims to span the Congo River with a horizontal alignment, facilitating trade and transport between the two capitals. Construction was slated to begin in 2020 with funding from the African Development Bank .

Bridge Types and Distribution

The DRC's road network includes 1,886 bridges, of which 445 are permanent concrete structures, 750 are semi-permanent metallic structures, and 691 are temporary bridges. Most bridges are horizontal in alignment, designed to span rivers and valleys, with reinforced concrete and steel truss being the predominant construction types . Many bridges are in poor or average condition due to age and limited maintenance, highlighting the need for modernization and rehabilitation.

Regional Examples

- o South Kivu and Tanganyika Provinces: UNOPS and local engineering firms have designed and supported the construction of 54 reinforced concrete bridges and 1 continuous steel truss bridge to improve connectivity in these regions .
- o Bukavu: The Pont Ruzizi I serves as a border crossing over the Ruzizi River between the DRC and Rwanda, exemplifying a horizontal bridge facilitating both transport and customs operations .

Summary

Horizontal bridge structures in the DRC are critical for connecting remote regions, supporting trade, and enabling transport across major rivers. They include suspension bridges, cantilever bridges, reinforced

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concrete bridges, and steel truss bridges, with the Matadi and Kongolo Bridges being the most prominent examples. Despite their importance, many bridges require rehabilitation due to age and limited maintenance, and ongoing projects aim to expand and modernize the network .

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The Matadi Bridge, constructed and protected through cooperation between the people of the Democratic

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The Brazzaville-Kinshasa Bridge is a proposed road-rail bridge construction project over the Congo River. It would connect the

The proposed Brazzaville-Kinshasa Bridge is designed as a 1.575-kilometer-long toll structure spanning the Congo River,

List of bridges in the Republic of the Congo Major bridges This table presents a non-exhaustive list of the road and railway bridges

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