



# STATE OF THE FORESTS OF THE CONGO BASIN 2021

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## Facts & figures

The State of the Forests of the Congo Basin (SOF) report is a flagship publication of the Observatory of Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) which provides up-to-date information on the forest ecosystems of Central Africa.

The **SOF 2021** four-part report highlights facts and figures on the Congo basin forests recognized worldwide for their essential role in carbon sequestration and the conservation of biological diversity. It also provides considerations that will guide decisions on forest management.

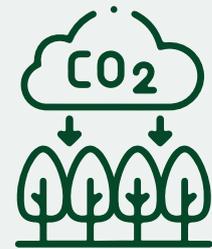


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## Carbon sequestration

Currently, despite their comparatively smaller area, undisturbed forests in Africa are now absorbing more carbon than those in the Amazon.

(Page 10; Paragraph 1; Line 8)



**40 Gt** of carbon is sequestered

by the forests of Central African forests  
Page 10; Paragraph 1; Line 1

**100 million** tCO<sub>2</sub>/year

absorbed by Gabonese forests, making the country a net carbon sink and the only in the Central African sub region whose forests absorb more than they emit.  
(Page 140; Paragraph 5; Line 3)

**80 billion tons** of carbon or so is stocked in the biomass and peatlands of Central African forests

equivalent to almost 10 years of global carbon dioxide emissions.  
(Page 112; Paragraph 1; Line 6)

**4.8 mg cm<sup>-3</sup>**

carbon emissions per unit volume of timber

were registered in one concession in Gabon.  
(Page 147; Paragraph 2; Line 1)

**10%** or less on average of the initial carbon stock is lost annually

during timber harvest in selectively managed forests in Central Africa.  
(Page 64; Paragraph 4; Line 2)

**2.5 million**

carbon credits have been issued

as part of AFOLU projects registered in COMIFAC countries with the UNFCCC or carbon standards.  
(Page 149; Paragraph 4; Line 6)

**1.1 billion tons**

of carbon is removed each year

from the atmosphere by the forests of Central Africa which emit on average 530 million tons annually.  
(Page 112; Paragraph 1; Line 15)

**46,700 tCO<sub>2</sub>**

was registered as final stock over an area of

**800 hectares**

in the Ibi Batéké agroforestry carbon sink in DR Congo in 2020.  
(Page 91; Paragraph 9; Line 3)

## Forest area

The **105.8 million hectares** of remaining expanse of undisturbed moist forest in DR Congo make it the largest in Africa and the second largest in the tropical world after Brazil and before Indonesia.  
(Page 17; Paragraph 1; Line 2)



# 500,000 hectares

of surface area is covered  
by oil palm plantations

in Central Africa, mainly in  
DR Congo, Gabon and Cameroon.  
(Page 218; Paragraph 5; Line 2)

The area of forest plantation in  
the Central African Republic is

# 3,900 hectares

(Page 79; Table 3.1; Row 5)

# 18 million hectares

of Central Africa's tropical  
moist forests

have disappeared since 2000.  
(Page 15; Paragraph 7; Line 4)

The area of forest plantation  
in Central Africa is

# 632,000 hectares

(Rwanda been the first with 301,500 ha,  
Burundi the second with 146,000 ha and  
RoC the third with 74,500 ha)  
(Page 218; Paragraph 5; Line 2)

# 27% of undisturbed rainforests

in the Congo Basin present in 2020 will  
disappear by 2050 if the current rate of  
deforestation and forest degradation  
continues unperturbed.  
(Page 34; Paragraph 1; Line 3)

# 146,055 hectares

of Burundi's surface area was covered by  
forest plantations in 2010.  
(Page 92; Paragraph 6; Line 1)

The percentage of forest cover in Burundi is

# 16%

akin to other densely populated countries,  
which have modest forest cover.  
(Page 293; Paragraph 5; Line 4)

## Wood production

The Congo Basin operates on the fringes of the global wood subsector, accounting for 1 percent of global sawnwood production, 6 percent of tropical sawnwood production, 5 percent of tropical logs, 7 percent of tropical veneers and 1 percent of tropical plywood and little to no secondary or tertiary wood processing (i.e 4 million ha). (page 69; paragraphe 2; line 4)



### ±30%

of the forest area in Central Africa is used for timber exploitation, yet the overall impact of logging on GHG emissions remains poorly understood. (Page 145; Paragraph 3; Line 1)

### 4 million m<sup>3</sup>

of timber is estimated to be produced in the informal sector in DR Congo, with artisanal loggers playing a major role in supplying local and regional timber markets. (Page 54; Paragraph 1; Line 3)

### 54 million hectares

out of

### 200 million hectares

of dense moist forest in Central Africa are classified as production forests of various types, including forestry concessions. (Page 36; Paragraph 1; Line 2)

### 150 tree species

on estimate are found in the natural forests of Central Africa, capable of providing at least 15,000 m<sup>3</sup> logs/year. (Page 65; Paragraph 5; Line 2)

### 8 million m<sup>3</sup>

of timber log was harvested in Central Africa in 2020 during the Covid-19 crisis. (Page 46; Paragraph 3; Line 2)

### 15 tree species

on estimate, provide 50% of timber production in the Congo Basin whereas circa 150 species could be utilised. (Page 74; Paragraph 6; Line 2)

### 55%

is the estimated processing rate of timber in Congo, DRC and CAR

even though their regulation stipulates that only 15%-30% of production may be exported as logs. (Page 47; Paragraph 7; Line 4)

### 25,000 hectares

of two natural hybrids of Eucalyptus were planted between 1963 and 1986 to respond to the need for fuel wood in Pointe-Noire, Congo. (Page 80; Paragraph 1; Line 1)

### 2.14 million tons

of charcoal is required each year in Kinshasa,

a demand whose consequences are dramatic both for the equilibrium of the forest and for food security of rural populations. (Page 85; Paragraph 8; Line 4)

## People and the forest



**>60 million**

people depend

on Central Africa's forests for their livelihood.  
(Page 166; Paragraph 1; Line 3)

**40,000** jobs are provided

by Central Africa's primary processing timber sector.  
(Page 71; Paragraph 1; Line 2)

**8,000** jobs are provided

by the formal forestry sector in Cameroon.  
(Page 168; Paragraph 4; Line 10)

**100** local community forestry

concessions have been awarded

over considerable areas in recent years in DR Congo, though almost all depend on external technical and financial support.  
(Page 350; Paragraph 1; Line 10)

The forestry sector's contribution to the GDP of Equatorial Guinea is

**0.2%**

as compared to 90% for the oil sector.  
(Page 352; Paragraph 2; Lines 2-5)

The levy paid by logging companies to local development funds in Gabon is XAF

**800/m<sup>3</sup>** of wood harvested

(Page 353; Paragraph 2; Lines 11)

## A region of protected areas



**30** million hectares out of **200** million hectares

of dense moist forest

in Central Africa are classified as protected area.  
(Page 36; Paragraph 1; Line 2)

**5%**

of protected areas across the Congo Basin are overlapped by mining titles, of which 65% are occupied by intact or degraded forests. (Page 24; Paragraph 2; Line 4)

**11%**

on average of the surface area of each Central African country has been made protected areas.  
(Page 172; Paragraph 1; Line 1)

**40.4** million hectares

of natural forest

(representing 76 % of forest concession area) in central Africa had a management plan in 2022  
(Page 171; Paragraph 4; Line 6)

## Peatlands

DR Congo and Republic of Congo (RoC) is the world's largest tropical peatland complex. An estimated 145,500 km<sup>2</sup> (i.e 200 fish species). Surface area of the Central Congo peatlands, which straddles Congo. (Page 242; Paragraph 3; Line 1)



**±30 gigatonnes**

of carbon is stored by the Central Congo peatlands,

roughly equivalent to 15 years of the carbon emissions from the US economy. (Page 242; Paragraph 3; Line 4)

The oldest published age of the base of a peat core of the Central Congo peatlands is

**11,000 years**

(Page 249; Paragraph 2; Line 2)

**30 concessions**

in DR Congo

entirely or partially cover around 4.5 million hectares of the peatlands in the country. (Page 255; Paragraph 1; Line 3)

**200 fish species**

or more are harboured in the Central Congo peatlands,

many of which are endemic. (Page 244; Paragraph 7; Line 2)

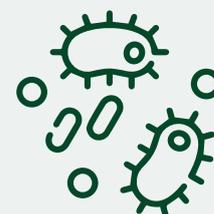
The approximate mean annual temperature recorded over the past four decades in the Congo Basin peatlands is

**25.5°C**

is, slightly warmer than temperatures recorded over open-water areas. (Page 253; Paragraph 1; Line 1)

## Infectious diseases

**more than 60%** of known emerging infectious diseases are due to an animal pathogen. (Page 266; Paragraph 2; Line 7)



**Between 1 and 5 million tons**

of bushmeat are estimated to have been consumed

in the Congo Basin in the 2000s, with an estimated hunting pressure of between 23 and 897 kg/km<sup>2</sup>/year. (Page 270; Paragraph 4; Line 2)

**35 epidemics**

or cases of infections have been reported in Central Africa

from the time Ebola viruses were discovered until 2021, including 27 epidemics and 5,980 cases. (Page 275; Paragraph 4; Line 1)

## Country commitments



DR Congo has pledged to plant

**3 million hectares**

of forest by 2025.

(Page 326; Paragraph 5; Line 5)

**12 million hectares**

is the target surface area Cameroon

has undertaken to restore under the Bonn Challenge and AFR100.

(Page 322; Paragraph 3; Line 2)

Rwanda has committed to restore

**76%** of territory

(2 million hectares) under AFR100.

(Page 203; Table 7.10; Row 7)

**650 hectares per year**

is the national exploitation quota for natural forests

set by the government of Burundi while reforestation is set at 100,000 ha for 30 years.

(Page 328; Paragraph 8; Line 3)

**0 country**

in Central Africa had submitted a report to UNFF

on their forest commitments for 2017-2030 by June 2020.

(Page 204; Paragraph 2; Line 1)

**3,653,948 hectares**

of forests are FSC certified

in the Congo Basin, notably in Cameroon, Republic of Congo (RoC), Congo and Gabon.

(Page 234; Paragraph 3; Line 5)

**100 million hectares**

is the target surface area to be restored

in Africa by 2030 under the Bonn Challenge.

(Page 319; Paragraph 1; Line 4)

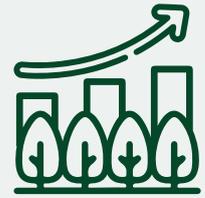
**10.3 million hectares**

of forests in the Congo Basin have a certificate of legality

(this represent 20% of forest concession area).

(Page 234; Paragraph 3; Line 6)

## Forest finance



### USD 2 billion

in bilateral and multilateral financing was pumped into the Central African forest and environment sector between 2008 and 2017. (Page 116; Paragraph 2; Line 2)

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The estimated global market value for Central African wood is

### USD 178 billion

for 440 million tons produced (Page 55; Paragraph 1; Line 3)

### USD 200 billion

was used between 2016 and 2020 to fund REDD+ activities in DR Congo. (Page 328; Paragraph 4; Line 2)

### USD 191,290,000

would be needed to implement the priority actions of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan between 2021 and 2025. (Page 120; Paragraph 4; Line 3)

### USD 1.5 billion

was set by twelve of the richest countries, and the Bezos Earth Fund, as the least amount to be mobilised for the protection and sustainable management of Congo Basin forests following a joint declaration at CoP26. (Page 133; Paragraph 7; Line 5)

### USD 57 million

was required to fight the 2018-2020 epidemic in DR Congo after it rose from USD 26 million when the disease spread to an urban centre on a major transport route in the region. (Page 285; Paragraph 3; Line 12)

### 0.03%

or less is the share of international financing – the lowest, devoted to forestry administration between 2008 and 2017. (Page 118; Paragraph 3; Line 2)

Eba'a Atyi R, Hiol Hiol F, Lescuyer G, Mayaux P, Defourny P, Bayol N, Saracco F, Pokem D, Sufo Kankeu R et Nasi R. 2022. Les forêts du bassin du Congo : état des forêts 2021. Bogor, Indonésie : CIFOR.