STATE OF THE FORESTS OF THE CONGO BASIN 2021

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.
Carbon sequestration

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

40 Gt of carbon is sequestered by the forests of Central African forests

100 million tCO₂/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.

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.

4.8 mg cm⁻³ carbon emissions per unit volume of timber were registered in one concession in Gabon.

2.5 million carbon credits have been issued as part of AFOLU projects registered in COMIFAC countries with the UNFCCC or carbon standards.

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.

46,700 tCO₂ was registered as final stock over an area of 800 hectares in the Ibi Batéké agroforestry carbon sink in DR Congo in 2020.

10% or less on average of the initial carbon stock is lost annually during timber harvest in selectively managed forests in Central Africa.
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)

The area of forest plantation in the Central African Republic is **3,900 hectares**

(Page 79; Table 3.1; Row 5)

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)

The area of forest plantation in Burundi is **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)

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)

8 million m³ of timber log was harvested in Central Africa in 2020 during the Covid-19 crisis. (Page 46; Paragraph 3; 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)

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)

4 million m³ 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)

150 tree species on estimate are found in the natural forests of Central Africa, capable of providing at least 15,000 m³ logs/year. (Page 65; Paragraph 5; 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)

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)

150 (Page 145; Paragraph 3; Line 1)

150 million hectares (Page 36; Paragraph 1; Line 2)

150 tree species (Page 65; Paragraph 5; Line 2)

25,000 hectares (Page 80; Paragraph 1; Line 1)
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/m³ of wood harvested. (Page 353; Paragraph 2; Lines 11)

A region of protected areas

30 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% 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)
**Infectious diseases**

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

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**Peatlands**

DR Congo and Republic of Congo (RoC) is the world’s largest tropical peatland complex. An estimated 145,500 km² (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)

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**Infectious diseases**

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/km²/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

Rwanda has committed to restore **76%** of territory (2 million hectares) under AFR100.

Page 203; Table 7.10; Row 7

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

**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

**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

**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

0 country in Central Africa had submitted a report to UNFF on their forest commitments for 2017-2030 by June 2020.
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)

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 **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)

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)

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)

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