



# Congo Basin Program

Reporting & Impact measurement

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## Introduction

Although the level of deforestation in the world's second-largest tropical forest remains relatively low compared to similar regions in Asia and Latin America, the latest data suggest that the annual rates of deforestation in the Congo Basin have doubled since 1990. Sustainable forest management (SFM) is seen as one of the most appropriate tools to tackle deforestation. SFM contributes to issues such as biodiversity preservation and the socially and economically responsible use of forests. Worldwide, forests play a very important role in the livelihood of people. Sustainable forest management can contribute not only to the preservation of these livelihoods but even to an improvement of livelihoods by creating employment, encouraging benefit sharing and improving access to education and care. In that way sustainable forest management can contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), especially MDG 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), MDG 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), MDG 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability) and 8 (Develop a global partnership for development).

There is an increasing body of scientific evidence showing that forest certification provides a credible guarantee of sustainable forest management. Good results have for example been shown in the tropics by certification according to the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®). FSC, through independent third party auditors certifies, forest management that meets the requirements of ten principles<sup>1</sup> (fine tuned per region and/or country) related to socially, ecologically and economically sustainable forest management. These principles have been established and are continually improved through a multi stakeholder process.

The FSC was created in 1992. But, in spite of its long existence and good performance, only a small percentage of all tropical forests are managed sustainably. Fast acceleration of certification and with that of SFM in the tropics is required. It has been shown (during the development phase of the Congo Basin Program) that it is possible to boost SFM through (among other interventions) three key mechanisms:

- Accelerating sustainability certification by a simple but suitable system.
- Stimulating market demand through innovative mechanisms.
- Strengthening and enabling local processing.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ic.fsc.org/the-ten-principles.103.htm>

### The Congo Basin Program

The overall objective of the Congo Basin Program is based on this insight and is to contribute significantly to SFM in the Congo Basin region and to assist forestry enterprises in the region to have their forest management certified. This is done through providing support to forest concession holders in achieving FSC certification or improving their FSC certification, but also through assisting companies to increase the amount of timber processed locally. In addition, the Congo Basin Program works in parallel with other IDH activities, in which the market demand issue is addressed in Europe.

The main objectives of the Congo Basin Program are:

1. Additional 4 million hectares FSC certified in the Congo Basin region.
2. Improvements on ecological/ social aspects of 1, 5 million hectares already FSC certified.
3. One good example of a FSC certification trajectory in DRC (one company undertaking participative land-use planning and in trajectory towards FSC).
4. Twenty five percent more local processing (extra production lines, use of waste material as secondary products).
5. Linking participating small producers and/or community foresters to the timber value chain.
6. Capacity building of local service providing NGOs and consultancies.
7. Solid collaboration with other key stakeholders working in the region, like WWF, KfW and others.

The Congo Basin Program focuses on Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, not excluding other countries in the region if companies are interested in certification and deemed appropriate partners<sup>2</sup>.

The Congo Basin Program realizes its objectives and contributes to the above mentioned MDGs by realizing FSC certification with timber companies and small timber producers. This is done in close partnership with service providers (NGOs and consultancies), donors and program support organizations. Services are provided on the basis of co-funding to the forest companies and small producers such as trainings, studies, etc., that contribute to realizing FSC certification and that provide positive impact on the MDGs.

Examples of co-funded services by the Congo Basin Program are:

- Analysis of High Conservation Value Forests such as forests essential to the nutrition of people and the proposition of appropriate management strategies assuring the continued use by people.
- Training of people in and around concessions on subjects such as sexually transmissible diseases and Malaria and other health and social improvement.
- Training of workers in the use of appropriate working techniques such as Reduced Impact Logging (RIL), etc...

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.congobasinprogram.com/en/selection-process>

## Monitoring impact

The Congo Basin Program monitors its impact on the various elements of sustainable forest management, i.e. on forest ecology, employees of the forest company and forest-fringed communities, in three ways:

1. Through SMART key performance indicators on which the program reports towards donors and other important stakeholders.
2. Through measuring improvements per participants directly and indirectly realized through the program.
3. Through impact assessment of FSC certification in general in the Congo Basin region in close collaboration with partner organizations in the region.

### 1. SMART key performance indicators

For each of the program objectives, a log frame of activities per objective has been designed to monitor and report on the output and outcome of the activities. Progress reporting based on this log frame is done half yearly. The indicators in the log frame are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time bound) and sometimes serve as a proxy for other effects which are more indirect and therefore more difficult to measure. Among the indicators are the following:

- Number of ha represented by approved action plans by participating concessions for program implementation
- Number of concession holders receiving services offered and match-funded by CBP
- Increase of FSC certified area
- Number of semi-commercial partnerships with communities established
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- Number Concessions participating to show best practice of FSC certification in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Congo Basin Program makes the progress reports available on its website. These reports are available in English only.

### 2. Directly and indirectly realized improvements per participant

Each FSC process starts with a pre-audit at the beginning. This audit shows the company what subjects need to be addressed in order to qualify for FSC certification. The company and the Congo Basin Program work together on making a planning for the activities needed to address the non-conformities raised during the pre-audit. The Congo Basin Program then assists companies in addressing these subjects. The Congo Basin Program assists financially for seven specific subjects. Other improvements and activities however also need to be made and done to achieve certification. As the participating companies have committed to achieving FSC certification, it is expected that also these other improvements and activities will be made and done. Examples of these other improvements and activities are various impact assessments, fauna studies, technical improvements in the working material, etc. When all subjects raised during the pre-audit been dealt with, an audit is done to check compliance with the FSC standard.

Progress per participating company is monitored through the bi-annual reporting of the companies. The overall contribution of the program to sustainable forest management is measured through comparing the results of the pre-audit and the final audit. The information on partners is presented in summary form on the website when the certificate has been obtained.

### **3. Impact assessment of FSC in general**

The impact of the Congo Basin Program (CBP) is directly related to the impact of FSC certification, as the core of the program is to realize large scale FSC certification in the Congo Basin region. The impact of FSC certification has been or is being studied by various organizations, such as CIFOR. Together with partners such as the German development bank KfW and WWF, the Congo Basin program will look into the need for specific additional studies on the impact of FSC certification in the Congo Basin region. Such additional studies will be undertaken in close coordination with the mentioned partners.