

Peatlands, mangroves, and other wetlands: climate responses in the Congo Basin

Slot 1: Current scientific activities on peatlands (and other wetlands) in the Congo Basin

6 July 2022 | 2:30pm-4:00pm CAT | Okoume



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Abstract

Mangroves and peatlands are important ecosystems of the Congo Basin. The services that they provide are fundamental to several sectors, so there are important livelihoods and economic considerations associated with their management. The Congo Basin's peatlands host critical carbon stocks; are home to rare and endangered species; and hold and clean vast amounts of water, and as such are crucial to protect and manage sustainably. To secure the services that these unique peatland ecosystems provide, significant conservation efforts will be required – in combination with investment in, and development of, sustainable livelihoods for the prosperity and security of local and regional populations.

While some information was already available for mangrove ecosystems, peatland studies and management practices have recently attracted considerable interest from stakeholders through the efforts of the Global Peatlands Initiative and its partners. Research on the Congo Basin's Cuvette Centrale peatlands has led to more attention on these ecosystems – both in the Basin and across the globe.

Members of the multi-stakeholder, non-profit Congo Basin Forestry Partnership (CBFP) have been discussing the significance of the Congo Basin peatlands for the global response to climate change. With a view to better including these ecosystems in climate and environmental action for the region as a whole, this two-part side event will provide a platform to discuss the experiences and progress of other countries in integrating peatland conservation, restoration, and sustainable management into national policies and plans. In particular, we will discuss commitments under the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) such as nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies (LTS). We will also explore planning and implementation vehicles such as nationally-appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs); National Adaptation Plans (NAPs); and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while fostering conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), as well as other development plans, strategies, and budgets – including for COVID-19 recovery.

Objectives of the side event

- Clarify and map out the current leading global drivers of wetland – specifically peatland – deforestation and degradation
- Present key principles for sustainable livelihood considerations related to these ecosystems
- Further develop understanding of the institutional and governance aspects for improving the management of peatlands and other wetlands
- Identify strategies for reducing wetland destruction
- Explore how peatlands and mangroves can be better mainstreamed into climate and environmental action in the Congo Basin countries

Agenda

Introductions and keynote

Denis Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Presentations

New carbon mapping in the Cuvette Centrale

Simon et al., Leeds University, and CongPeat team

Early efforts of peatland mapping beyond Cuvette Centrale in DRC

Pr Corneille Ewango, UNIKIS

Assessing peat forest disturbances in the central Congo Basin

Karimon Nesha, Wageningen University

Mapping peatlands using remote sensing-based techniques

Michigan Tech University

Connection between peatlands and other processes (REDD+ and land use planning)

Jean Jacques Bambuta, UGT, DRC

Review of current knowledge of peatlands and research priorities in Republic of the Congo

Pr Ifo Suspense, Univ Marien Nguoubi

Discussion with the audience

Rene Siwe (USFS)

Peatlands, mangroves, and other wetlands: climate responses in the Congo Basin

Slot 2: Early responses to protect and manage peatlands in the Congo Basin

6 July 2022 | 5:30pm-7:00pm CAT | Ebene



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Abstract

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Agenda

Introductory note

Rene Siwe (USFS)

Presentations

DRC: current activities on peatlands and perspectives on REDD+

Jean Jacques, UGT

Framing the governance of peatlands in the Congo Basin

Denis Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Felicien Kengoum, CIFOR-ICRAF

Peatlands in climate action and national contributions – and their monitoring

Rémi d'Annunzio, FAO

Aurélie Shapiro, FAO

The definition of peatland in DRC, and opportunities for measurement, reporting, and verification

Florence Bernard, USFS

Rene Siwe, USFS

Peatland partnerships through the Global Peatlands Initiative: advancing action for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands through South-South collaboration

Dianna Kopansky, UNEP

Discussion with the audience

David Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Evolution of measuring, reporting, and verification after a decade of REDD+ in Central Africa

7 July 2022 | 1:00pm-2:30pm CAT | Tente 2



Abstract

The implementation of the global climate change mitigation initiative through the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement requires countries to provide regular updates on their progress towards, and achievement of, commitments indicated in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Countries are making efforts and receiving support to develop sustainable Transparency and Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems. These systems seek to provide quality reporting on climate-related trends, progress, and action; track wider impacts; and support activities on reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (mitigation) and building resilience to a changing climate (adaptation).

Article 5 of the Paris Agreement invites countries to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests. The article also encourages actions to implement and support – including through results-based payments – the existing Warsaw Framework for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation while fostering conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) adopted during the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP-19), and alternative policy approaches such as sustainable management of forests.

Central Africa is one of the regions where REDD+ can enable member countries to achieve their commitments under the Paris Agreement. To capture and integrate emission reductions from REDD+ into national MRV and Transparency systems will depend on the strength of its own such systems. As such, improved REDD+ MRV and Transparency systems will attract partners and investors for climate action in the region.

Countries in the region have been making efforts for more than a decade to develop REDD+ MRV systems. REDD+ MRV initiatives have been piloted and tested at the local, sub-national, and regional levels, through a range of

projects and programs. Results from these initiatives have been mixed, with both successes and failures. As the forest ecosystems in the region are gaining visibility as critical to the fight against climate change globally, there is a need to look for ways to improve REDD+ MRV. As such, in this session, we will review and share lessons learned from more than a decade of REDD+ MRV in Central Africa, in order to take stock and map the way forward for improving MRV and Transparency systems in the region.

Agenda

Introductory note

Denis Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Presentations

MRV process at the subnational level in the Congo Basin

Dr. Sufo Richard, University of Mans

MRV process at the subnational level in the DRC

Faustin Boyemba, FONAREDD, DRC

MRV process at the national level in DRC

Cleto Ndikumagenge, FAO

MRV process in Gabon

TBC

MRV/Transparency in Central Africa in the context of the Paris Agreement

Eugene Chia, Senior Climate Expert , FOKABS

Panel discussion

Moderator: Denis Sonwa, CIFOR

Reducing deforestation from commodity supply chains in the Congo Basin

Recent initiatives, constraints, and the way forward

5 July 2022 | 5:00pm-6:30pm CAT | Tente 2



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Abstract

Several commodity crops, including palm oil and cocoa, are produced in a number of Congo Basin landscapes. The agricultural production of these crops, by small farmers and private companies, is a direct cause of deforestation and forest degradation across Central Africa. However, products from these plants are useful for local and national economies – and for consumption beyond the African continent. Given the role of such commodities in tropical deforestation and forest degradation, it's particularly critical to understand the dynamics and associated impacts of their value chains.

In the palm oil sector, global production is dominated by Southeast Asia, with products exported predominantly to Europe, India, China, the US, and Africa. However, while many African countries, such as those of the Congo Basin, have historically been net importers of palm oil, a number are now trying to increase domestic production of the commodity, both for national consumption and in order to export the surplus. The DRC is attempting to restore old and abandoned plantations, while Cameroon is aiming to expand the area occupied by palm oil plantations, and Gabon is pushing to produce enough surplus to export.

In the cocoa sector, two-thirds of global production comes from West Africa, with beans produced in cocoa orchards at the expense of forests. In the Congo Basin, however, cocoa is grown under forest shade, which allows for the possibility of creating productive ecosystems while leaving forests intact. As with palm oil, though, Congo Basin countries are aiming to increase their cocoa production, and these amplified productivity targets are putting pressure on the countries' remaining forest. Across the globe, efforts are being made to protect these forests from that pressure at a range of levels, including at national (such as REDD+), international, (such as EU countries reducing imports linked to deforestation) and private-sector (such as zero-deforestation supply chain initiatives) scales, but these remain at early stages in the Congo Basin. This session aims to explore the deforestation and forest degradation pressure related to these commodities, identify what needs to be done to reverse deforestation, highlight constraints, and learn lessons from early experiences in the Congo Basin.

Agenda

Introduction and keynote

Denis Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Presentations

Commodity dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa

Elsa Ordway, UCLA

Palm oil sector at the local level in the Yangambi landscape

Eric Basosila, IFA Yangambi, and University of Kisangani

Palm oil development in Gabon

TBD

Preconditions for responsible production of agro-commodities in the Congo Basin, and PROFOREST experience (efforts & constraints) in Congo Basin countries

Louis Defo, PROFOREST

WWF and commodity development in the Congo Basin

Cecile Lachaux, WWF France

IDH experience: roadmap to deforestation-free cocoa in Cameroon

Elvis Ngwa Suh, IDH Cameroon

State of the art, from OFAC chapter

Richard Etyi Eba'a, CIFOR-ICRAF

Discussion with the audience

Louis Defo, PROFOREST

Woodfuel management and the first decade of REDD+ implementation in Central Africa

Realities and the way forward

7 July 2022 | 5:30pm-7:00pm CAT | Tente 2



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Abstract

Woodfuel is the main source of energy for cooking for households in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to the food security and nutritional needs of millions of people. Due to the lack of alternative energy sources, and to growing charcoal demand from urban centers, woodfuel production is expected to increase in the coming decades.

Unsustainable wood harvesting for woodfuel causes forest degradation and greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast, sustainable woodfuel value chains can positively contribute to livelihoods, by generating both household income from trade and a secure supply of cooking fuel, while mitigating negative environmental impacts. Options for sustainable woodfuel – such as those developed during the EU-funded CIFOR-ICRAF-led Governing for Multifunctional Landscapes program (2018-2022) – include: more sustainable sourcing options through agro-forestry, woodfuel plantations, assisted natural regeneration, and/or use of wood residues; more efficient carbonization; capacity enhancement for planning at the community level; support of charcoal producer groups; and improving efficiency in end-use.

In Central Africa, prior to the REDD+ period of the past decade, several initiatives to improve woodfuel management were developed, but little attention was paid to policy on this topic. REDD+ has offered an opportunity to consider woodfuel management as an important component in the region's fight against deforestation and forest degradation. The DRC, for example, is mainstreaming woodfuel management in each of its sub-national REDD+ initiatives (PI-REDD) while the country is developing activities at the national level to structure the governance framework related to biomass collection and uses. In Cameroon, there are several initiatives related to woodfuel, which are less well-integrated with REDD+ dynamics, but seek to address concerns that neighboring Chad's ban on charcoal production could lead to a transboundary

leakage effect in the country's fragile northern ecosystems. The Republic of Congo has gained funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five of its departments – including through better management of woodfuel.

Central Africa's countries thus sit at various stages in terms of integrating woodfuel management into their REDD+ programs. However, this is an opportune time for practitioners to share experiences and generate early lessons on woodfuel management and integration into climate change mitigation initiatives, following the first decade of REDD+ implementation in Central Africa.

Agenda

Introductory note

Richard Eba'a, CIFOR-ICRAF
Denis Sonwa, CIFOR-ICRAF

Fuelwood harvest and land use/cover implications in the mangroves of Cameroon

Claude Tagne, Univ Yde 1

Increasing woodlots through plantations in local communities in Cameroon and DRC

Abdon Awono, CIFOR-ICRAF

Woodfuel and REDD+ in DRC

Jean Jacques Bambuta, CN REDD+ DRC

Woodfuel and REDD+ in Congo Brazzaville

Remi Dannunzio, FAO

Cross-border trade of woodfuel from the far north region of Cameroon: the urgent need for regional regulation

Jean Hugues, Université de Douala