

Understanding the Commission of Central African Forests

Global ambitions and hidden gains

By Elke Verhaeghe and Jan Vanheukelom*

This background paper is part of a series on the Political Economy Dynamics of Regional Organisations (PEDRO). It was prepared in March 2017. In line with ECDPM's mission to inform and facilitate EU-Africa policy dialogue, and financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ, the studies analyse key policy areas of seventeen regional organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so they address three broad questions: What is the political traction of the organisations around different policy areas? What are the key member state interests in the regional agenda? What are the areas with most future traction for regional organisations to promote cooperation and integration around specific areas? The studies aim to advance thinking on how regional policies play out in practice, and ways to promote politically feasible and adaptive approaches to regional cooperation and integration. Further information can be found at www.ecdpm.org/pedro.

* Authors contact: Elke Verhaeghe (everhaeghe@cris.unu.edu), Jan Vanheukelom (jvh@ecdpm.org). Project team leader: Bruce Byiers (bby@ecdpm.org).

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1. Introduction

The Congo Basin is home to the world's second largest tropical forest after the Amazon. It has immense ecological, social and economic value. Due to its vast size and thriving biodiversity, the Congo Basin is seen by many as the *lungs of our planet*. In this light, it has received particular attention from the international community. Since the 1990s, various donors as well as multilateral and international non-governmental actors have stressed the potential of the Congo Basin forests and have actively engaged in their preservation.

Mainly in response to this surge in international awareness, seven Heads of State of forested countries in the Central African region issued the Yaoundé Declaration in 1999, committing themselves to the principles of biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management. By 2000, three more countries joined and established the Commission of Central African Forests, COMIFAC. This specialised regional organisation serves as a reference body for the harmonisation of forest and environmental policies in the Central African region. With over 80 partners, COMIFAC is a focal point for global efforts in the fight for forest protection. Yet, the varied nature of international attention and diversified support for forest governance reforms generate both opportunities and challenges.

This background paper attempts to answer the general question how this single purpose regional organisation contributes to regional decision making and implementation at the level of the ten member states (section 2). Although there is a shared foundational element - all countries are heavily forested - there seems to be a lack of political traction of the regional organization itself to implement its mandate. Its numerous external partners cooperate with COMIFAC for its added value in a number of national and regional dynamics.

In the cooperation on forest governance with member states, numerous gaps remain between the commitments taken at the regional level and their implementation at the national level. Section 3 looks at the actors and factors that shape the national level political and economic interests in domestic forest governance. Cameroon is the region's most influential country, so the background note analyses the ways in which particular powerful political and economic stakeholders interact with one another and with external actors and how this shapes policy outcomes.

Section 4 reflects on the question in what areas COMIFAC has traction to promote forest governance reforms or to contribute otherwise to change dynamics around forest governance. A literature review and a limited number of interviews served as inputs for this background paper.

2. Assessing the political traction of COMIFAC

2.1. Structural and foundational factors

The Congo Basin is one of the largest tropical forests in the world, coming second after the Amazon. It is estimated to provide livelihoods for at least 60 million people (de Wasseige et al., 2015). With a dense forest surface area of nearly 99.000.000 ha, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is by far the most forested COMIFAC member state. It is followed by Gabon (over 21.000.000 ha), Congo Brazzaville (over 18.000.000 ha) and Cameroon (nearly 17.000.000 ha) (Eba'a Atyi et al., 2008, cf. annex 1). The Congo Basin forests are generally well conserved. Deforestation rates dropped from 0.19% between 1990-2000 to 0.14% between 2000-2010. The low levels of deforestation generally result from poor infrastructure, an unattractive business climate and low rural population densities due to a rural exodus, rather than from political actions and good forest governance (de Wasseige et al.,

2015; Karsenty, 2011). The highest rates of deforestation are found in Cameroon¹.

Forest governance in the Congo Basin takes place in a fragile political context, characterised by poorly governed, authoritarian political systems and by protracted violent conflicts. Long-lasting conflicts raise serious concerns for regional spillovers and the spread of terrorism. This is particularly the case in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in parts of the DRC. Boko Haram spreads terror in Cameroon and Chad. Meanwhile, these violent conflicts and internal rivalries transcend poorly managed boundaries and seriously undermine relations between countries in the region (Stevens, Hoebeke & Vlassenroot, 2008). Neighbours interfering in each other's domestic politics and security put a heavy strain on the potential for regional integration². A striking example is the meddling by neighbouring countries in the Central African Republic: while the Congolese president Denis Sassou-Nguesso has supported the CAR administration financially, Chad has manipulated and misled the CAR leadership by both helping former President François Bozizé to power and facilitating a rebel offensive against him³.

The fragility and poor governance in the Central African region is reflected in high scores on various rankings reflection fragility⁴ and corruption⁵. In general, the Central African countries score low on the Human Development Index, with marginal better scores for Sao Tomé and Príncipe (143rd position out of 188), Equatorial Guinea (138th position), Congo (136th position) and Gabon (110th position).⁶ With regards to forest governance, the political fragility of the Congo Basin results in illegal timber trade and related corruption. Because of their size and central position, this is especially true for the DRC and Cameroon. Hence, the DRC serves as a transition country for illegally harvested wood to the East African subregion. Generating over tens of millions of dollars per year, illegal timber flows in the DRC are comparable to conflict minerals in both value and role (Assemble-Mvondo, 2014).

2.2. Sector characteristics

Forest and forest governance are subject to complex and often conflicting multi-actor dynamics. From an economic point of view, forests allow for a wide array of activities, most of which are detrimental to forest conservation. These include the following:

- *Timber trade.* Timber trade plays a crucial role in Central African economies and forest governance. This trade constitutes a major cause of forest degradation as logging activities cause a direct decrease in tree counts. Subsequently, they may generate improved infrastructure and increased accessibility, thus serving as an indirect catalyst for future forms of economic exploitation (de Wasseige et al., 2015). Timber trade involves various types of actors. The bigger private sector players are involved in industrial wood products that are mostly destined for export. Small-scale loggers supply the domestic and sub-regional markets. Gabon is the biggest exporter (nearly 2000 m³ in 2011), followed by Congo Brazzaville (more than 1000 m³ in 2011) and Cameroon (more than 800 m³ in 2011) (*cf. annex 5*). These exports constitute considerable amounts of the national export earnings (e.g. 41% of the national export earnings of the Central African Republic in 2007) and generate millions of dollars in tax income (e.g. EUR 62m in Cameroon, *cf. annex 7*). However, informal timber trade overrides these numbers by far. Earlier research estimates that informal trade

¹ See <http://theredddesk.org/countries/cameroon>.

² See <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-12-strength-in-unity-and-vice-versa-central-africas-integration-problem/#.WKRMcXlrJBx>.

³ See <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-12-strength-in-unity-and-vice-versa-central-africas-integration-problem/#.WKRMcXlrJBx>.

⁴ According to the Fragile State Index 2016, three out of the ten COMIFAC member states belong to the top ten fragile states (CAR, DRC and Chad). See <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/>.

⁵ Corruption Perception Index

⁶ See http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2015_statistical_annex.pdf.

between Cameroon and Chad accounts for at least 80,000 m³ per year ; 12,000 m³ between Cameroon and Nigeria; 6,000 m³ between CAR and Chad and 50,000 m³ between DRC and Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda (Assembe-Mvondo, 2014).

- *Small-scale and industrial agricultural expansion.* Small-scale agricultural expansion involves the so-called slash-and-burn technique, whereby fire is used to clear land for agriculture. Industrial agricultural expansion mainly involves large tree-crop plantations, such as palm trees. As most industrial plantations in Central Africa date from before 1960, their impact had decreased significantly after independence. Recently, however, renewed external interest in industrial agriculture resulted in further deforestation. Especially Cameroon, Gabon and Congo grant concessions for large scale palm oil and other tree crop plantations within forest zones and biodiversity hotspots to foreign investors from Asia, the US and Europe.
- *Mining activities.* Mining activities constitute a direct and indirect cause of deforestation. Mining permits often overlap areas assigned to logging, community forests or conservation. Furthermore, mining adds to deforestation in an indirect manner, especially through improved infrastructure and increased accessibility (de Wasseige et al., 2015).

Each of these activities correspond with different interests and require different forest governance approaches. Tensions arise between formal and informal users of the forests; between small-scale and industrial actors; and between forest inhabitants and forest exploiters. These tensions need to be factored in when trying to understand the political traction of COMIFAC. This was demonstrated by the COMIFAC member states. At the time of the Yaoundé Declaration (so preceding the establishment of COMIFAC) they declared that efforts for forest protection or conservation should not hinder the economic development of the forestry sector (Essama-Nssah & Gockowsk, 2000).

In addition, the forest sector has also drawn the attention of another interest group that is more diffuse and foreign to the region and to Africa. As the 1992 Rio Earth Summit raised the international attention to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, global players increasingly tried to curb deforestation in tropical countries. They pointed to the importance of an until then neglected sector characteristic: the interdependence of forest governance with environmental and climate change concerns (see further). The establishment of COMIFAC reflects the changing global environment and concerns about forest governance, with COMIFAC member states responding to the changing incentive environment and new financing opportunities created by global partners, donors and international NGOs.

2.3. COMIFAC institutions and governance

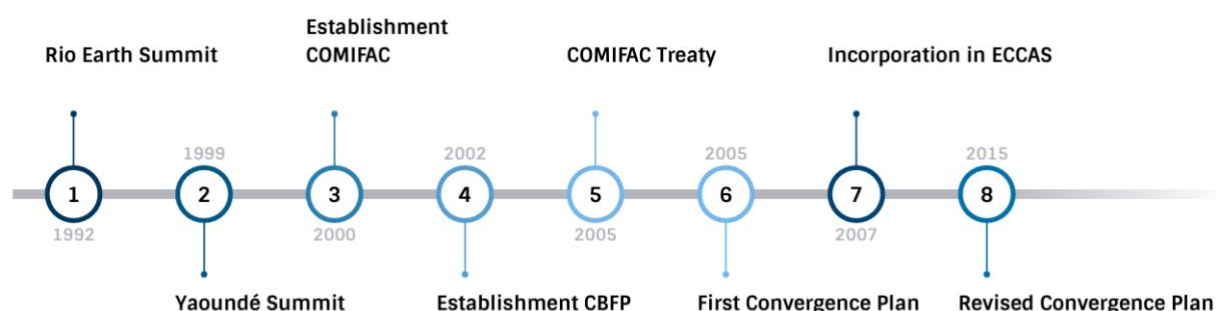
The first steps towards establishing COMIFAC were made soon after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, at a time of surging international attention to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation as promoted by an increasingly vocal global environmental movement. In 1999, seven Heads of State in the Central African region came together at the Yaoundé Environmental Summit of Central African States. Together with various international actors (including the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Commission) they discussed the conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin Forests⁷. The Summit was a joint effort by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Cameroonian president Paul Biya. While Cameroon at that time was already considered to be a national frontrunner in forest governance, the regional approach was driven mainly by WWF (interview, February 2017). Hence, from the very beginning, commitments to sustainability by countries in the Central Africa region were associated with international dynamics and external actors around environmental sustainability and climate change (see Essama-Nssah & Gockowski, 2000).

At the Yaoundé Summit, the Central African Heads of State signed the “Yaoundé Declaration”. By

⁷ See http://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/f3_full.pdf.

doing so, they officially proclaimed their attachment to the principles of biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of Central Africa. They also acknowledged the right of forest communities to rely on forest resources for their economic and social development. In December 2000, the Heads of State established the Conference of Ministers in charge of Forests in Central Africa as the sub-regional reference body for the harmonisation of forest and environmental policies in Central Africa. It is based in Cameroonian capital, Yaoundé. An establishment treaty⁸ was formulated in 2005 in order to provide COMIFAC with a legal basis. Ten states signed and ratified⁹ and are still the COMIFAC members. During that same year, the *COMIFAC Convergence Plan* was agreed and still serves as a regional plan of action.

Figure 1. COMIFAC Milestones



COMIFAC has a standard institutional make-up. The Treaty establishes three main governance institutions. *The Summit of Heads of State* is the highest body and is responsible for adopting regional guidelines. *The Council of Ministers* comprises Ministers in charge of forests and/or the environment of each COMIFAC Member State. It is responsible for decision-making, coordination and control of the implementation of policies and oversees the Executive Secretariat. The Council is led by a Chairperson. This is the Minister in charge of forests of the country chairing COMIFAC and is in function for a period of two years. The Council comes together once every two years, although extraordinary sessions may be convened by the Chairperson at the request of two thirds of the Member States. In practice these extraordinary meetings take place quite frequently, allowing the Council to meet once to twice a year¹⁰. However, participation is generally low and inconsistent, and member states are not inclined to send high level officials (Ko, 2011; interview, February 2017).

The member states are responsible for developing national forestry programmes and/or environmental action plans, for ensuring public sector preparedness to implement these plans (which implies coordination among various departments concerned) and for institutionalising feedback loops (COMIFAC, 2015b). To assist in that process, two additional structures have been established. First, the respective ministries in the member states designate *National Coordinators* to serve as a two-way information and coordination channel between the sub-regional and the national level. Their job is to communicate both regional and national priorities, as well as to coordinate and communicate member state activities on the ground (Ko, 2011).

In spite of their important role, the National Coordinators are often ineffective as they consider their responsibilities to the regional level as of secondary importance. They often send delegates to the regional meetings instead of attending themselves (Ko, 2011). The National Coordinators are further impeded by their lack of integration into the COMIFAC processes, with little to no coordination with the Secretariat (AGRECO, 2011a). Second, *thematic working groups* have been established to

⁸ *Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa and to Establish the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)*. <http://www.lead-journal.org/content/06145.pdf>.

⁹ The Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe

¹⁰ See <http://www.comifac.org/fr/content/conseil-des-ministres> for reports on the Council meetings.

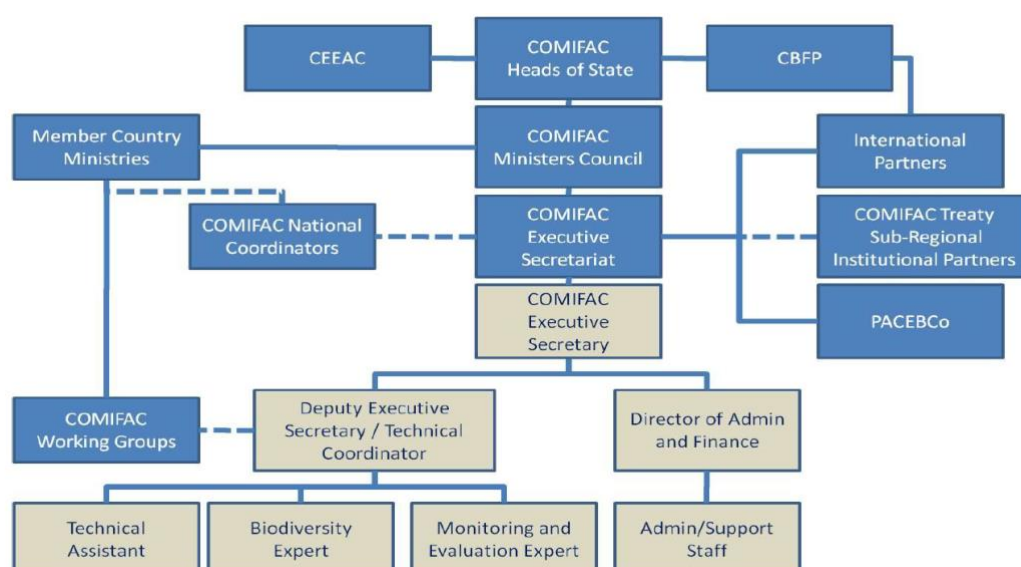
prepare the participation of countries in international negotiations and to monitor the implementation of conventions at the national level. They consist of national focal points of international conventions on climate and biodiversity, and other experts on forest governance (COMIFAC, 2015a).

The *Executive Secretariat* of COMIFAC serves as a facilitation, coordination, steering and monitoring body. It comprises an Executive Secretary, a Deputy Executive Secretary/Technical Coordinator and a Director of Administration and Finance. The Council can appoint them and terminate their service. The Secretariat is aided by thematic working groups and by consultation and coordination meetings with partners and/or the National Coordinators. It develops planification and collaboration frameworks, including operational plans, bi-annual action plans, yearly work plans and partnership agreements for technical and financial cooperation (COMIFAC, 2015b). The Secretariat, however, has low capacity. When fully staffed, the Secretariat comprises only three statutory and six technical staff members, assisted by sixteen support staff members. Three of the technical positions remained vacant in 2015. Donors and partners provided a total of eight additional staff members (COMIFAC, 2015a).

The Treaty foresees institutional relationships with various organisations through memoranda of understanding. This way, COMIFAC recognises and incorporates earlier international, regional and sub-regional initiatives related to forest conservation and management. Each of these institutions contribute to the regional objectives according to their own mission and function. While some of them are effectively dormant, others maintain a good working relationship with COMIFAC. For example, the Network of Central African Protected Areas is integrally involved in the implementation of COMIFAC objectives on biodiversity and the protected areas (Ko, 2011).

In 2007, COMIFAC became a specialised institution of the *Economic Community of Central African States* (ECCAS), which is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities that are officially recognised by the African Union. The incorporation of COMIFAC into ECCAS was mainly due to financial reasons. COMIFAC would be better sustained financially if it were situated within the larger ECCAS framework (COMIFAC, 2015b; Ko, 2011). In theory, COMIFAC is the main regional body for coordinating forest related action, while ECCAS is responsible for ensuring coherence with other sectors, mobilising financial resources and ensuring the proper peace and security settings (COMIFAC, 2015b). In practice, however, the relation between ECCAS and COMIFAC is less clear-cut and often prone to mutual misunderstandings. For example, while COMIFAC is the main body dealing with the dossier of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and represents Central Africa in international climate negotiations, ECCAS has set up a group of climate experts that do not work in collaboration with the COMIFAC focal points (JMN, 2012).

Figure 2. COMIFAC Organigram.



Source: Ko (2011)

2.4. Funding of COMIFAC

Financing by member states of the operational and programme budget of COMIFAC is erratic and minimal. Member states have to contribute to the COMIFAC operational budget in equal ways. In 2015 these contributions were fixed at FCFA 45 million per member state (less than EUR 70,000). However, few member states have actually paid their contributions. So far, Cameroon is the only country to have paid its full share (*cf. annex 10*). Hence, donors and international and national forestry-related NGOs pay most of the COMIFAC operational costs, programmes and projects. The ECCAS and COMIFAC 2009 ministerial conference tried to solve this problem by proposing a system in which the COMIFAC budget would be automatically derived from the ECCAS budget. Some countries have started to catch up on their financial commitments, including Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Gabon and the DRC (*cf. annex 10*)¹¹.

A possible explanation might be the recent call to enforce the treaty article that states that any state failing to meet its financial obligations forfeits its right to vote and to any form of support¹². In fact, the ministerial meeting of January 2015 has asked that the donors verify the status of member state contributions before offering any aid (COMIFAC, 2015c: No. 21(vii)). In practice, donors and other external partners have been urging member states bilaterally to pay their debts without, so it seems, exercising extra pressure (interview, February 2017). Lastly, the COMIFAC is planning to develop a strategy for sustainable resource mobilisation. This includes the establishment of national forest and environmental funds, conversion taxes on forests used for other purposes, partnerships with the private sector, REDD+ and other resources (COMIFAC, 2015b).

2.5. Donors and external partnerships - how to move from outputs to change?

Global partners and donors have played important roles in the inception of COMIFAC, and in the

¹¹ See <http://www.mediacongo.net/article-actualite-17734.html>.

¹² http://pfbc-cbfp.org/news_en/items/passation-temoin-COMIFAC-fr.html.

conception of ambitious objectives related to improved forest governance. The partnerships with COMIFAC result in a wide range of outputs, but fail to substantially contribute to improved forest governance in the member states. In reality, COMIFAC has not been empowered to engage with the member states in order to do so, and merely acts as a regional conduit to attract funding and goodwill for its members.

But there is also another side to the partnerships with a number of external partners that COMIFAC has developed over the years. Generally speaking, the members of COMIFAC signal their reform readiness rather than demonstrating true commitment to make the difficult decisions to implement it. Still, COMIFAC seems to be appreciated for some of the less visible but no less real added value it delivers at other levels or layers - the analogy with an onion was made. Section 3 will further clarify the obstacles or lack of political traction behind COMIFAC at national level.

COMIFAC as a regional organisation - outputs but little traction

The global movements around biodiversity, environmental and forest protection and increasingly around climate change, are strong external variables that have contributed to the establishment of COMIFAC as a regional organisation. These international dynamics have also contributed in multiple ways to shaping the COMIFAC agenda. For example, the predecessor of COMIFAC, the Yaoundé Declaration, explicitly incorporated the establishment of Transboundary Protected Areas, which would later find their way into the COMIFAC Convergence Plans. This input can be attributed to the World Wildlife Fund, which had co-organised the Yaoundé Summit (Essama-Nssah & Gockowsk, 2000). Other mechanisms through which external players exert influence and try to alter the incentive environment in which regional decision makers operate, include financial support, debt reduction, conditionality and policy dialogue (*cf. infra*).

From the very beginning, COMIFAC committed itself to a wide agenda of forestry related measures such as sustainability certification and the combat against poaching. The agenda also included broader policy ambitions, such as accelerating sustainable industrialisation. In order to achieve these goals, the COMIFAC Heads of State adopted a regional plan of action. In February 2005, the COMIFAC accepted the Convergence Plan. The first edition of the plan was translated into two operational schemes, one for the period 2006-2008 and one for the period 2009-2011¹³. Due to a lack of implementation, a second Convergence Plan was negotiated, which was to address both emerging challenges and national priorities.

The revised Convergence Plan came into force in 2015 and will be the main framework for cooperation until 2025. It comprises six priority axes and three cross-cutting axes. The priority axes are: (i) the harmonisation of forest and environmental policies; (ii) sustainable management and exploitation of forest resources; (iii) conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; (iv) combating the effects of climate change and desertification; (v) socio-economic development and multi-stakeholder participation; (vi) sustainable financing. The cross-cutting axes include: (i) training and capacity building; (ii) research and development and (iii) communication, awareness, information and education (COMIFAC, 2015b).

By merging the COMIFAC priorities into a single document, the Convergence Plan serves as an umbrella for regional action and for external partners. In other words, the Convergence Plan not only guides actions by the Executive Secretariat and the member states, but also informs donors and (international) non-governmental organisations. The latter have to indicate how their actions will contribute to the realisation of the Convergence Plan (see *box 1*). In practice, however, not all of the odd 80 partners involved are aware of these obligations, and the generic nature of the objectives makes implementation and policy coherence cumbersome (interview, February 2017).

¹³ See <http://www.comifac.org/fr/content/quest-ce-que-le-plan-de-convergence>.

Box 1. A very multi-stakeholder partnership

During the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the ten member states of COMIFAC and their numerous external partners (bilateral and multilateral donors, specialised global and regional organisations, international non-governmental organisations, private sector partners, and others) created the *Congo Basin Forest Partnership* (CBFP). The CBFP was launched as a voluntary multi-stakeholder partnership to improve cooperation and coordination¹⁴. The US promoted a platform for its Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) (interviews, February 2016). The CBFP counts over 94 members, including the COMIFAC member states. Its specific goals are to increase effectiveness of the partners' programs and initiatives, through improved communication and collaboration¹⁵. However, since CBFP is a voluntary partnership, donors are not obliged to use it. As a result, much aid is still provided through channels outside of the CBFP (interview, February 2017).

In 2008, the CBFP established the *Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa*. The Observatory aims to pool the knowledge and available data necessary to monitor the ecological, environmental, and social aspects of Central Africa's forests (Mayaux et al., 2009). It publishes biennial State of the Forests Reports. The Observatory officially became part of the Secretariat in 2010.

COMIFAC is involved in a wide array of projects in support of forest governance and institutional strengthening¹⁶ under the umbrella of the Convergence Plan. The projects are mainly donor-funded and are often executed by third actors. Content-wise, the external partners of COMIFAC seem to have considerable influence on the formulation of regional initiatives (AGRECO, 2011a; interview, February 2017). Besides the regional programmes and projects, donors continue to engage with member states bilaterally. For example, the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative is built on national Voluntary Partnership Agreements, which target forest governance measures at national level rather than deal with regional mechanisms (Bigombe Logo, 2015). In general, donor initiatives - both at the regional and national level - are hardly coordinated, even those that are channelled through the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (interview, February 2017).

The plethora of partners, donors and projects makes it hard to understand the roles and responsibilities of the various actors. Moreover, most project and policy related documents primarily deal with the numerous COMIFAC inputs, activities or transactions rather than with their effects on change dynamics or contributions to improved forest governance in the member countries. Nonetheless, at the regional level, COMIFAC has managed to produce some concrete outputs. Some of these outputs include:

- *Joint declarations.* Through the COMIFAC thematic working groups, which prepare the participation of countries in international negotiations, COMIFAC member states have managed to formulate a joint position in several international negotiations. For example, it is widely recognised that the joint declaration of the COMIFAC members on the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) mechanism was one of the main factors behind the inclusion of sustainable management of forest and carbon stocks into the REDD-agenda (Allan & Dauvergne, 2013; Assembe-Mvondo, 2013). Most recently, the COMIFAC member states aligned their positions on climate change through the COMIFAC thematic working group on climate change, resulting in a common position at the climate change conference in Paris, the COP21 (COMIFAC, 2015a).
- *Legal instruments and guidelines.* COMIFAC has adopted a number of legal instruments on

¹⁴ The PFCB is a type II partnership, which is designed to facilitate an effective support to intergovernmental organisations. External partners include bilateral and multilateral donors, specialised global and regional organisations, international non-governmental organisations, private sector partners, and others.

¹⁵ See <http://pfbc-cbfp.org/>.

¹⁶ See <http://www.comifac.org/en/programmes-et-projects>.

specific topics, as well as some guidelines for harmonising national policies. The latter are complemented by technical assistance for national policy makers. For example, in the context of REDD+, a regional project is setup to develop national forest surveillance mechanisms.

- *Resource knowledge and transparency.* COMIFAC has contributed to the collection and dissemination of resource knowledge and better transparency in general. For example, the newly established Observatory for the Forests of Africa uses highly modern tools for forest data acquisition, reporting on physical, economic and legal trends on its website and for issuing State of the Forests reports on a regular basis. Additionally, a monitoring-evaluation mechanism is currently being operationalised.

COMIFAC has also undertaken initiatives to improve its governance systems by strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to enhance accountability to both member states and external funders. For example, in order to properly assess progress, the Convergence Plan is translated into specific targets to be met by 2025. As yet, however, this does not include intermediate targets nor a clear division of labour. The COMIFAC stakeholders also receive regular action and work plans and external partners are requested to communicate in what way their actions contribute to the implementation of the Convergence Plan. Regular reports provide updates on the state of the forests, projects and programmes as well as on the funding (e.g. State of the Forest Reports, Annual Reports).

In 2014, a monitoring and evaluation manual was created, describing the technical, functional and organisational procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress. The procedures include a monitoring scoreboard as well as an annual timetable on the activities of the Executive Secretariat. In December 2015, COMIFAC launched the final stage of an online monitoring platform which allows to track the impact of the Convergence Plan on the national and sub-regional level¹⁷. In August 2015, the Secretariat started the process of determining a baseline for tracking evolutions (COMIFAC, 2015a). However, none of the instruments described in the manual are fully operational yet.

COMIFAC as an *onion* - change dynamics beyond the layer of outputs

Given the pervasive nature of poor forest governance in all countries in the region, some external partnerships with COMIFAC prioritise cooperation with other layers of players than cooperation through the member states. Germany, for example, is one of the longer term supporters of COMIFAC, with a big portfolio over a twelve-year period in areas ranging from forest certification, transboundary protected areas, benefit-sharing and supporting COMIFAC as an institution. COMIFAC can be viewed as a small executive secretariat at the core of the onion (with three staff employed by the COMIFAC Council of Ministers). The more you move to the outside layers of the onion, the bigger these layers - and the more important the role of external players become, with less influence from member states.

Some view the COMIFAC Secretariat as a small structure that lacks the commitment of its member states, and fails to encourage, pressurise or enforce implementation of agreed regional policies with the member states. As such, it needs to be complemented by looking at other layers. This view needs to be complemented with an assessment that points to a versatile and loosely organised secretariat that is effectively run, and that has gained credibility as an umbrella organisation with a wide range of tasks and projects. Some have pointed out that through some supportive roles played by the Secretariat, non-state actors such as conservation and human rights NGOs have found ways to cooperate with state partners, especially with departments with responsibilities over improving environmental and forest governance, departments that are often staffed with technically interested and motivated people.

The COMIFAC Secretariat does not act as a powerhouse, but rather a halfway house between a range of stakeholders that operate in a politically and otherwise fragile environment. COMIFAC does

¹⁷ See <http://www.convergence.comifac.org/connexion/>.

not assume the position of coordinator, nor does it function as a gatekeeper. It operates as a facilitator that enables aid to be channelled in particular areas, adapts to the changing context, and creates a policy cover for a diverse group of interested stakeholders as well as a platform for sharing of experiences, technical knowhow and orienting knowledge development.

Paradoxically, the fragility in the region “makes it also rather attractive for a number of donors to work in such a relatively unstable environment through a regional organisation as COMIFAC” (interview, March 2017). Working through bilateral channels is difficult given the high degree of corruption. In the whole chain from funding to implementation, there is a mixture of partners, including more than one hundred civil society organisations or NGOs. The realisation of extreme fragility in the region also creates the space for some donors to adapt cooperation models to the context. With such fragile environments it is less difficult to convince donor capitals to downscale expectations and to adapt aid modalities to the context. The cooperation with and through COMIFAC, as one seasoned interviewee observed, had altered with the changes in the context and improved accordingly. Germany does not channel funding through COMIFAC and provides its support to the Secretariat through in kind contributions and technical assistance.

On the other hand, member states of COMIFAC take a low interest in the regional organisation and its secretariat, as there is little government interest in improved forest governance or the types of (conditional) support provided by donors. COMIFAC has steered away from becoming the “playing ball of the political powers in the region. These political leaders consider improved forest governance and concerns about climate change as a preoccupation of western governments. They keep themselves somewhat at a distance from COMIFAC” (interview, March 2017).

One of the longstanding areas of German support are the *Transboundary Protected Areas*. Central to the regional agenda is the joint management of transboundary protected areas in Central Africa. These area based programmes are among the oldest of COMIFAC, going back to the Yaoundé Declaration. They represent the first example of joint community management of forest areas by different countries (Koyo & Foteu, 2006). Since 2000, five Transboundary Protected Areas have been established, connecting forests in Cameroon, CAR, Congo, Gabon, DRC and Chad. There have been “marked improvements in the multi-stakeholder partnership, with adaptations over time to the partnership instruments and approaches.” Some donors have come to accept that a long term perspective is required, within a realistic results and time framework. “Real changes in governance require a very long time perspective” (interview, March 2017).

3. Political interests of COMIFAC member states

Detailed country analyses of the political and economic interests and involvement of particular private and public stakeholders in member states of COMIFAC is rather scarce. Still, there is some deeper analysis of the politics in forest-land use in Cameroon, COMIFAC’s most influential member. The Cameroon case provides relevant insights into the “political interests” in, and the broader incentive environment in which ruling elites operate and take decisions in the forestry sector and on their regional commitments. This case also reveals how external actors influence that incentive environment in support of their own climate and environmental objectives. Insights in these dynamics around forest governance at country level help understand the rather limited political traction behind implementation of the COMIFAC agenda at national and cross-country level. The first subsection deals with the Cameroon case and the next one presents some generic findings.

3.1. The case of forest governance in Cameroon - political economy at work

Presenting policies and players

For Cameroon, Ongolo and Karsenty (2015) have mapped the formal and informal influences exerted by public authorities involved in forest and forestland governance (see annex 11). The Ministry of Forestry, for example, is the main authority of policies related to forest land use, but is also the major opponent to forest conservation reforms as these may affect the rent streams from logging, forest agricultural expansion, etc. This ministry does not stand to benefit from internationally or regionally sanctioned policies relating to forest conservation, as conservation resources and rents are more likely to flow through different channels and networks such as the Ministry of the Environment. The latter is a proponent of greater consideration of environmental sustainability in forest land use and holds responsibility over the REDD+ process. According to Somorin et al. (2014) the possibility to obtain funding through REDD+ has been one of the major incentives for the Cameroon government to engage in sustainability policies.

Such divergences within the ruling elite and government help explain the apparent paradox between Cameroon's stance at the regional and global levels and its measures at national level. To the international eye, Cameroon is the most engaged member state of COMIFAC in terms of both financial contributions and participation in sustainable forest governance initiatives. Its capital, Yaoundé, is home to the COMFAC headquarters. This goes back to the days that Cameroon, together with the World Wildlife Fund, were the driving forces of the Yaoundé Summit, the very start for sub-regional cooperation in forestry management. Yet at a national level, "Cameroon actually disregards the forestland use reforms recommended by international aid donors" (Ongolo and Karsenty, 2015, p. 204). In fact, Cameroon also disregards its own national forest laws. Two years after the Rio World Summit of 1992, it introduced important forestry legislation targeting innovations through transparency and forest tenure enforcement in forest operations. The system included decentralised management through communal and community involvement of forest management, including instruments to decentralise equitable sharing of forest revenues from the national to the local level.

Cameroon's forest law of 1994 and its regional approach on forest governance were regarded as the most innovative in the Central African region. In practice, however, Cameroon does not lead by example. Implementation is poor and patchy for a variety of reasons. Typically, political barriers the forestry sector include elite capture, rent-seeking practices, and the lack of sufficiently powerful countervailing institutions. The country's forest management policies have also legal loopholes, e.g. allowing logging companies to exclude commercially valuable species from logging quotas (see Clough et al., 2008). Another factor relates to the political economy of environmental and forest governance. The benefits of land conversion for private sector actors (agriculture, mining, logging) are often concentrated, while its environmental costs are diffused. The former enables concerted efforts by better positioned stakeholders to lobby government departments and agencies, while the fragmented actors who stand to lose most are confronted with collective action problems that reduce chances of effective lobby efforts (Rubaba et al. 2015).

International efforts and the political economy of non-implementation

A fuller picture of both policy decisions adopted by the Cameroon government and the paradox of non-implementation emerges when factoring in a powerful external variable, i.e. donors and international non-governmental actors. A number of bilateral and multilateral donors as well as international non-governmental organisations are highly motivated to promote environmental global goods by seeking compliance from aid dependent forested countries through financial incentives and aid conditionality. To encourage effective implementation of Cameroon's progressive forest law and in

an effort to expand forest conservation zones in the country, some donors used funding as a means of pressurising - or incentivising - the Cameroon government. Particularly at a time of political and financial crisis in the second half of the nineties, the government seemed most open to such international efforts and adopted formal measures as demanded by these external actors.

While such external interventions alter the incentive environment for reformers in government, the conditionalities and incentive packages are generally too weak to alter the underlying political economy. Such measures, in other words, have not been sufficiently well targeted or substantial to win over the most powerful and influential stakeholders who benefit from the status quo. On the contrary, factions within Cameroon's highly centralised bureaucracy used their discretionary powers to resist the external influences. State officials are not sufficiently motivated to promote improved forest governance through transparency, accountability and equity as this will undermine the status quo from which they benefit. So at a formal level, the government signalled compliance with donors, while informally, government strategies and private interests in the public bureaucracy ran counter stated *good forest governance* policies and principles. Moreover, these dynamics are difficult to observe as they are not "directly accessible to a layman monitoring public action" (Ongolo and Karsenty, 2015, p. 204).

In the complex policy arena of forest governance, ministries and stakeholders with varying vested interests, compete and position around three *sub-sectors*, with each sub-sector having particular rent systems:

- maintaining/expanding forest operations including commercial logging,
- promoting the conversion of forest lands for mining and agro-industrial use, and
- consolidating forest conservation and tapping into international compensation mechanisms (such as REDD+) or other funding opportunities.

The direction of government policies in forest governance at national and regional level, and the relative weight given to environmental and development objectives, depends on the outcomes of this competition. The competing ministries though "understand that they must not cross a red line that can be defined as: any action that leads to the complete elimination of the options open to their competitors" (*idem*).

Contextual changes in the external environment have also influenced the incentive environment in which these public and private stakeholders or actors operate. Until ten years ago, the EU was an important market for Cameroonian exports of wood. Through initiatives such as *Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade* (FLEGT) the EU exercised some influence to stop environmental degradation¹⁸. But Cameroon has been able to reorient its exports, primarily to Africa and East Asia. One interviewee observed that in Cameroon, "in terms of the environment perspective things are getting from bad to worse, and it is not easy to see a change for the better in terms of protected areas, the integrity of forestry and certification" (interview, March 2017). Such contextual changes have weakened the position of donors and their incentive or conditionality approaches.

In order to avoid international blame and aid cuts, Cameroon has demonstrated just enough commitment to the global environmental agenda to keep donors interested, while simultaneously avoiding the implementation of what the ruling elite perceived to be policy imposition by external players. This type of politics has been named "gecko politics." In "gecko politics", countries employ cunning behaviour¹⁹ to keep the upper hand over domestic policies through manipulation, ambiguous

¹⁸ FLEGT is a multi-faceted EU initiative to reduce illegal logging by strengthening forest governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber. One component of this initiative is about building on the EU's regulations for certified wood products as this creates market incentives for partner countries that export wood products to Europe to engage in sustainable and legal forest management.

¹⁹ This phenomenon has also been studied by Andrews (2013), who refers to it as *signalling*. This is part of developing countries' approaches to donor demands for wholesale, best practice reforms. Developing countries mimic the policies that are demanded by donors, hoping that such empty signals will suffice to obtain funding (see also PERIA Synthesis 2016, p. 13).

decision-making and institutional dysfunctioning (Ongolo, 2015, p. 13). When promoting comprehensive governance reforms, most donors fail to grasp the complexities of the socio-political barriers to reforms in Cameroon and other forested countries. Profound political reforms cannot be bought, “especially when these incentives are limited by the lack of sufficiently attractive funding or hindered by contested conditionalities” (Ongolo and Karsenty, 2015, p. 206).

3.2. Other examples of national level interests in COMIFAC

Many COMIFAC members other than Cameroon have also signalled their support for forest governance reforms. At the regional level, this support has led to some concrete commitments and outputs (see section 2.4). At national level, many COMIFAC members have integrated regional directives into national legal frameworks, or are in the process of doing so (interview, February 2017). Most COMIFAC member states have also ratified international conventions and treaties on forestry and the environment. National level measures have been taken in areas such as national protected areas and in certified concessions. In 2016, 18% of all forest concessions were certified. Most member states are enrolled in the REDD+ process and some are also concluding Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) within the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade framework.

Nevertheless, while governments in the region signal a degree of commitment to sector reforms, they have not engaged in solid implementation arrangements. At activity and output level, governments are able demonstrate new policies, protocols, signed statements, plans, etc. Yet, it is much harder to discern any meaningful move towards a meaningful improvement in forest and forestland governance on the ground. Moreover, the quality of member state engagement in COMIFAC is dubious. The non-payment of yearly contributions to COMIFAC by member states and the poor attendance rates at COMIFAC meetings at the ministerial and working group levels point to low member state ownership of regionally defined initiatives (Ko, 2011).

As in the case of Cameroon, the implementation gap can be explained by the interference of a wide range of national level public and private stakeholders with diverging interests, with some players wielding powerful influence and extracting considerable rents from forest economies. This divergence often results in incoherent actions of sectoral ministries of member states, with donors unable to counter such dynamics or alter the political and economic incentive environment. Publicly stated development and conservation goals are often undermined by the collusion of stakeholders with vested interests, and reinforced by ingrained weak governance systems and endemic public and private sector corruption.

Among the most powerful external stakeholders are foreign investors from Asia, the US and Europe, who recently received more concessions for their large scale palm oil and other tree crop plantations within forest zones and biodiversity hotspots, especially in Cameroon, Gabon and Congo (Assemble-Mvondo, 2014). Additionally, governments in the region are known to benefit from industrial logging companies with considerable lobbying capacity through flawed legal frameworks (Clough et al., 2008).

In some cases, member states use COMIFAC to raise donor support for sustainability or environmental projects. They prioritised REDD funding, for example, as the conditionalities to obtain funding under REDD rules were considered to be less binding in terms of demands for national level policy measures or reforms (Karsenty, 2012). In fact, since the Congo Basin already has a low deforestation rate due to low level demography and poor economic exploitation, COMIFAC pushed to include external compensation from REDD for these carbon stocks for which no additional policy measures or implementation efforts were required (Allan & Dauvergne, 2013; Assemble-Mvondo, 2013). COMIFAC also pleaded for taking into account past efforts of forest protection or non-exploitation, as well as for an “adjustment factor”. The latter would allow for a certain degree of deforestation according to development needs of the countries in the region (Karsenty, 2012). These

measures would enable the COMIFAC member states to benefit from the REDD scheme without having to conduct profound reforms to their forest governance systems.

4. Conclusion: political traction behind regional forest governance

Forest conservation features high on the international agenda. The surge in international awareness on sustainability and biodiversity conservation has contributed to the establishment of the first regional organisation in Africa to preserve forests and improve forest governance, COMIFAC. Ten countries in Africa's most conflictual region, the Congo Basin, signed up to common objectives in 2000. They engaged in regional and national programmes and projects to realise these objectives. This background paper has analysed the political traction of this single-purpose regional organisation to contribute to the realisation of these objectives.

The COMIFAC Secretariat has been the driving force behind enabling or facilitating regional policy development, of harmonisation, of norm-setting, of multi-partner cooperation, and of sensitisation and project implementation. COMIFAC had traction beyond the mere output level when it managed to speak with one voice on international forums where climate change and environment related norms were established. However, despite numerous activities, policies, joint declarations and legal instruments the results on the ground in terms of improved forest governance remain sobering. Explanations for this implementation gap can be found in an analysis of relations with external partners of COMIFAC, and by a country level assessment of the political economy actors and factors of forest governance.

Over ninety donors, multilateral organisations, international NGOs and other external partners have developed partnerships with or through COMIFAC. This reflects the strong global interest in the protection of the Congo Basin forests. Donors, international organisations and national NGOs fund most of the COMIFAC operational costs, programmes and projects. Through various support mechanisms, they also try to directly or indirectly steer or influence regional initiatives and policies. However, this external influence and support did not manage to close the implementation gaps.

These gaps persist because of national level political economy obstacles to forest governance reforms. Cameroon exemplifies this gap between promise of improved governance and sobering practice well. It is the one country with the most progressive policy framework and elaborate institutional architecture on forest governance. It is the only member that consistently pays its yearly contributions to COMIFAC, and as the most powerful economy in the sub-region it is an influential player in the regional organisation. Nevertheless, influential actors within the public and private domains with vested interests in rent seeking and corruption manage to maintain the status quo of *bad forest governance*.

An important incentive for this joint approach through COMIFAC has been the common prospect for its member states to benefit from international financial compensation mechanisms for their efforts to protect the tropical forests of the Congo Basin. However, donor approaches seem at times ill adapted to the national level political economy blockages to improved forest and environmental governance and the dominant political incentive environment. The conditionality and incentive packages attached to external interventions are generally too weak or poorly designed to win over the most powerful and influential stakeholders who benefit from the status quo. The prospects of aid seem to encourage empty *signalling* by COMIFAC members. Public authorities invest more efforts in *looking good* rather than *performing better* on conservation and forest governance objectives.

Still, the COMIFAC Secretariat has managed to drive a number of actions and processes in the region that are conducive to positive outputs. The Secretariat does not act as a powerhouse, but rather a halfway house between a range of stakeholders that operate in a politically and otherwise fragile

environment. It has developed an ability to maneuver carefully and avoid negative attention from the member states. A substantial part of its agenda is about facilitating, convening, or enabling numerous stakeholders with an interest in tackling climate, environmental or forest governance related challenges. These stakeholders range from global NGOs, donors, multilateral agencies, domestic NGOs and CSOs, but the Secretariat's range also extends to technocrats in government departments of member states who try to take parts of the broad agenda forward.

These gains may seem modest when compared with the high-end vision, agreements and policies of the official COMIFAC agenda. Yet, these less visible gains need to be understood against the broader canvas of instability in the region, and of extreme forms of poor governance failures in member states. Or, as one interviewee stated, without these interactions between the COMIFAC Secretariat and the multiple stakeholders with an interest in improved forest governance of some sorts "we could have been much further away and would have even more reason for pessimism. The political trend in the region is undeniably downward in many areas. More cannot be expected at this moment from COMIFAC than to help with slowing down of that fall" (interview, March 2017).

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Skype interview with technical advisor at the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), February 2017.

Skype interview with technical advisor at the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), February 2017.

Skype interview with Head of Programme Gestion Durable des Forêts dans le Bassin du Congo (COMIFAC), GIZ - Yaoundé, March 2017. Dr. Paul SCHOLTE.

Annexes

Annex 1: Forest area (ha) of the six forest countries of Central Africa (2008). Source: Eba'a Atyi et al. (2008)

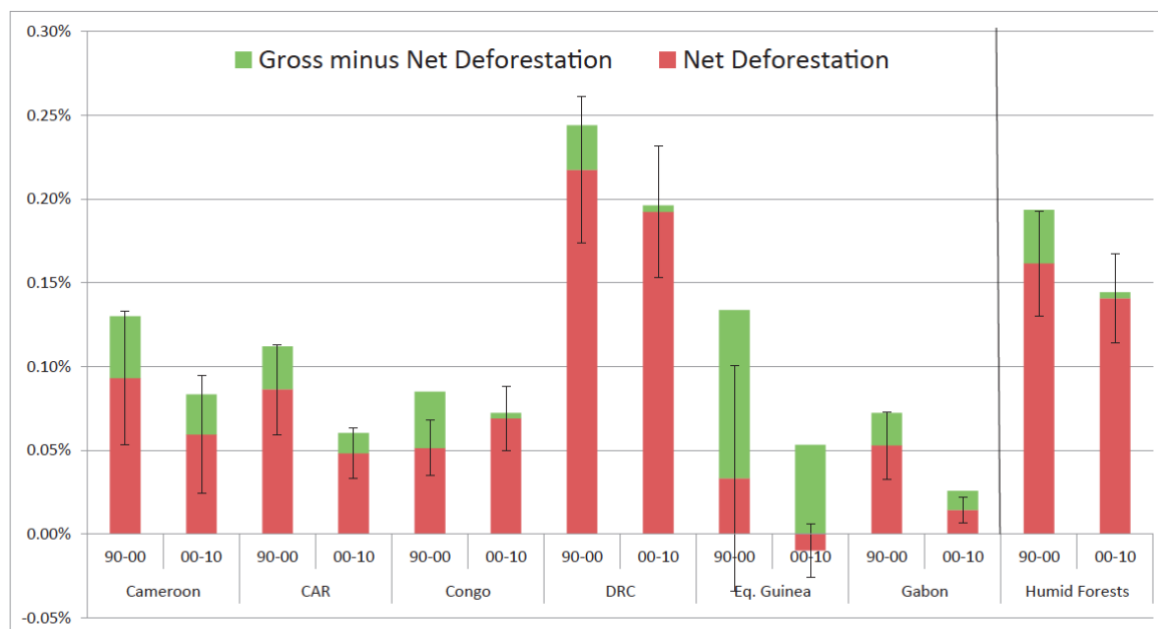
Forest cover category	Cameroon	Congo	CAR	DRC	Gabon	Eq. Guinea
Lowland dense forest	16,467,570	14,384,835	4,614,732	83,761,542	20,982,690	1,972,044
Sub-montane forest (900-1500 m)	270,540	612	1,440	5,995,494	14,445	27,450
Montane forest (>1500 m)	17,685	0	0	955,071	36	2,619
Swamp forest	0	4,108,545	27	8,200,098	17,766	0
Mangrove	120,348	0	0	0	71,919	351
Total dense forests	16,876,143	18,493,992	4,616,199	98,912,205	21,086,856	2,002,464
Forest-cropland mosaic	4,501,395	5,805,468	1,816,380	21,144,384	3,120,219	624,438
Forest-savanna mosaic	5,867,865	1,351,890	22,774,437	28,592,334	185,931	28,647
Dense deciduous forest (Miombo)	105,984	1,251,531	922,923	28,023,714	176,643	0
Other vegetation	14,066,352	6,824,178	30,970,737	50,825,421	1,404,630	39,231
Cropland	4,873,077	215,514	917,676	825,390	33,480	2,637

Annex 2: Land cover surfaces in 2012 and forest cover loss since 2000 of the COMIFAC countries. Source: de Wasseige et al. (2012)

Strata	Surfaces km ² (Proportion %)	
	With Chad	Without Chad
Water	140 332 (3)	92 452 (3)
Dense humid forest	1 707 185 (36)	1 706 256 (48)
Wooded savannahs	1 167 234 (24)	1 143 835 (32)
Shrub savannahs	129 363 (3)	125 999 (4)
Grass savannahs	355 581 (7)	219 522 (6)
Farmland or grassland	508 291 (11)	225 217 (6)
Low or absent vegetal biomass	782 585 (16)	71 463 (2)
TOTAL	4 790 571 (100)	3 584 744 (100)
Forest cover loss > 30 %	78 726 (4.6)	

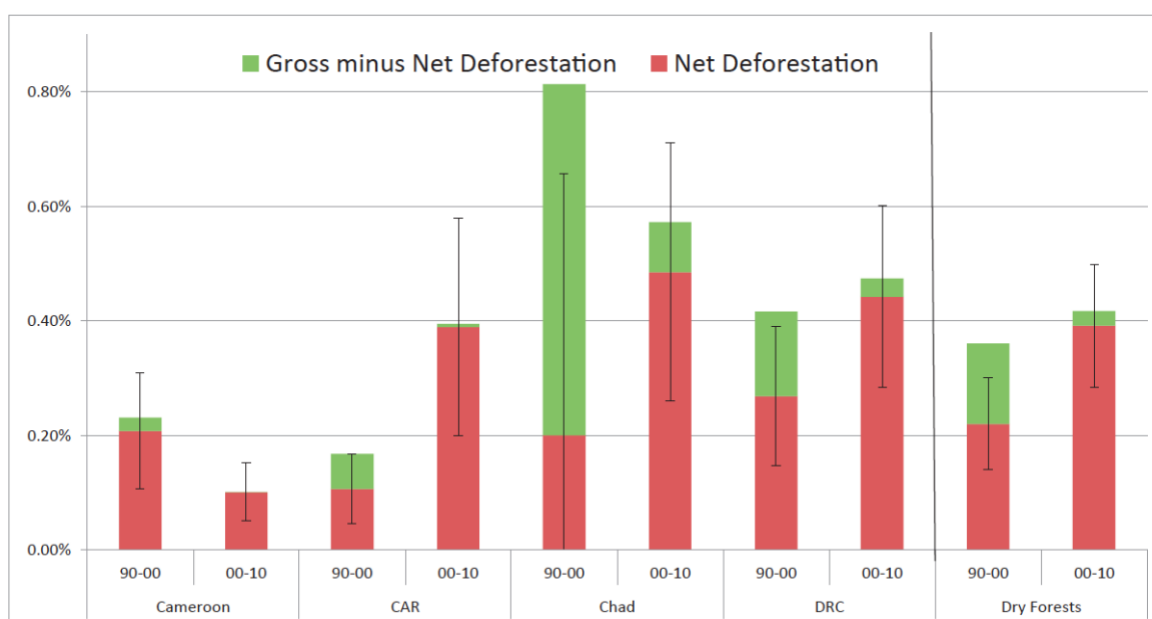
Annex 3: Annual deforestation rates (gross and net) of Central Africa rainforests between 1990 and 2000, and between 2000 and 2010. Source: de Wasseige et al. (2012).

Note: The gross deforestation added to afforestation, reforestation and forest regeneration gives the net deforestation.



Annex 4: Annual deforestation rates (gross and net) of Central Africa dry forests between 1990 and 2000, and between 2000 and 2010. Source: de Wasseige et al. (2012).

Note: The gross deforestation added to afforestation, reforestation and forest regeneration gives the net deforestation.



Annex 5: Timber exports in m³ (2011). Source: Assembe-Mvondo (2014).

Country	Year	Volume of wood exportation (1000 m ³)
Cameroon	2009	822
CAR	2009	111
Congo	2009	1 012
DRC	2008	223
Equatorial Guinea	2009	35
Gabon	2009	1 994
Total		4 198

Source: FAO (2011)².

Annex 6: Destinations for timber export (2011). Source: Assembe-Mvondo (2014).

Table 5. Summary of various destinations wood exportation.

From/To (m ³)	Intra- COMIFAC	Rest of Africa	North America	Asia	E U	Rest of the World
Cameroon (2009)	4 095	30 210	9 574	435 686	340 520	1 087
CAR (2009)	1 474	N/D	N/D	45 011	64 568	472
Congo (2009)	2 500	6 825	7 366	514 437	460 484	20 845
DRC (2008)	N/D	42 540	55 221	50 128	137 292	N/D
Eq. Guinea (2009)	N/D	1 565	35	16 472	17 046	N/D
Gabon (2009)	125	77 588	2 944	3 017	245 266	33 992

N/D = not declared, Source: FAO (2011).

Annex 7: Contribution of the forestry sector to GDP and tax earnings. Source: Eba'a Atyi et al. (2008).

Table 1.5: Contribution of the forestry sector to GDP and tax earnings in the Congo Basin

Country	Contribution to GDP (%)	Contribution to tax earnings (million €)
Cameroon	6	62.1
Congo	5.6	10
Gabon	4.3	31.3
Eq. Guinea	0.22	13.8
DRC	1	1.7
CAR	6.3	-

Sources: Cameroon: Ministère des Finances; Congo: Document stratégique de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSRP); DRC: World Bank; CAR: Institut centrafricain de Statistiques et d'Études économiques et sociales; Gabon: Direction générale des Impôts; Equatorial Guinea: Documento de la 2^{da} Conferencia Económica.

Annex 8: Harvested timber volume and primary species logged (2007). Source: Eba'a Atyi et al. (2008).

Table 1.6: Harvested timber volume and primary species logged by country in 2007

Country	Production (m ³)	Main species logged
Cameroon*	2,296,254	Ayous, sapelli, tali, azobé, iroko
Congo	1,330,980	Sapelli, sipo, bossé, iroko, wengué
Gabon	3,350,670	Okoumé, azobé, okan, movingui, ozigo
Eq. Guinea	524,799	Okoumé, tali, azobé, ilomba
DRC	310,000	Sapelli, wengué, sipo, afromosia, iroko
CAR	537,998	Ayous, sapelli, aniegré, iroko, sipo
Total	8,350,701	

* Data 2006.

Source: National ministries of forestry.

Annex 9: Overlap of soil utilizations. Source: de Wasseige et al. (2015)

Table 1.4: Overlap of main soil utilizations in some COMIFAC countries

Countries	Overlap of mining exploration over logging areas (%)	Overlap of mining exploration over conservation ¹³ zones (%)	Overlap of mining exploitation over logging areas (%)	Overlap of mining exploitation over conservation ¹³ zones (%)
Cameroon	44.3	25.7	1.9	0.0
Congo	43.7	16.3	0.4	0.0
Gabon	54.0	17.8	0.1	0.0
CAR	0.8	0.0	1.5	0.0
DRC	6.6	12.5	0.5	1.3
COMIFAC ¹⁴	33.8	13.2	0.6	0.7

Annex 10: Member state contributions (2015). Source: COMIFAC (2015a)

Contributions of ECCAS States 1 (Resources)

Contributions of States and ECCAS	Countries from 1.01.2015 to 31.12.2015	Annual contributions	Recovery of arrears (FCFA)
	Burundi	0	35 740 972
	Cameroon*	30 700 000	0
	Congo	0	0
	Gabon	0	15 350 000
	Equatorial Guinea*	0	0
	CAR	0	0
	DRC	0	0
	Rwanda	0	0
	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0
	Chad	0	61 400 000
	Total contributions of countries	30 700 000	112 490 972
	ECCAS subsidies		23 233 121
	Total mobilised contributions		166 424 093
	Credit interests MSP account closure		688 222
	Total resources 1 (FCFA)		167 112 315

*Only Cameroon is up to date with their contributions in 2015.

Annex 11: mapping of formal and informal influence of Cameroon authorities involved in forestland use policies

	Formal influence on forestland use policies	Informal influence on forestland use policies
Presidency of the Republic	Top echelon of authority orienting the major governmental decisions on forestlands policies based on its discretionary power	Top echelon authority fostering uncertainty and ambiguity in forestland use policies depends on competing interests or hidden agenda
Office of the Prime Minister	Highest hierarchical authority for the signature of the major decrees of forestland concessions or forest conservation areas	A supra governmental hierarchy governing sectoral forestland use policies through (erratic) trade-off decisions
Ministry of Economy and Planning	Promoter of economic prosperity based on land rush including forestlands conversion National authority promoting sustainable development	A powerful governmental supporter of business companies engaged in forestland use conversion.
Ministry of Mining	Promoter of submission of forestlands to a mining code	
Ministry of Forestry	Main authority of forestland use policies (e.g. logging, forest conservation)	Major opponent to forest conservation reforms without substantial and concrete funding incentives
Ministry of Agriculture	Promoter of agricultural expansion on <i>available</i> forestlands	
Ministry of Environment	Proponent of greater consideration of environmental sustainability in forestland use policies. National authority of REDD+ process	Environmental authority with very little influence over forestland use policies
Ministry in charge of Land Tenure	National authority of land property (including forestlands) processes	Marginal authority over forestland use policies

(from: Ongolo and Karsenty, 2015 p. 197)