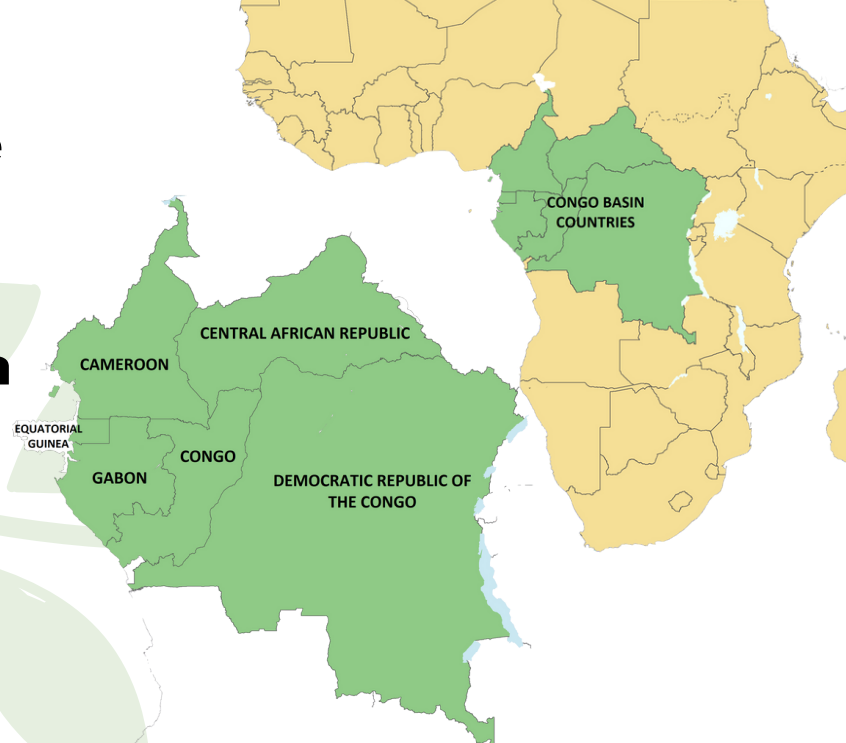


UN Environment Programme supports the harmonious relationship between Biodiversity, People and Landscapes in the Congo Basin



WHERE?

UNEP is supporting governments and stakeholders in **Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Congo** in sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin.

The regional project *"Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin"* funded by the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, promotes regional dialogue and collaboration to **address barriers to sustainable forest management**. UNEP is also supporting the governments and stakeholders of Congo and DRC through two national child projects, also supported by the GEF, and focused on the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands and forests.

UNEP is also supporting work to mitigate climate and development impacts on biodiversity, water and carbon in the Lac Télé/Lac Tumba transboundary landscape through the project *"Securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin Peatlands by enabling evidence-based decision-making and good governance"* funded by the **International Climate Initiative (IKI)** of Germany.



Image Credit: Getty Images Signature

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WHY?

Located in Central Africa, the Congo Basin is one of the three key-areas in the world that regulate moisture transport and rainfall patterns and have a significant role in the hydrological cycle as well the global climate system [1]. It contains the **Earth's second largest area of contiguous moist tropical forests**, stretching from the Gulf of Guinea in the west to the Rift Valley in the east, and containing more than 2.87 million km² of both humid and dry forests [2]. In addition, the recently mapped peatlands of Cuvette Centrale in the Congo Basin are estimated to be the **largest continuous tropical peat complex in the world** at 167,600km² [3]. Furthermore, estimates show that it stores around 30 gigatons of carbon, equivalent to two years of global greenhouse gas emissions, making the **Congo Basin the largest carbon sink in our world** [4].

The region also plays a crucial role in **conserving endemic biodiversity**; the DRC is one of the 5 megadiverse countries in world hosting the endemic bonobo and okapi, and the Congo has the highest densities in Western Lowland gorillas.

In other words, the protection and conservation of the Congo Basin forests and peatlands is vital not only for the local communities that depend on them, but also for the global community that benefits from the basin's ecosystem services.



Sustainable management of the Congo Basin is key for the overall health of our planet.

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HOW?

The GEF-funded Congo Basin Impact Programme, led by UNEP, includes one regional and six national child projects. The regional project "*Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin*" is executed by UNEP.

The regional project will contribute to the **long-term goal of healthy and thriving forest ecosystems** in the Congo Basin while protecting and maintaining forest cover and peatlands, maintaining stable wildlife populations, and empowering local forest-dependent communities to manage their land and improve their livelihoods, while ensuring exploitation of natural resources is sustainable, with cross-sectoral and transboundary land-use planning in place.

The six national projects contribute to the objectives of the regional project. Through **collaboration and inclusive processes** involving government agencies, partner institutions and organizations, universities, and indigenous leaders and local communities, and private entities, the Programme aims to **work across national boundaries in an integrated and networked approach**.

The IKI-funded project "*Securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin Peatlands by enabling evidence-based decision-making and good governance*" aims to protect the globally significant carbon sink and invaluable natural diversity of the Cuvette Centrale in DRC and the Congo.

The project will contribute to a **biodiversity-friendly development pathway** through effective integrated land-use plans, improved sustainable livelihood approaches, as well as methods, data and tools addressing peatland and water monitoring, national investment plans, and cross-sectoral coordination. Led by UNEP with implementing partner the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the project includes a **participatory governance mechanism** ensuring inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia.