

CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Forest family photo of World Leaders at COP26

Photo: Karwai Tang / UK Government

LIBREVILLE ACTION POINTS

At the FSC Congo Basin Business Encounter 2018 held in Libreville Gabon 6 action points were identified to develop the market for sustainable tropical timber:

- Creating a Green Lane for FSC within EUTR.
- Developing LKTS.
- Reduce certification costs.
- Linking with Asian operators.
- Eco Services Payment action.
- Marketing tools to create awareness.

As a result of the Business Encounter and the action plan a working group is established called LKTS Congo Basin (LKTS CB). Members are from the leading European tropical timber markets and are coordinated by FSC Netherlands and FSC Denmark.

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Dear members of the FSC Congo Basin Community

With this newsletter we would like to inform you about some of the current activities of FSC on behalf of the FSC Congo Basin team, and furthermore interest you with the actualities relevant to the tropical timber trade and our network partners.

Despite that Covid-19 still daily impacts the way we conduct business – with great disparity between parts of the world – the last months have allowed us for some in-person activities. This just before we learned of the new Omicron variant that now seems to challenge or close down this sort of interaction.

In Gabon, preparations for launch of 'Stminef' Gabon's tracking system have been put in place. With the implementation of this computerised timber legality tracing system the Gabonese Government hopes to improve national forest production, curb corruption in the sector and support the industry as a whole. While in the EU, trade fairs could continue and important decisions were made for the future of the forests.

The importance of tropical forests and sustainable forest management has received a great deal of acknowledgement in the last period. During COP26, more than 140 world leaders have promised to end and reverse deforestation by 2030, in the COP26 climate summit's first major deal. In addition to that, the presentation of the new European deforestation legislation proposal again implies the importance the work that we do.

Moving towards the end of 2021, we hope all will look back on an eventful year and to celebrate the progress on sustainability - both on the ground as well as political as it has not been achieved under easy circumstances. Looking forward to even more developments in 2022.

Tijmen Hennekes, FSC Netherlands
&
Kristian Jørgensen, FSC Denmark



CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Photo: FSC UK



FSC AT COP26: A FOREST OF SOLUTIONS

FSC colleagues from various offices were present in Glasgow during COP26. We all followed the news from the main negotiations and had read the headlines in the newspaper and the role of the world's forests became a hot topic. Mainly the forest and land use declaration, signed by most countries got attention.

The FSC UK office had a lead role in organizing activities on behalf of the FSC system:

[Read the COP26 - Reflections from FSC UK](#)

In relation to the main event various partners of FSC were hosting side events worth following – Cities4Forests, Interholco & COMFIMAC all stressed the importance of enhanced trade relations, to make partnerships and to promote sustainable forest management as key part of the solution on the climate crisis.

FSC also hosted or co-hosted side events, convening speakers from most sectors involved in sustainable forest management, forest conservation and restoration and the related social aspects. A main event was a panel debate about forest-based solutions in the Congo Basin.

Speakers included: Kim Carstensen (FSC International) Asger Olesen (FSC International) Harrison O. Kojwang (FSC – Regional Director Africa), Mireia Vilaplana (South Pole), Charles Karangwa (IUCN), Markus Pfannkuch (Precious Woods)

These FSC events are available to watch again via the following links:

[A forest of solutions: The Congo Basin public and private sector for healthy forests, healthy communities and for a healthy world.](#)

[Co-creating forest based solutions to enhance social and ecological resilience with shared value](#)

GETTING UP TO SPEED ON ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

By Loa Worm, Senior Officer, Digital Innovations Outreach
FSC Global Development

In this episode of the Forest For the Future podcast we will dive into ecosystem services and give room for a basic introduction. What is it? What is FSC doing on it? How does it connect to nature based solutions? And how does what FSC is doing connect to what the rest of the world is doing?

Drivers to protect ecosystem services comes in many shapes and forms. The most known one is probably carbon credits, but the group also include biodiversity protection, water management, and a range of other solutions.

To help me learn much more about Ecosystem services and how they play a role in the FSC system, we've asked Asger Olesen to present his view on the .

Asger recently joined FSC as our new Chief Climate and Ecosystem Services officer and comes with a background of being part of international carbon and climate negotiations and solutions development for years.

So who better to ask than Asger?

[Direct link to this podcast](#)

Find more FSC podcasts here:

[Apple Podcasts](#) | [Castbox](#) | [Google Podcasts](#) | [Podtail](#)



STEPHANE GLANNAZ
CCO PRECIOUS WOODS

SCOTT FRANCISCO
DIRECTOR CITIES4FORESTS

Cities4Forests
PARTNER FORESTS PROGRAM

Cities4Forests pavilion was the gathering place for many forest stakeholders who in between events and negotiations all met here for informal network activities and global interaction - and these with good snacks, quality coffee and other hot drinks from Cities4Forests' community partners.



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CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO speaking at the Forest event at COP26

Photo: Karwai Tang / UK Government

COP26: FOCUS ON FORESTS IN THE FIGHT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

A message by FSC International's Director General Kim Carstensen on the recent Declaration on forests and land use at COP26.

FSC welcomes the Declaration at the Glasgow COP26 meeting, stating their commitment to work together to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of the world's forests.

The focus on protection and sustainable management of forests is a crucial element in any solution to the world's climate crisis. Without increased efforts to protect forests, it will not be possible to meet the ambition of the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C.

The Declaration is not the first of its kind, but it is positive to see it come out as the first specific result of COP26, in particular since it includes participation from a majority of the countries of the world, including most of the important forest countries. It is also important that countries from all parts of the world have agreed to the Declaration.

The Declaration commits the participating countries to work together to build resilience and enhance rural livelihoods, including through empowering communities and recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples. These are crucial elements of success for any forest initiative going forward.

Based on the Declaration, forest protection and sustainable forest management must now become a central part of all efforts to combat climate change. FSC certification of forests, including certification by Indigenous Peoples of their territories, can be an important part of the solution going forward.

FSC stands ready to work with governments, businesses, Indigenous Peoples and interested stakeholders to help meet the ambition of the Declaration.

GLASGOW DECLARATION ON FORESTS AND LAND USE

The nations' commits to work collective to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation by strengthen shared efforts to:

- Conserve forests and other terrestrial ecosystems and accelerate their restoration;
- Facilitate trade and development policies, internationally and domestically, that promote sustainable development, and sustainable commodity production and consumption, that work to countries' mutual benefit, and that do not drive deforestation and land degradation;
- Reduce vulnerability, build resilience and enhance rural livelihoods, including through empowering communities, the development of profitable, sustainable agriculture, and recognition of the multiple values of forests, while recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, in accordance with relevant national legislation and international instruments, as appropriate;
- Implement and, if necessary, redesign agricultural policies and programmes to incentivise sustainable agriculture, promote food security, and benefit the environment;
- Reaffirm international financial commitments and significantly increase finance and investment from a wide variety of public and private sources, while also improving its effectiveness and accessibility, to enable sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest management, forest conservation and restoration, and support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Facilitate the alignment of financial flows with international goals to reverse forest loss and degradation, while ensuring robust policies and systems are in place to accelerate the transition to an economy that is resilient and advances forest, sustainable land use, biodiversity and climate goals.

[SEE THE DECLARATION HERE](#)

¹ By the 12th of November 141 nations have signed the declaration

CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



FORESTS FOR ALL, FOREVER OUR WAY FORWARD - COP26 EVENT BY INTERHOLCO

On the 9th of November, INTERHOLCO held a side event that was live streamed from the COMIFAC Pavilion in Glasgow during the COP26 climate conference.

The objective was to show best practice in public-private-partnership in tropical forestry based on experiences from the Republic of Congo in implementing the protection of forests through responsibly produced wood products, models of payment for ecosystem services and to challenge classic business models for forestries by mobilizing new forms of partnerships and funding.

Main talking points:

1. Carbon positive forestry is possible in the Congo Basin.
2. Together, we should compensate Africa's forests.
3. Forest and climate finance should share benefits with host countries and local communities.



From left to right: Mr. Georges Boundzanga, Dr. Christian Ruck, Dr. Oscar Crohn, Mr. Olman Serrano, H.E. Minister Rosalie Matondo, H.E. Minister Ndongo, Mr. Ulrich Grauert

[Press release from Interholco and recordings can be found here](#)



“There are no single solutions to maintaining the tropical forest and its fundamental role in regulating our climate. There is no silver bullet”

This was the succinct, but effective message from Willem Klaassens, Director Markets and SourceUp at IDH -The Sustainable Trade Initiative, opening the joint STTC-Fair&Precious conference.

STTC AND FAIR&PRECIOUS CONFERENCE 2021

The European Sustainable Tropical Timber Coalition STTC and Atibt Fair&Precious annual conference spotlighted the key role of sustainable forest management in context of the ongoing climate changes. The online event took place on the 18th of November and followed up on the hot topic of the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow - “world forests and land use”.

The conference theme ‘Sustainably managed forests as part of the solution to climate change: recognizing the value of certified forests and ecosystem services’ was addressed in many ways such as the relationship between the landscape sustainability approach and ecosystem services and on product level such as documentation like the emerging market requirements through environmental product declarations (EPDs), species diversification and in the general the role of market and forest data.

[Read the conference report here](#)

[Find the recording on youtube here](#)

CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Photo: WALE - Wood & Logistics Expert (Emmanuel Groutel)

EUROPE'S SOURCING OF VERIFIED TROPICAL TIMBER

New report: If Europe sourced 100% verified sustainable tropical timber products, it would have positively impacted over 16 million hectares of semi and natural tropical forests in 2020.

This is one of the key findings from our latest study 'Europe's sourcing of verified tropical timber and its impact on forests: What Next?', a third in a series, commissioned by IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative. This new study analyses the level of verified sustainable tropical timber imports and extends the recommendations that go beyond increasing demand for verified sustainable timber products.

The research, conducted by forest and timber sustainability advisors Stichting Probos and the Global Timber Forum, concludes that despite growing competition from less challenging markets, the European market remains the global leader in demanding verified sustainable timber products.

"Only 31 - 36% of Europe's tropical timber imports are estimated to be exposed to certification of sustainable forest management and 30% to legality verification issued by a third party or a FLEGT-license. If 100% verified sustainable was demanded, it could have positively impacted over 16 million hectares of tropical forests and reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 88 million metric tons in 2020."



Mark van Benthem
Director of Stichting Probos



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve competitiveness and added value of tropical timber in producer countries to increase the positive impacts on tropical forests and livelihoods.
2. Increase the attractiveness of the EU27+UK market, lessen perceived trade barriers, and encourage tropical timber producers to develop their capabilities and product offering.
3. Extend data collection for primary and secondary tropical timber products, increase data validation, and assess consumption trends to support tropical producers to better understand EU27+UK markets.



[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT HERE](#)

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CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



NEW CIB PRODUCTION PLANT

Congratulations to CIB Olam for the inauguration of their third production plant in the Republic of Congo. They have realized a 42.000m² sized facility, dedicated to the manufacturing of high quality forest products which contributes to the local economy through job creation. This production line will produce 1.500m³ of finished products each month, and after scaling up this will even reach 2.500m³.

The officially opening happened on the 22nd of November and took place in the presence of the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF), Republic of Congo, Her Excellency Mrs Rosalie Matondo.

With more to come in the near future, we are happy to see the development of the forest sector.

[Learn more](#)



NEW EU DEFORESTATION LEGISLATION IN THE MAKING

On 17 November 2021 the European commission has presented its proposal for an EU law designed to minimize the impact of the European market on deforestation. However still in development and bearing enough imperfections, the law has the potential to significantly reduce the impact of international trade. Soy and palm oil will have special attention, but the timber industry will feel the impact as well.

The new law will eventually replace the already existing EU Timber Regulation and implement new due diligence requirements.

[Read more on the new law proposal here](#)



MORE FSC AREA IN PROCESS BY GABON SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE (GSEZ)

The Gabonese government decision to require FSC certification in all forest concessions, as announced by Gabon's President, means that there is potential to increase the area under responsible forest management by around 13 million hectares.

CMO Groups have assisted implementing FSC certification for 3 concessions belonging to Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ). Soon to be expected additional ~500.000 hectare of FSC-certified forest to meet the national strategy on certification.

"Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ) started in 2010 as a joint venture between Olam International Ltd., the Republic of Gabon, and Africa Finance Corporation with a mandate to develop infrastructure, enhance industrial competitiveness and build a business-friendly ecosystem in Gabon"

[Learn more on GSEZ](#)



CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



IN-PERSON PROMOTION OF TROPICAL TIMBER

By: Tijmen Hennekes, FSC Netherlands
Kristian Jørgensen, FSC Denmark

After many postponements and cancelations of trade fairs since the breakout of Covid-19, it was our greatest pleasure to be able to attend various timber events in Europe during the autumn of 2021.

During these events we welcomed architects, students, government officials, suppliers, manufacturers, and engineers to discuss timber diversity, the circular economy and sustainable forestry together the great diversity of tropical timber. This to promote the FSC framework in general as well as the use of tropical timber species and the great species diversity.

Building Green in Copenhagen in start November tested a long-awaited pavilion concept consisting of more than 40 tropical timber species. Thanks to our supplying partners we were able to build a space that encourages visitors to explore different application areas for tropical timber. On each timber species visitors could find a QR-code which linked to their profiles on lesser. With the support of FSC certified timber suppliers and producers we managed to build our pavilion mostly based on sponsorships and co-creations.

A trade fair process turned out to be much more than just attending and getting the on-site relations – the process of preparing it can in itself be the foundation of great conversations, co-creations and small-scale tests.

Thank you...

... to the Danish importers Wennerth Wood, Keflico, and Global Timber for sponsoring much of the timber this time – to Emmanuel Groutel for bringing us Gombé from CBG and to Van Dam Houthandel, Van den Berg, Wijma and Precious Woods who sponsored enough timber in previous promotion projects giving us great leftovers to work with this time around. To Woodways.com for making a downscaled model of a wooden bridge containing a mix of 9 tropical timber species including Tali, Bilinga and Padouk from the Congo Basin.

To Acupanels for making a test production of their lovely woodpanels in Okumé – maybe a new “oak-killer” for this segment. The lovely Bilinga floor was donated by Hørning Parket who also delivered small samples of Doussie and Wengé.

Also a thank you to Thors Design for a significant discount on the lovely table made out of recycled timber from old harbour constructions – 75 year old Azobè now proving itself in a beautiful rustic design.

The concept is scheduled to take part at the Carrefour du Bois in Nantes, June 2022 – We welcome all new product additions that can support the story of well managed forest in the tropics and the benefits of the products the timber and the many species can become.

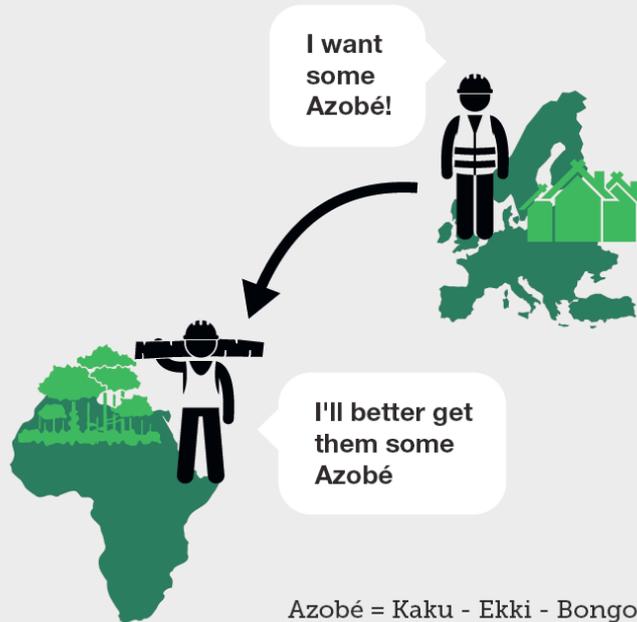
The full list of species from the Congo Basin is:

Azobé, Okumè, Gombé, Sapeli, Sipo, Kosipo, Movingui, Wengé, Doussie, Tali, Bilinga, Padouk, Okan, Ayous (modified) and both Limba and Fraké (modified).



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The market as we know it:



The market as it should be:



CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Arbor Groupe is close connected to the Gabonese forest sector and is one of the yachting companies with a clear strategy on sustainable tropical timber.

IS THE YACHTING INDUSTRY GOING SUSTAINABLE?

FSC Netherlands and FSC Denmark attended METSTRADE in Amsterdam to gain more insights in the yachting industry. We were there to map supply lines and relevant species, get in contact with important players and learn more sustainable developments, and the general attitude towards sustainable forest management. The visit is part of a project supported by Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation titled: "Ensuring more sustainable timber in the yachting industry".

Even though the focus often points at the tense situation on Myanmar Teak there seems to be a realization to find new ways forward, and we have connected with various motivated companies who want to be pioneers in the industry through sustainability and species/material alternatives.

Next to sustainable alternatives to Myanmar Teak, we see a general interest in verified sustainable sourcing of materials. This makes us wonder, what can we do to realize the world's first FSC certified superyacht?

The METSTRADE Show is the world's largest trade exhibition of marine equipment, materials, and systems.



EXCLUSION OF TROPICAL TIMBER AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN 2024

Exclusion of Tropical timber as a building material during the Olympic games in 2024. With the good intentions of the French Government of hosting the Olympic games in 2024 as the first "climate positive" sports event, they have missed out on a great opportunity to support sustainable tropical forest management by excluding tropical timber as a building material.

Considering the event will leave a benchmark for the French construction industry, it will be of most importance that this decision is reverted and instead seeks ways to support sustainable forest management.

In the light of this problematic situation, ATIBT has organised a diplomatic mission to France, in collaboration with the authorities of various wood producing countries in the tropical region.

[Read more on the ATIBT website](#)

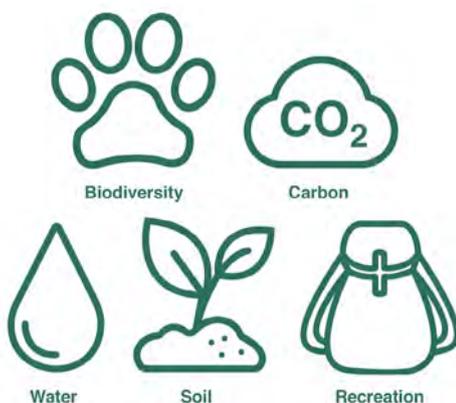


FSC REVISION: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROCEDURE

The "Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools" (ES procedure) has for some years been in effect. FSC recommends proceeding with the full revision of ES procedure, considering the feedback provided by first users of the procedure, existing interpretations, and frequently asked questions.

As a first step, FSC is asking for your feedback which will be submitted to FSC Board of Directors as part of the final review report. The process is set to begin in the first quarter of 2022 and tools is now available for public consultation until 09 January 2022.

[Learn more and give your contribution here](#)



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CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



INTERVIEW: DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS EXPLAIN HOW WILDLIFE THRIVES IN THESE GABONESE FSC-CERTIFIED CONCESSIONS

Upcoming documentary shows how well-managed logging concessions are areas where animals and ecosystems thrive and support highly sensitive species such as gorillas survive. The film, titled Forests to Save Humans, will be released at the beginning of 2022.

The film follows Max Hurdebourcq who has been conducting observation campaigns in the heart of Central Africa's forests for more than 13 years and founded the Bambidie gorilla conservation program. To this Max has long advocated for peaceful coexistence between wildlife and logging concessions.

The film takes place in the CEB Precious Wood concession, where Max has been working with this company for 15 years. The film tells the story of Max's quest to make a gorilla sanctuary within the concession.

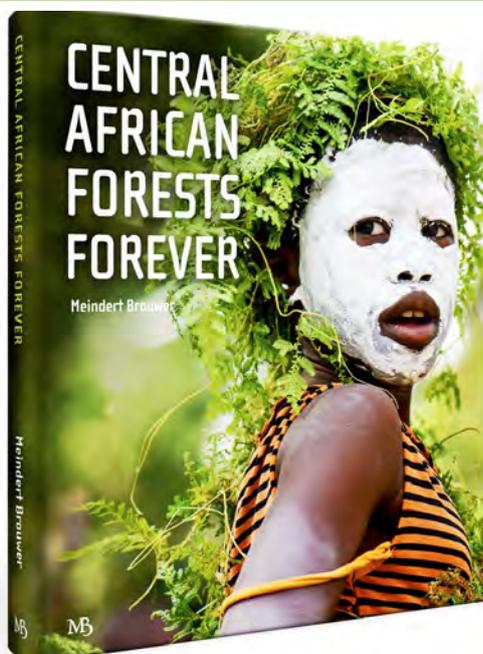


Former FSC Africa Communications Manager Nathalie Bouville recently sat down with Filmmaker Ms. Caroline Thirion to hear about how this project came about.



Pictures by ©Caroline Thirion and ©Max Hurdebourcq

[Read the full interview here on the FSC Africa website.](#)



The updated edition of Central African Forests Forever is currently available in English, Chinese, and French.

[Visit here to order or download the book for free](#)

UPDATED EDITION: CENTRAL AFRICAN FORESTS FOREVER

The new edition of Central African Forests Forever by Meindert Brouwer is an in-depth look at the Congo Basin rainforest, including opportunities and solutions for its sustainable use. FSC plays an important role in the plan for this vast forest's protection.

"The update is 17 new chapters about opportunities and solutions for conservation and sustainable use of the Congo Basin rainforest. Including: The China Responsible Forest Products Trade and Investment Alliance (China RFA) supports Chinese timber companies in sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin. Responsible Cobalt Initiative wants to improve the lives of artisanal miners. Transition to sustainable forest management in Gabon. Sedentary farming ends slash and burn agriculture near Salonga National Park in DRC."

Publication of the second, revised and extended edition of the book Central African Forests Forever is supported by the PPECF-programme of the Central African Forest Commission COMIFAC in partnership with German Development Bank KfW; FSC International; Tropenbos International; Worldwide Fund for Nature WWF, Central African Forest Initiative CAFI and Silk Mandarin Language Training Institute.

Well done Meindert!

CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021



Kenneth Toah Nsah aka Nsah Mala

CAN LITERATURE SAVE THE CONGO BASIN?

The doctoral dissertation “Can Literature Save the Congo Basin? - Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Literary Activism” by Cameroonian author and literary researcher Kenneth Toah Nsah approaches literature from its utilitarian dimension. It argues that literary texts have the potential to contribute towards environmental protection and climate change mitigation in the Congo Basin rainforests.

The dissertation contends that, in addition to relevant political, scientific and technological solutions and innovations, literature is important in addressing climate and ecological concerns in the Congo Basin and elsewhere, particularly because of literature’s capacity to deal with complexity, to spotlight various forms of injustice, to raise ecological awareness, to educate various audiences (readers), and to influence behavioral transformations that align with sustainability, both at the political and individual everyday levels.

Broadly situated within the environmental humanities, the dissertation principally draws on postcolonial ecocriticism and environmental literary activism to analyze a selection of literary texts—plays, novels, and poems—written in English and French by ten writers from five of the six core countries of the Congo Basin, excluding Equatorial Guinea.

The dissertation examines these literary texts in view of their usefulness in climate change and environmental-ecological debates, policies and practices in the Congo Basin. Accordingly, it argues that this literature—the literary texts and their ecocritical analysis—have a crucial role to play in saving the Congo Basin from biodiversity loss, climate change, and ecological breakdown. In this regard, the dissertation examines the causes and consequences of deforestation on both humans and nature.

It argues that some Congo-Basin writers had predicted the emergence of global youth climate activism and it discusses human-animal entangled relations through companion species like dogs, horses, and, unusually, buffaloes through co-domestication. It also examines the ecopolitics of freshwater pollution and disorderly urbanization as well as how bad governance causes these problems and their consequences on the rights and health of both humans and nature.

Finally, it contends that literature can help to unravel wrong assumptions and myths such as the colonial idea of an Edenic Africa that underpins fortress conservation in the Congo Basin. Overall, it contributes towards nature conservation and the inclusive, sustainable management of forest and natural resources in the Congo Basin.



ABOUT THE DISSERTATION

Dissertation Title: Can Literature Save the Congo Basin? Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Literary Activism

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Institution: Aarhus University, Denmark

Year of Submission: December 2021

CONGO BASIN COMMUNITY REPORT #9

DECEMBER 2021

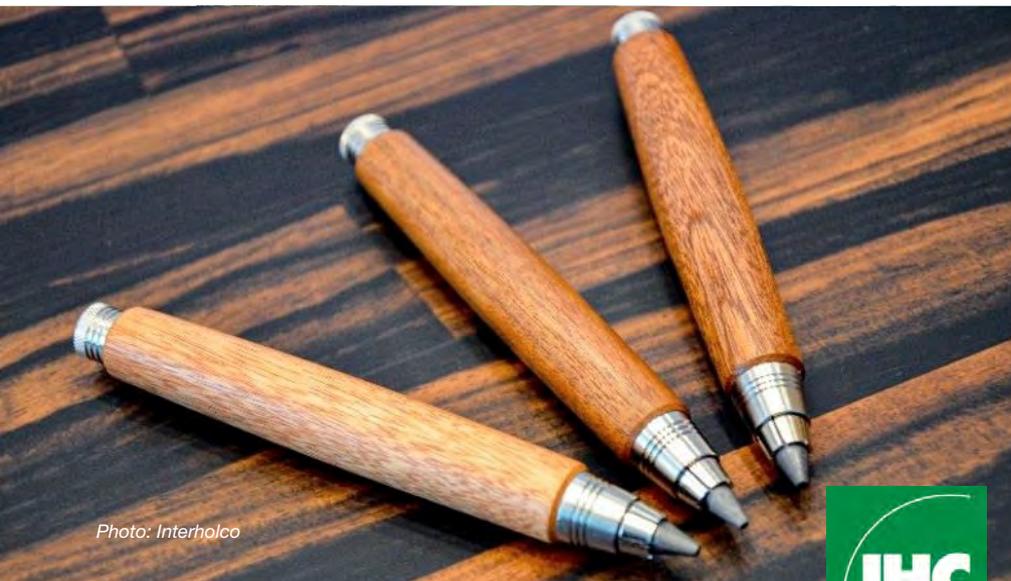


Photo: Interholco



LOBI SKETCHING PENCILS

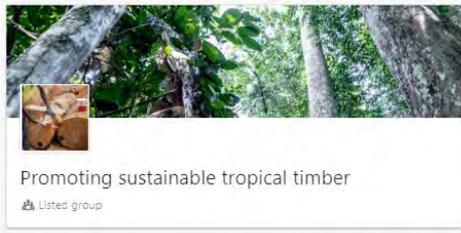
For the Christmas sale in 2021 INTERHOLCO presented Lobi – a collection of sketching pencils designed by Jean-Frédéric Fessler and made from FSC®* certified hardwoods,

Lobi means 'tomorrow' and 'future' in the broadest sense; the name is derived from Lingala, the most widely used language in Congo Basin countries.

Lobi is available in Bosse, Kanda and Sapelli - three of Africa's leading wood species from the Ngombé forest, which INTERHOLCO responsibly manages in the northern Republic of Congo. Bosse is salmon-pink in colour holding a cedar-like fragrance. Kanda, of which there are several varieties, is similar to Walnut in terms of colour and grain quality. Sapelli does not even need an introduction, it is extremely well known thanks to its quality and the charm of its iridescent reflections.

Looking to the future, for each Lobi sold, a 15 EUR donation is to be donated to the school founded by INTERHOLCO in the village of Ngombé Carrefour. A school that enables 140 children from indigenous tribes, to learn to read and write and they follow courses adapted to the specificities of their culture.

KANDA <i>Beilschmiedia spp.</i>	BOSSE <i>Guarea spp.</i>	SAPELLI <i>Entandrophragma cylindricum</i>
BONZALE NKONENGU 异叶琼楠	GUAREA OSSOUNG 黑驼峰楝	UNDIANUNO SAPELLI-MAHOGANY 沙比利



SEE YOU ON LINKEDIN

The LinkedIn group: "Promoting sustainable tropical timber" is a platform for inspiration in the use of tropical timber.

Join the [LinkedIn group](#)



YOUR CASES NEEDS TO BE SHOWN

WWW.LESSERKNOWNTIMBERSPECIES.COM



SUBMIT: We are collecting examples of the use of lesser-known tropical timber species from a broad range of wood users, such as designers, architects, producers, businesses and project owners.

This database is your opportunity to promote your products or projects made with FSC certified LKTS species!

Provide us with a description and other details of the product/project such as:

- An overall description (50 - 150 words)
- Location of construction/production
- Year of construction/production
- Constructer/producer
- Designer/architect
- Project owner
- Timber supplier
- Species used and their use in the project/product

Remember to provide us with a variety of high-resolution images of your project/product.

Submit cases by contacting the website editor:

Kristian Jørgensen, Projectcoordinator, FSC Denmark
Mail: k.jorgensen@dk.fsc.org