

INTERHOLCO LINKING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL LANDSCAPE



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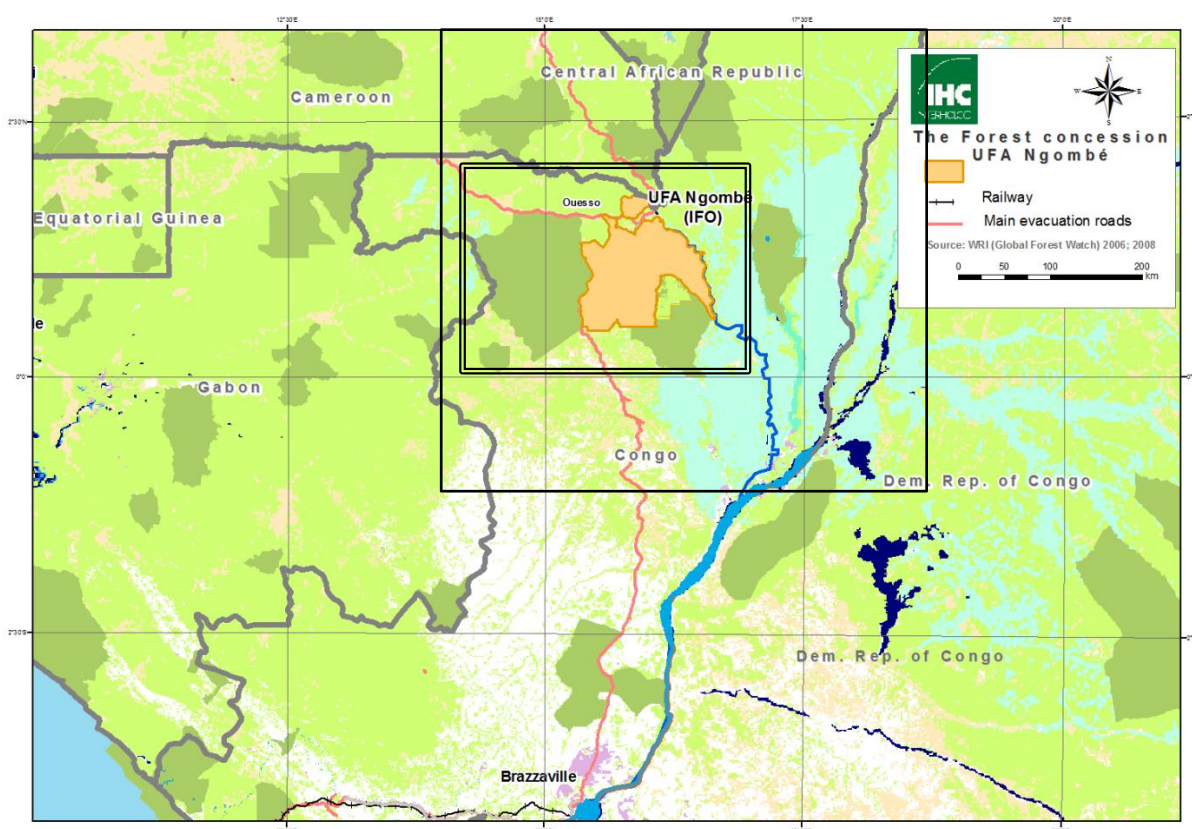
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KEY DATA AND FIGURES

CATALYSING BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION IN AN ECO-SYSTEM SIX TIMES THE SIZE OF BELGIUM

Situated in the North of the Republic of Congo (RoC), the Ngombé forest concession managed by INTERHOLCO covers app. 1.16 million hectares (11'600 km²), managed for maintaining biodiversity and social infrastructure and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™)¹.

The concession is separated from the neighbouring Odzala-Kokoua National Park² (13'500 km²) by the National Road (R.N.) 2, an asphalt highway built by the government to connect the North of the country to the capital, Brazzaville.



The Ntokou-Pikounda National Park³ (4'572 km²) is located to the South-East of the Ngombé concession. Both parks and the Ngombé concession together secure an area of more than **2.96 million hectares (29'600 km²)**, almost the size of Belgium.

The neighbouring forest concessions (12'000 km²) managed by Congolaise Industrielle des Bois (CIB), a subsidiary of OLAM⁴, are also certified by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™).

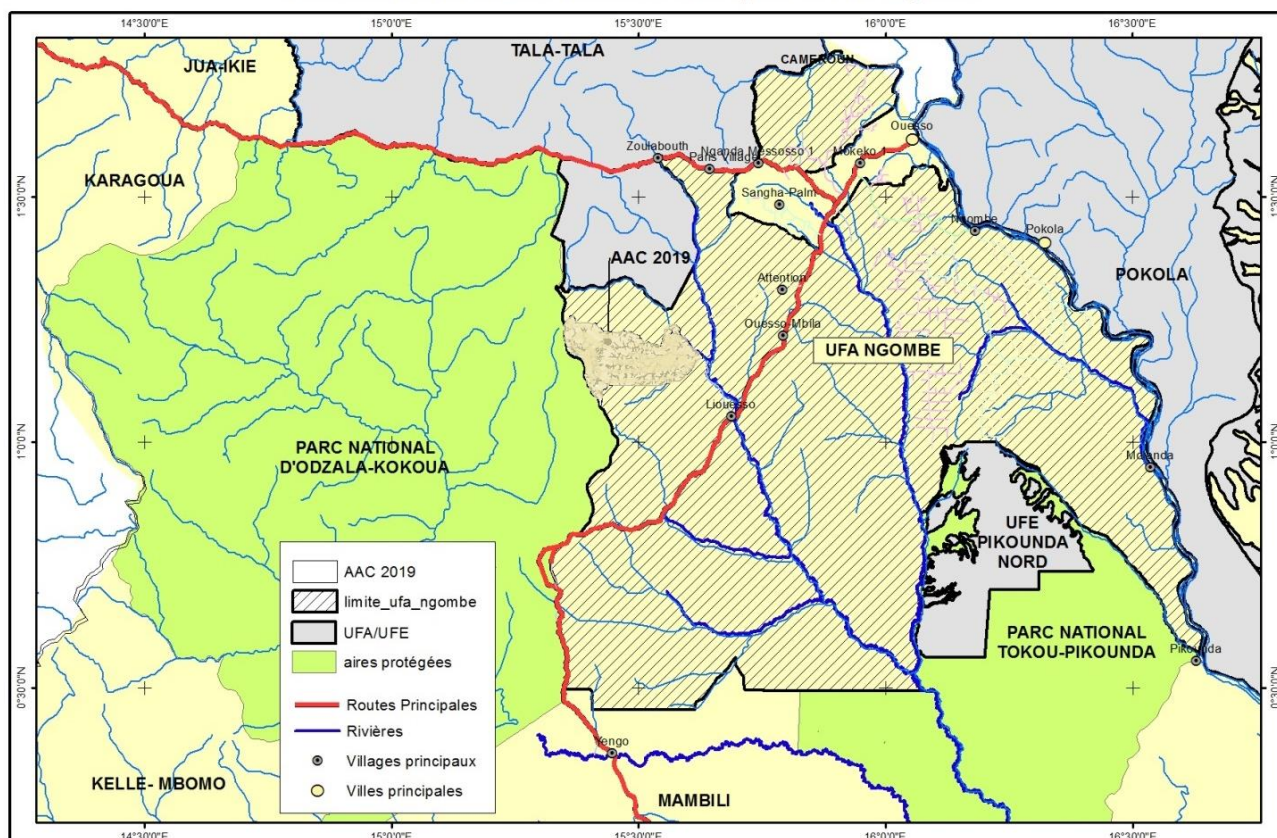
¹ License IFO FSC® C122325; Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Bonn, Germany: <https://fsc.org/en>

² **Odzala-Kokoua National Park**; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odzala-Kokoua_National_Park and <https://www.africanparks.org/the-parks/odzala-kokoua>

³ **Ntokou-Pikounda National Park** ; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ntokou-Pikounda_National_Park

⁴ Congolaise Industrielle des Bois (CIB) is owned by Singapore-based commodity producer and trader Olam: <https://www.olamgroup.com/products/industrial-raw-materials/wood-products/forest-concessions.html>

Permis forestiers et Parcs Nationaux limitrophes de l'UFA Ngombé



The Pokola and Kabo forest concessions links the Ngombé forest to the **Tri-National Sangha landscape** (11'331 km²) encompassing the Dzanga Sangha Special Reserve⁵ and the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park⁶ in the Central African Republic, the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park⁷ in the Republic of Congo, and the Lobéké National Park⁸ in Cameroon.

The Pokola, Kabo, Loundougou forest concessions also links the area to the Lac Tele Community Reserve⁹ (4'400 km²). Altogether, this amounts to an area of 27'731 km² (2.77 million hectares), again almost the size of Belgium.

Finally, via the Lake Tele Community Reserve, the entire area is linked to the **Lake Télé–Lake Tumba landscape**¹⁰, 126'440 km² of seasonally flooded marshlands, meadows and natural forests across the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); a globally unique eco-system, four times the size of Belgium. The Ngombé concession managed by INTERHOLCO is an asset to a vast biodiversity hotspot, a link to a regional

⁵ Dzanga Sangha Special Reserve: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzanga-Sangha_Special_Reserve

⁶ Dzanga-Ndoki National Park: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzanga-Ndoki_National_Park

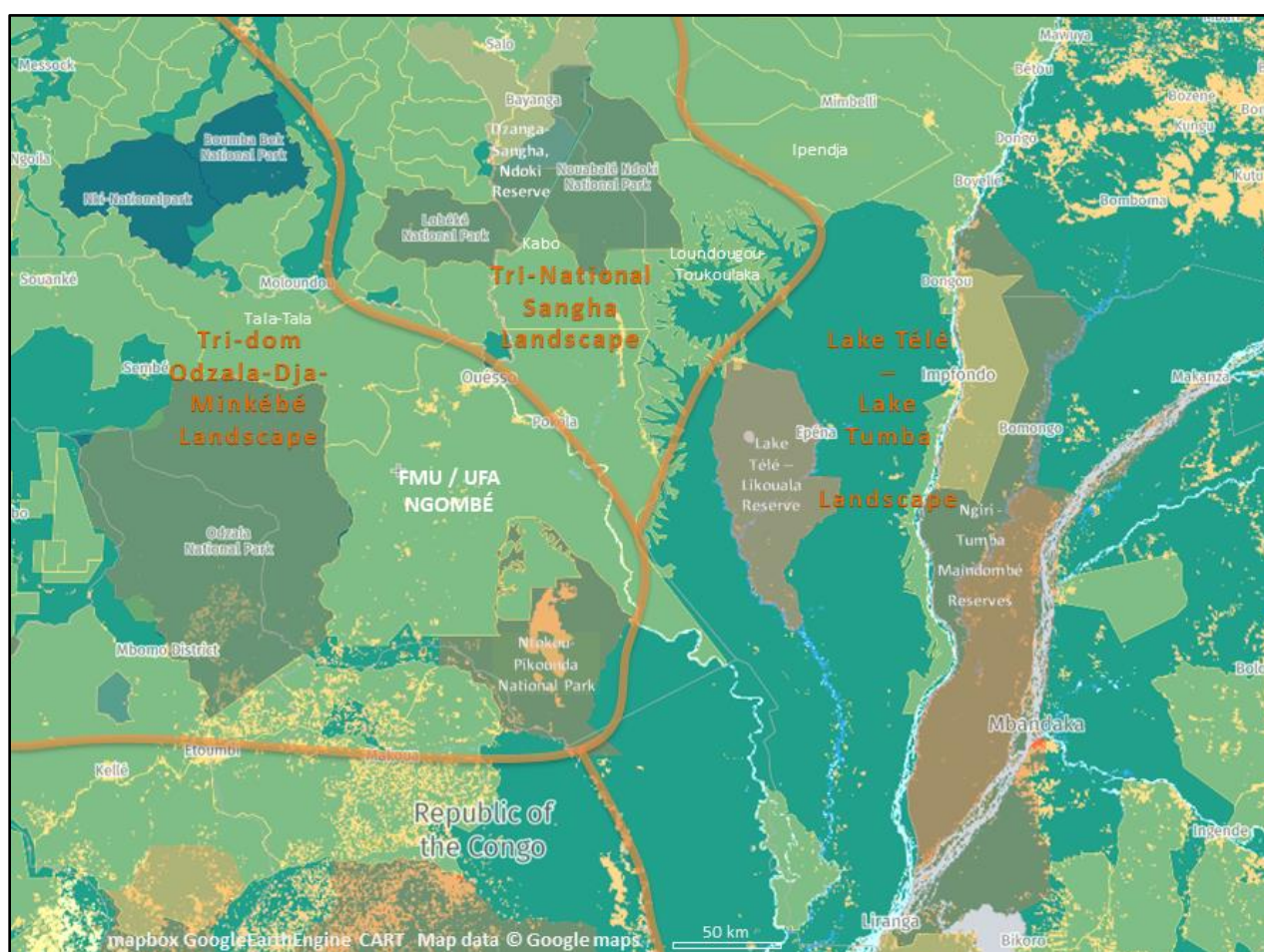
⁷ Nouabalé-Ndoki Park: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nouabalé-Ndoki_National_Park

⁸ Lobéké National Park: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobéké_National_Park

⁹ Lac Tele Community Reserve: <https://congo.wcs.org/Wild-Places/Lac-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9-Community-Reserve.aspx>

¹⁰ Lake Tele–Lake Tumba landscape: http://www.wwf-congobasin.org/where_we_work/democratic_republic_of_congo/lac_tumba/

network of 183'771 km², app. six times the size of Belgium, in which maintenance and protection of biodiversity has priority over any other land use.



THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

A rapid surge in poaching and ivory trafficking has been recorded, amongst others by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)¹¹ and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)¹², in the transboundary area between the North of RoC, North-East Gabon and South-East Cameroon.

Following DNA analysis of large ivory seizures in Asia to determine the genetic origin of tusks¹³, the region, a unique natural forest with a great variety of globally important species, has been identified as one of two major elephant poaching hotspots in Africa. A 2013 assessment revealed a 62% species decline since 2003 mainly due to poaching.

¹¹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Nairobi, Kenya : <https://www.unenvironment.org/>

¹² International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Gland, Switzerland: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-area-categories>

¹³ Wasser, S.K., Brown, L., Mailand, C., Mondol, S., Clark, W., Laurie, C., and Weir, B.S. (2015). **Genetic assignment of large seizures of elephant ivory reveals Africa's major poaching hotspots.** Science 349, 84–87

Other, often less prominent animal species are also threatened, as demand for animal protein (bushmeat) in urban centres, such as Brazzaville or the city of Ouessou in the North, is rising due to population growth. Combined with road development, this led to a steep increase in commercial bushmeat hunting and trade.

LINKING BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS

The Ngombé concession of INTERHOLCO is situated in the Congo Basin, and acts as a natural forest bridge between the Odzala-Kokoua National Park and the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park, two National Parks with an extremely high value .

Together, the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park and the INTERHOLCO concession host app. 80'000 Western lowland gorillas, i.e. over 20% of the world population¹⁴, 60% of the gorilla population is present in the Republic of Congo. In addition, natural forests in the North of Congo are home to approximately 25% of the total remaining forest elephant population and a broad variety of rare and threatened wildlife species.

SECURING FOREST BIODIVERSITY

Under the concession agreement with the government of the Republic of Congo, INTERHOLCO is required to secure the forest area against unauthorised access and illegal use – i.e. unauthorised settlement, illegal logging, poaching, bushmeat trade, etc. INTERHOLCO currently finances a team of 40 dedicated guards to protect wildlife, including forest elephants and Western lowland gorillas, against poaching. These 'Anti-Poaching Units' (in French, *Unités de Surveillance et Lutte Anti-Bracconage*, or USLAB) are managed by the *Agence Congolaise de la faune et des aires protégées* (ACFAP, or Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas)¹⁵. Together with ACFAP, INTERHOLCO manages the ecosystems linking the Ngombé forest with the Odzala-Kokoua National Park and the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park, to ensure that wildlife and biodiversity throughout the whole area are protected against illegal activity (e.g. poaching, illegal logging, etc.) and irreversible change.

Surveys carried out by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)¹⁶ in 2007 and 2014¹⁷ and studies by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)¹⁸ in 2009¹⁹ confirmed that gorillas and forest

¹⁴ Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., Breuer, T., Greer, D., Jeffery, K. & Stokes, E. 2018. **Gorilla gorilla ssp. gorilla** (amended version of 2016 assessment). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2018:e.T9406A136251508. The article is available on line:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308888303_Gorilla_gorilla_ssp_gorilla_The_IUCN_Red_List_of_Threatened_Species_2016

¹⁵ Founded in 2012, ACFAP is a Ministerial agency based in the Republic of Congo, to protect wildlife and several national parks, natural reserves and biosphere/community reserves; <http://www.mefdd.cg/le-ministere/organismes-sous-tutelle/acfap/>

¹⁶ Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), New York, USA; <https://www.wcs.org/>

¹⁷ Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., Rayden, T., Kiminou, F., Madzoke, B., Mangonga, P. and Ndzai, C. 2015. Wildlife and Human Impact Survey of the Ngombé Ntokou-Pikounda Forest Landscape, Republic of Congo. Feb–Oct 2014. Wildlife Conservation Society, Brazzaville, Congo; https://interholco.com/images/pdfs/Maisels-et-al-2015-Wildlife-and-human-impact-survey-of-Ngombe-Ntokou-Pikounda-EN-v2_FINAL.pdf

elephants are effectively protected in the Ngombé forest concession. WCS found that the numbers and distribution of animals remained stable over the observation period. Gorillas and forest elephants move freely between the Ngombé forest concession and neighbouring national parks.²⁰

Anti-poaching units (i.e. eco-guards) work under the authority of the local administration. Together with INTERHOLCO's security personnel, they receive regular training, including specific training on human rights. During training, it is made clear that there is zero-tolerance for abuse of authority, breaches of human rights, discrimination or corruption and that breaches have disciplinary and, if applicable, legal consequences.

CONDITIONS SET BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In this context, it is important to note that the Ngombé forest and the two adjacent national parks (Odzala-Kokoua and Pikounda) are legally owned and controlled by the government of the Republic of Congo (ROC). Recognising the global importance of the entire landscape, the ROC government is prioritising maintenance of biodiversity and social infrastructure throughout an area, the size of Belgium. Approximately 60% of the area is under strict protection, in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park and Ntokou-Pikounda National Park. Covering less than 40% of the area, the Ngombé forest concession has been designated as a production forest to provide opportunities for economic and social development for local and indigenous people living in the area. In addition, even within the Ngombé forest concession, INTERHOLCO set aside 27% of the total surface for protection.

Social and forest legislation in ROC and especially the concession agreement clearly stipulate that economic use of the forest concession shall be targeted towards development of social infrastructure in one of the most remote areas in ROC, without compromising the unique biodiversity of the natural forest. This symbiosis between conservation and economic use (while still maintaining highest biodiversity and conservation values) is unique. Social infrastructure includes providing income opportunities for local communities and Indigenous Peoples, establishing and refinancing housing, schools, maintaining health care in medical centres, delivering clean drinking water and supplying power to communities, etc. Maintaining biodiversity requires securing the area in collaboration with the local authorities and neighbouring national parks against unauthorised access and illegal activity (unauthorised settlement, illegal logging, poaching, bushmeat trade, etc).

To implement its social, ecological and economic objectives and manage the Ngombé forest, the ROC government chose INTERHOLCO and entered into a forest management concession

¹⁸ World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Gland, Switzerland: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/WWF>

¹⁹ A.v.Kreveld, I.Roerhorst. 2009. **Great Apes and Logging**. 23 pages. Published by WWF, Zeist, The Netherlands; <https://africa.fsc.org/preview.great-apes-and-logging.a-28.pdf>

²⁰ See the ARTE film *Congo – Protecting the Gorilla Forests* (original title: *Naturparadiese mit Zukunft: Kongo – Schutz für den Gorillawald*), Längengrad Film production, 2019; <https://www.daserste.de/information/wissen-kultur/w-wie-wissen/Tierschutz-Gorillas-Kongo-100.html>

agreement for 25 years, approving its Forest Management Plan for a rotation cycle of 30 years²¹.

PRINCIPLES OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP

INTERHOLCO has adopted the most rigorous standards and approaches for the management of the Ngombé forest concession. The concept of '**Critical Habitats**'²² as endorsed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC)²³ as well as the concept of '**High Conservation Values (HCV)**' as promoted and enforced by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)²⁴ and the HCV Resource Network²⁵ apply – i.e. forest conservation values are treated and managed as '**Critical Habitats**' and '**High Conservation Values**'. Neither concept rules out forest management. Rather, both require that forest management measures do not endanger, compromise or irreversibly change forest biodiversity. Coexistence of conservation and adding economic value is important.

INTERHOLCO ensures integrity of the forest by adopting and implementing the '**Precautionary Principle**'²⁶ - i.e. the forest is managed and timber is harvested only selectively, where the ecological and social impacts can be anticipated and monitored and forest management activities cause only temporary, reversible impacts, but no medium or long term or irreversible changes to the natural capital, i.e. the forest ecosystem.

INTERHOLCO comprehensively implements the concept of '**Reduced Impact logging (RIL)**'²⁷ as defined and encouraged by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)²⁸, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)²⁹, the Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR)³⁰ and many other organisations worldwide.

Lastly, as more than 16'000 local and indigenous people live throughout the Ngombé forest concession, INTERHOLCO recognizes and employs the concept of '**Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)**'³¹ as defined by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous

²¹ As reported on p. 175 of the Republic of Congo 2016 EITI Report;

https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/documents/rapport_itie_congo_2016_version_finale.pdf

²² 'Critical Habitats' - International Finance Corporation's Guidance Note 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources;

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/5e0f3c0c-0aa4-4290-a0f8-4490b61de245/GN6_English_June-27-2019.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mKqG85z

²³ International Finance Corporation (IFC), Washington DC, USA; <https://www.ifc.org/>

²⁴ <https://fsc.org/en/details-page/high-conservation-values>

²⁵ HCV Resource Network <https://hcvnetwork.org/>

²⁶ Precautionary principle; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precautionary_principle

²⁷ Reduced Impact logging (RIL); https://www.itto.int/sustainable_forest_management/logging/
<http://www.fao.org/3/ac805e/ac805e04.htm>;

<https://www.cifor.org/?s=Reduced+Impact+Logging&submit=%EF%80%82>

²⁸ International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Yokohama, Japan; <https://www.itto.int/>

²⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy; <http://www.fao.org/>

³⁰ Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia; <https://www.cifor.org/>

³¹ Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC);

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free,_prior_and_informed_consent

Issues³², as adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO)³³ and as operationalised by FSC³⁴. FPIC was developed by the international community to protect the cultural integrity, livelihoods and rights, including customary and traditional rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and most importantly the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples

Comprehensively implementing FPIC ensures that the rights, needs and expectations of local and indigenous inhabitants are comprehensively identified and duly respected by INTERHOLCO, its teams and all other actors throughout the Ngombé forest.

The concepts outlined above serve as the fundamental principles on which INTERHOLCO bases all management of the Ngombé forest concession and the associated industrial site in the village of Ngombé.

PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ngombé forest concession managed by INTERHOLCO covers approximately 1.16 million hectares (11'600 km²) of natural – but not undisturbed – forest. In fact, Indigenous Peoples and local communities have been living in and from forests, and using, managing and shaping forests for their livelihood for thousands of years³⁵. Bantu populations likely arrived in the region within the last 2000 years³⁶, whereas Indigenous Peoples, hunter and gatherer groups have been present for as long as 40,000 years³⁷. Today an estimated 16'000 people live in and from the Ngombé forest.

Long before the first tree was harvested, INTERHOLCO carried out extensive scientific research feeding into its Forest Management Plan (FMP). It took INTERHOLCO over five years to develop its FMP, based on an inventory of the forest and detailed studies on tree species composition, flora and fauna as well as socio-economic and social- and environmental impact studies on the livelihoods, rights and needs of the local communities and indigenous peoples living throughout the Ngombé forest. Forest management planning is kept up to date through on-site visits, monitoring studies and detailed survey in forest

³² United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/>

³³ ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and tribal peoples is an international treaty adopted by ILO in 1989; <https://web.archive.org/all/20111031202527/http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C169>

³⁴ FSC guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); <https://fsc.org/en/document-center/documents/23275b28-3697-420e-9316-4092eeab1498>

³⁵ Based on **Tribal conservationists in the Congo Basin**, an article published on Survival International's web site: *'The lands of these tribes are wrongfully viewed as "wildernesses". when they have in fact been shaped and managed over millennia by human hands'*. The article is available online: <https://www.survivalinternational.org/articles/3473-conservationistscongo basin>

³⁶ Brncic TM, Willis KJ, Harris DJ, Washington R (2007) **Culture or climate? The relative influences of past processes on the composition of the lowland Congo rainforest**. Philos Trans R Soc Lond Ser B Biol Sci 362(1478):229–242. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2006.1982>

³⁷ Oslisly R, Doutrelepon H, Fontugne M, et al (2006) **Premiers résultats pluridisciplinaires d'une stratigraphie vieille de plus de 40.000 ans du site de Maboué 5 dans la réserve de la Lopé au Gabon**. In: Actes du XIV Congrès de l'UISPP, Liège 2–8 September 2001, Préhistoire en Afrique, BAR International Series. pp 189–198

management blocks and permanent sample plots. Representatives of the local communities and Indigenous Peoples are closely involved in these processes.



Given the extraordinary ecological and social characteristics of the Ngombé forest, INTERHOLCO set aside and permanently excluded from forestry activities over 300'000 hectares (app. 27% of the concession) of the ecologically most important sites for biodiversity conservation. In addition, almost 50'000 hectares (app. 4% of the concession) were reserved for community development, such as community activities, agriculture and animal husbandry.

INTERHOLCO has thus reserved app. 350'000 forest hectares (31% of the forest concession), which are not part of the production area for the entire duration of forest management validity and rotation of 30 years.

Together with both national parks bordering on the Ngombé forest concession, this brings the portion of strictly protected forest to over 70% in an area app. the size of Belgium – i.e. effectively, only less than 30% is designated as production forest and used economically to support biodiversity maintenance and social development.

As a comparison, it should be mentioned that the Republic of Congo protects its landbase in reserves in a much higher percentage than elsewhere in the world (Republic of Congo 40.7%, Africa in general 17.1%, Europe 19.6%, North America 8.9%, and worldwide 14.7%)³⁸. These statistics include all categories of protection i.e. National Parks, Nature and Fauna reserves as well as Ramsar sites, as defined by the International Union for

³⁸ Protected Planet – database on protected areas; established by the IUCN and the UNEP-WCMC: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/region/EU>

Conservation of Nature (IUCN)³⁹ and as used by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)⁴⁰.

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING

App. 800'000 hectares (69%) of the Ngombé forest concession are classified as production forest. The forest is progressively divided into 30 forest management blocks of app. 27'000 hectares each. This reflects the 30-year rotation cycle that INTERHOLCO follows based on its Forest Management Plan (FMP) - i.e. one forest management block for each year of the duration of the FMP. Each forest management block is managed for timber harvest for only one year; then access is blocked again; natural regeneration takes over and the forest remains undisturbed for 30 years.

A few years before harvesting, each forest management block is surveyed in detail in close collaboration with local and Indigenous Peoples to identify and mark special ecological sites, e.g. buffer zones along water courses, particularly sensitive sites and habitats, etc. and/or social assets, e.g. resource (fruit) trees, hunting/fishing and cultural sites, and other locations which need to be preserved from timber harvest. This collaborative management planning comprehensively follows the concept of *Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC, see above)*. Strictly following the concept of *High Conservation Value approach (HCV, see above)*, high value environmental and social assets as well as buffer zones around water courses are marked to be excluded from forest harvest activities.

In a next step, this detailed survey identifies and marks every tree in the forest management block which is selected for harvesting based on its species, location and diameter. To ensure forest regeneration, the government of ROC has set minimum diameters for trees which may be harvested. As part of its commitment to the *Precautionary Principle (see above)*, INTERHOLCO and ROC have increased the minimum diameter for trees scheduled for harvesting in the forest management plan (thus largely improving regeneration potentials) and set a maximum diameter, so that the biggest and oldest trees remain in the forest for their ecological and patrimonial value. The last step in this detailed planning of forest management activities is the mapping and marking of temporary forest roads, skid trails, as well as landing, storage and loading sites.

FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

In the year following the detailed planning, the trees marked by the forest team are harvested in the annual forest management block. Harvesting follows requirements for

³⁹ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Gland, Switzerland: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-area-categories>

⁴⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), Cambridge, United Kingdom: <https://www.unep-wcmc.org>

Reduced Impact Logging (RIL, see above) and other harvest requirements as included in international standards (such as FSC), and occurs only selectively (i.e. on average, 1 tree per 2 hectares). The individual tree selection harvest system is applied, clear cut avoided so that the structural integrity of the forest is maintained.

The harvest volume varies from 5 m³ to 10 m³ per hectare within each annual harvest block. As only one block of 27'000 hectares on average is harvested each year, the average annual harvest rate in the total production forest of about 800'000 hectares is ca. 0.25 m³ per hectare. This harvesting rate is far lower in INTERHOLCO's forest and forests in the Congo Basin than in other forestry operations worldwide – i.e. the sustainable average annual harvest in temperate forests in Europe is app. 4-7 m³ per hectare.

After harvesting is complete in a forest management block, all temporary forest roads, skid trails as well as landing, storage and loading sites are blocked and broken up to prevent unauthorised access to the forest. The forest regenerates naturally, and within a few years temporary roads, trails and forest openings are overgrown with vegetation and forest regeneration.

SECURING PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND NEEDS

It is important that the livelihoods, cultures, rights and needs of indigenous Baka (e.g. Mbendzélé, Bangombé, Mikaya ethnic groups) and local Bantu peoples and communities are respected and that these peoples can live a self-determined life. Local and indigenous peoples' rights to their culture, traditional way of living and livelihoods, including using the forest for hunting, fishing and gathering food, are protected by law. The concept of *Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC, see above)* forms the basis for INTERHOLCO's respectful, inclusive, fair and equitable relations with local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

To establish and maintain such relations with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, INTERHOLCO set up a Social Team which includes employees from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, able to communicate fluently in the local and indigenous dialects and languages. The Social Team is critical to not only inform about, consult on and agree forest management activities, but also to identify, map and maintain sites of particular social significance⁴¹ to the communities, such as resource trees, fruit trees, storage areas, medicinal plants, sacred sites, fishing waters and hunting grounds. In addition, consultations are held on social infrastructure projects, e.g. building and maintaining housing and schools, hospitals and medical services, provision of drinking water and power supply.

Members of the INTERHOLCO Social Team attended various training sessions, including at the 'Centre of Social Excellence'⁴², supported by the Earthworm Foundation⁴³, formerly

⁴¹ See the ARTE Film *Congo, a new deal with the forest* (original title: *A la reconquête des forêts: Congo, un nouveau pacte avec la forêt*), Papillon Film production, 2017; <http://play.tv/tv-shows/1608746/a-la-reconquete-des-forets/>; <https://youtu.be/Gyxb1M0kxvc>

⁴² Centre of Social Excellence; Earthworm Foundation; <https://www.earthworm.org/our-work/programmes/cse>

known as The Forest Trust. In collaboration with swisspeace⁴⁴, a recognised, independent, international human rights organization, INTERHOLCO developed a Conflict Sensitivity Due Diligence (CSDD)⁴⁵ process and manual and a grievance mechanism which is open to indigenous peoples, local communities and other stakeholders. Moreover, INTERHOLCO collaborates closely with independent Congolese human rights organizations, such as Centre des Droits de l'Homme et de Développement (CDHD)⁴⁶, etc.

The Social Team holds about 150 consultations each year involving 3'000 indigenous people and 5'000 members of the local communities. The work of the Social Team is critical to avoid misunderstandings, prevent conflict and ensure respectful relations and social peace. Also, regular trainings on human rights practices are being held for employees and eco-guards.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The economic value of INTERHOLCO is focused on providing benefit to its stakeholders (shareholders, employees, government, local population, society/climate).

In 2018 INTERHOLCO's turnover was abt. 65 million €, of which app. 6.5% were paid as fees, duties and taxes to governments. Moreover, 98.89% of all payments to government remain in, and benefit the people of, ROC.

Generating most of its revenue in international markets, INTERHOLCO is able to invest its revenue mostly in ROC.

The vast majority of personnel is locally employed in ROC. Employees in ROC receive wages and enjoy insurances and benefits which significantly exceed those legally prescribed.

In addition, INTERHOLCO invests in development of local rural infrastructure (e.g. security, housing, schools, health care service, medical centres, delivering clean drinking water and supplying power).

Last but not least, INTERHOLCO invests over 35% of its annual turnover towards local providers of services (e.g. transport, etc.) and supplies (e.g. fuel, spare parts, food, etc.).

In ROC, INTERHOLCO is an important actor, driving local development and growth. Especially in the remote North of the country the economic opportunities, employment and investment INTERHOLCO provides are essential for the local and indigenous communities and rural development.

⁴³ Earthworm Foundation (formerly known as The Forest Trust), Winchester, United Kingdom; <https://www.earthworm.org/>

⁴⁴ swisspeace, Bern, Switzerland; <https://www.swisspeace.ch/>

⁴⁵ Iff A. 2013. **Conflict Due Diligence for timber companies in the Congo Basin**. Manual. 49 Seiten. Swisspeace, Geneva, Switzerland. Nelson J., Kipali P. 2014. Available online: https://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Topics/Business_Peace/Manual_Danzer_EN.pdf

⁴⁶ Centre des Droits de l'Homme et de Développement (CDHD), Brazzaville, Republic of Congo: http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-acteurs-493_fr.html and <https://www.interholco.com/en/about-us/initiatives>

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FSC Revised FPIC Guidelines - draft V 2.0

[GOOGLE MAPS Satellite location of the Ngombé forest concession in the Republic of Congo](#)

INTERHOLCO Figures and Financials 2018-2014

[INTERHOLCO FSC 2018 Monitoring Report - Ngombé Forest Management Unit](#) (in French)

INTERHOLCO Governance / Grievance mechanism

[INTERHOLCO Management Plan Summary - Ngombe Forest Management Unit](#) (in French)

[INTERHOLCO Sustainability Report 2017](#)

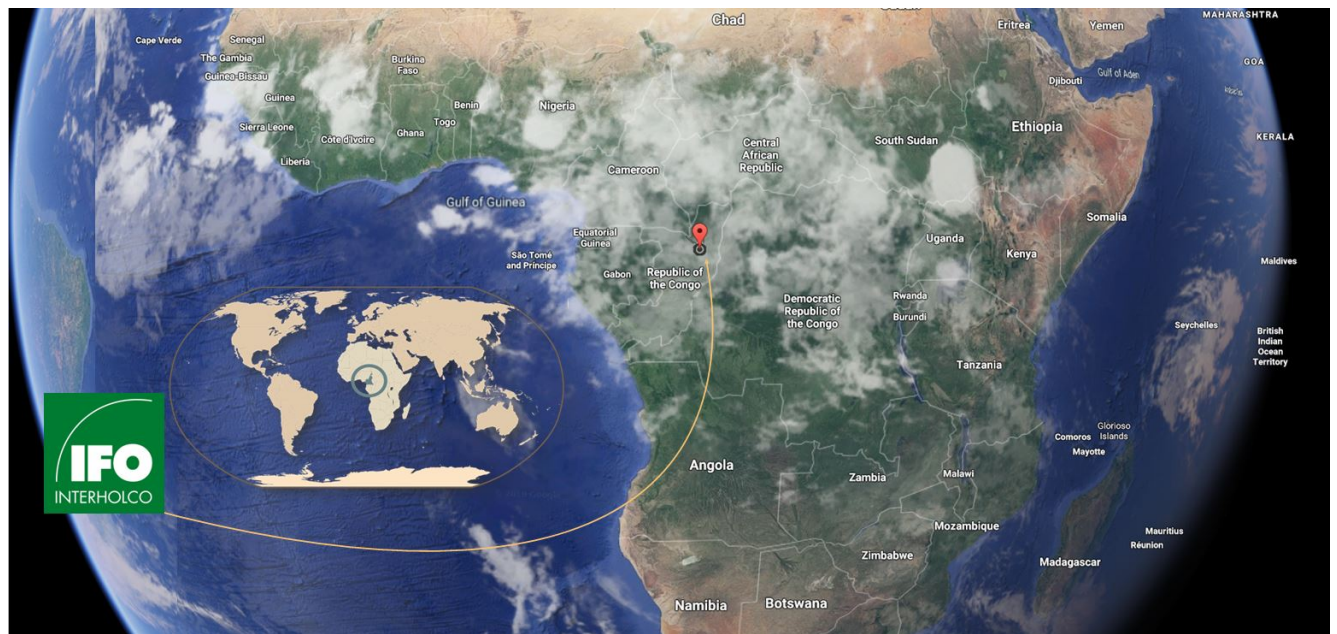
IUCN Gorilla gorilla ssp. gorilla

NATURAL CAPITAL COALITION Forest sector guide: Interholco's Case Study

SCIENCE ADVANCES Density and distribution of gorillas in Western and Equatorial Africa

SWISSPEACE Conflict Due Diligence for timber companies in the Congo Basin

WCS Wildlife and Human Impact Survey



KEY DATA AND FIGURES

