



## KEY INFORMATION ABOUT INTERHOLCO

AUGUST 2020

### ABOUT THE COMPANY

Based in Baar (Canton of Zug, Switzerland), INTERHOLCO AG (INTERHOLCO) is a Swiss holding company founded in 1962 which works in the international timber trade by harvesting and processing hardwood products sourced from forests managed in an ecologically, socially and financially responsible manner.

<b>Legal form</b>	Joint-stock company
<b>UID</b>	CHE-113.764.521
<b>Founded</b>	1962
<b>Headquarters</b>	Baar, Switzerland
<b>Management</b>	Ulrich Grauert, CEO
<b>Workforce</b>	1'253 (2019)
<b>Turnover</b>	€ 65 Mio. (2019)
<b>Industry</b>	Timber
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.interholco.com">www.interholco.com</a>

INTERHOLCO is committed to sustainable forest management in Africa and consistently implements this approach. The tropical hardwood harvested by INTERHOLCO is certified according to the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

INTERHOLCO serves an international client base ranging from importers to industrial end-users with high-quality and sustainable hardwood Made in Africa.

With an annual turnover of EUR 65 million (2019) and more than 1'200 employees, INTERHOLCO is one of the world's leading suppliers of sustainable hardwood and handles the entire supply chain, from harvesting wood in sustainably managed forests to industrial processing in Africa (Republic of the Congo) and delivery to more than 55 countries worldwide. Through its subsidiary company, Industrie Forestière de Ouesso (IFO), INTERHOLCO manages a 1.16 million hectare (11'600 km<sup>2</sup>) FSC-certified forest concession (Ngombé FMU, Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo). Products include logs, sawn timber, laminated timber scantlings as well as kiln-dried and planed goods in more than 20 wood species.

INTERHOLCO is committed to sustainable wood harvesting in Africa because, as a naturally regenerating commodity, it improves the livelihoods of people in the local region, benefits the forest and protects the precious wildlife. INTERHOLCO thus makes an active contribution to protecting the climate. INTERHOLCO sees itself as a forest company that aims to protect forests and their unique biodiversity in the long term, generating value and thus creating job opportunities, which in turn drives regional development.

## ORGANISATION

- Since 1962: Baar, Switzerland/Canton of Zug: Interholco AG, holding company (headquarters, sales, trading). Since its founding in 1962, INTERHOLCO has combined advanced industrial processes with a commitment to people and nature. This involves protecting the forests where we work and the wildlife they harbour. Our global sales network, trading and administration/financial activities are managed by around 20 members of staff (2019).
- Since 1999: Ngombé/Ouesso, Republic of the Congo: Industrie Forestière de Ouesso (IFO), production of logs, sawn timber, laminated wood scantlings, planed goods (sawmill, large kiln facilities, a lamination and planing mill). In 1999, INTERHOLCO took over SCBO, a state-run company at the time, which had been founded in 1985. Today the entire value-creation chain is FSC-certified. IFO currently manages 1.16 million hectares (11'600 km<sup>2</sup>) sustainably, in the North of the Republic of the Congo. Around 1'200 local employees (2019) carry out the following activities: forest management and wood harvesting, industrial processing at nearby facilities, running a hospital for employees and the local population, managing a library for the local population, running schools (including for indigenous children), providing clean drinking water, supplying electricity, protecting animals against poaching and, logistics. More than 85% of the timber harvested is turned into sawn timber and premium products at a nearby facility. IFO's products made up approximately 84% of INTERHOLCO's total turnover in 2019.
- Since 2002: Douala, Cameroon: Logistique Congo Cameroun (LCC). Founded in 2002 by INTERHOLCO, LCC handles logistics for IFO and other INTERHOLCO suppliers in Central Africa, with approx. 15 employees (2019). Established relationships with international carriers make it possible to deliver high-quality hardwood to 400 customers in more than 50 countries.
- Since 2008: Erembodegem, Belgium: INTERHOLCO-Belgium (warehouse, sales). In 2008, INTERHOLCO took over a timber company in Belgium and continued to operate it under the name of INTERHOLCO-Belgium. With 7 members of staff (2019), this facility is used as storage and distribution centre of a wide selection of wood products traded in Europe. The majority of wood is sourced primarily from the USA, Europe and Africa. The facility also handles services such as consultancy, sales, procurement and wood processing.
- Since 2014: Amwaj Island, Bahrain: INTERHOLCO MIDDLE EAST. Managed by a single sales representative, this office, set up by INTERHOLCO in 2014, is a strategic gateway for customers in the Middle East, North Africa all the way to Central Asia.

## **THE VALUE OF FORESTS**

Forests all over the world are a unique ecological resource - only the coral reefs of the world's oceans have a comparable degree of biodiversity. Forests are also a unique social resource - they are both the direct and indirect source of livelihood for almost 1 billion people worldwide who live in and from them. And forests are an extraordinarily important renewable economic resource - they generate more than 1.3 billion cubic metres of a versatile, carbon-neutral raw material for the world economy each year.

No other land-based ecosystem can sustain this degree of biological diversity in the long-term whilst safeguarding livelihoods and social services for people at the same time as well as providing the world economy with a renewable, versatile, carbon-neutral raw material in adequate quantities.

## **SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Sustainable Forest Management is a method based on the principle that tropical forests are best protected when they are used sustainably.

As far as global challenges are concerned, only the highest ecological, social and financial standards are good enough to ensure the conservation and integrity of forests in their entirety.

Developed in European forestry over centuries, this principle has been applied to the needs of tropical rainforests and taken further.

- In the forest concession INTERHOLCO manages in the Republic of the Congo (1.16 million hectares, or 11'600 km<sup>2</sup>), it uses approximately 70% of the entire forest surface (800'000 hectares) in a rotation cycle of 30 years. Roughly 27% of the forest surface (300'000 hectares) is under permanent protection (e.g. sensitive forest types and areas that hold particular significance to the locals and their livelihood), whilst 4% (50'000 hectares) are available to the local population for community development.
- A detailed forest inventory (GPS-based, tree by tree) is carried out before starting to harvest wood. The inventory is then mapped and compiled to form a forest management plan. This serves as the basis for wood harvesting in a 30-year rotation cycle. More trees grow back naturally than are harvested. Monocultures are avoided, which removes the need for extensive reforestation.
- Reduced-impact logging for the climate (RIL-C) makes it possible to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on land.
- Once harvested, wood is processed locally. This creates the best possible added value. Job opportunities are created in the local area and local members of staff are trained. Special harvesting techniques, the use of light machinery to preserve the forest floor and selective timber harvesting (just 1

tree every 2 hectares, or 2 football fields) help to minimise temporary, secondary damage to the forest.

- The indigenous Baka population (i.e. Mbendzélé, Bangombé, Mikaya etc.) can moreover continue to carry out their traditional ancestral activities. This includes self-sufficiency farming, gathering, fishing and hunting. All of these requirements and traditional activities are recorded in collaboration with the local population respecting FPIC (Free Prior Informed Consent) procedures; then, mapped, confirmed by the local population and then taken into account in planning the company's activities. This process treats all of the ethnic groups, whether Bantu or indigenous, equally.
- Poaching is prevented as much as possible by a team of 40 anti-poaching units (eco-guards) who work in collaboration with government agencies, external experts and international organisations such as WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) and the neighbouring Odzala Kokua National Park (managed by African Parks). Studies carried out by WCS in 2007 and 2014 confirmed that gorillas and forest elephants are well protected in the forests managed by INTERHOLCO and that their numbers are stable in these areas.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

SPOTT (Sustainability Policy Transparency Toolkit) is an online platform dedicated to supporting the sustainable production of upstream commodities . The platform aims to show and promote corporate transparency. Since 2017, INTERHOLCO ranks 1st in SPOTT's transparency assessment of timber companies. The platform is an initiative run by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). SPOTT evaluates producers and dealers of raw materials with regard to the disclosure of their guidelines, processes and obligations in the context of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, in other words how a company is managed as far as environmental and social issues are concerned. In this context, companies are assessed across 10 different categories and against more than 170 indicators. The ranking for the timber and pulp sector in the tropics currently covers 100 companies (2019).

## **WEBLINKS**

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND BUSINESS DATA (2014-2018)

[INTERHOLCO Facts and Figures](#)

## **CERTIFICATES**

[CONTROL UNION Timber Legality Verification Certificate](#)

[RAINFOREST ALLIANCE Forest Legality Verification](#)

[FSC 2018 Certificate](#)

[PEFC 2018 Certificate](#)

## **SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY**

[INTERHOLCO Working Across Landscapes](#)

[INTERHOLCO Management Plan Summary – Ngombe Forest Management Unit](#)

[FSC 2019 Monitoring Report - Ngombe Forest Management Unit](#)

[FAO Indigenous peoples – Our Pillars: Free Prior Informed Consent](#)

[FAO Video: Indigenous Peoples and Free Prior and Informed Consent](#)

[NATURAL CAPITAL COALITION Forest sector guide: Interholco's Case Study](#)

[NATURE Cutting carbon with greener chainsaws](#)

[ETH Racing through the tropical rainforest](#)

[DAS ERSTE Wie Holzfirmen im Kongo Gorillas schützen](#)

[SCIENCE ADVANCES Density and distribution of gorillas in Western and Equatorial Africa](#)

[IUCN Gorilla gorilla ssp. gorilla](#)

[WCS Wildlife and Human Impact Survey](#)

## **TRANSPARENCY**

[SPOTT 2019 Timber companies ESG assessment](#)