

# CONGO BASSIN FOREST ECOSYSTEM SERVICES OVERVIEW

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# INTRODUCTION

The Congo Basin forest extends over the following six countries: Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Gabon. It is the richest ecosystem on the continent harboring more than half of Africa Fauna and flora. It has the second largest contiguous areas of humid tropical forest after the Amazon or approximately 20% of the world remaining tropical forest.

In addition to the rich fauna and flora, Central Africa forest also harbor vast reserve of mineral. Furthermore there is a huge potential for the generation of hydroelectricity power.

# Threats to natural ecosystems in the Congo basin

Major threats to natural habitats in the Congo basin are deforestation due to land conversion including logging, farming (both commercial and subsistence), mining, expansion of human infrastructures and commercial hunting.

Forest ecosystems are being degraded faster than they can recovered.

The only hope for the long term conservation of a significant portion of the regional ecosystem rest with the creation of a representative network of protected areas connected by carefully define wildlife corridors.



# ecological services provided by the Congo basin forest ecosystem

## Provisioning services

Good and other products that can be collected from forest for consumption and sell for providing income, energy, shelter, food, medicine, and recreational (timber, building material, food including bushmeat, fiber, medicine tourism etc.)

## Supporting services

The ecological functions that maintain and protect natural and human systems: watershed protection, nutrient cycling, soil formation, primary production and regeneration

## **Regulating services**

The maintenance of ecosystems for future possible uses some of which may not be known now (climate regulation, carbon sequestration, flood regulation water purification, pharmaceutical application, novel possibilities for resources use etc.

## **Cultural services**

The intrinsic values of ecosystem regardless of current or future possibilities to use them: historical or cultural sites, spiritual places, beautiful landscapes etc.



# The economic Value of ecological services

Although it may be relatively easy to assess the economic value of some of the elements of the provisioning services such as timber, some non-wood forest products and recreation, evaluating the monetary economic importance of other services is extremely difficult or even impossible.

Unfortunately the general tendency is to focus on the economic value (direct income that can be generated) of the forest that is easy to estimate. Because this is only a small fraction of the real value of the full range of ecological services provide by intact ecosystems, this make it very difficult for Protected areas to compete with other land uses



# Prospect for long term conservation and sustainable use

Development and long term conservation of natural ecosystems are not mutually exclusive, but are interlocked component of the sustainable development.

The private sector is to play a major role to help mainstreaming biodiversity and sustainable use into production landscape and integrate Biodiversity value and ecosystem service value into accounting and internalized in development, finance policy, land use planning and decision making



THANK YOU

