

# Cameroon

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## Forest Management

Cameroon has the second highest deforestation rate amongst all Congo Basin countries; only the Democratic Republic of Congo deforests more per year than Cameroon. Since 1990, Cameroon's forest sector has increased its logging activities, which now contributes around six percent of its GDP. Today, Cameroon's legal timber production has reached approximately 2 million m<sup>3</sup> and, as a result, Cameroon has become the leading exporter of timber products in Africa. The European Union is Cameroon's main export market for sawn timber (about 80%). In addition, large-scale forest operations are predominantly owned by European companies. Besides logging, deforestation results from local fuelwood collection, agriculture (subsistence farming and other), and mining.

Although Cameroon has taken measurable steps to improve local forest policy and governance in the country to manage its high rate of deforestation, illegal logging continues to be a major concern in the country and is frequently documented at various stages along the local supply chain. Cameroon passed its first forestry law in 1994, and has made a vested effort to keep implementation and enforcement actions under one ministry - the Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF). Relying on only one ministry dedicated to forestry issues, however, has strained local implementation and enforcement. As a result, much of Cameroon's ambitious forest management goals have been left unexecuted. Despite using independent observers to help the government monitor and identify violators, Cameroon's government has failed to deter illegal conduct: too few violations are reported and the existing financial penalties are weak.

Recently, Cameroon began developing its Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU, which was ultimately signed in May 2010. The country developed its proposals for negotiations through an unprecedented multi-stakeholder platform, including ministries, timber trade federations, non-governmental and community organizations, national assembly members and international organizations. legality verification and tracking systems. It is currently in the system development phase, setting up national legality verification and tracking systems.

## Transparency

According to the [Corruption Perception Index 2013](#) from [Transparency International](#), on a scale of 0-100 (100 = very clean), Cameroon has a corruption index of 25, meaning it has very high levels of corruption. It ranked 144th out of 177 countries assessed. Transparency in the Cameroonian forest sector remains a challenge. Citizens' abilities to hold the forest authorities accountable or to fully participate in the management of forest resources is frustrated a decentralized system and limited availability of information. Transparency is not adequately dealt with in the existing legislation, even though Cameroonian law tries to increase citizens' access to information. [View the Results of the 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index.](#)

World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) The World Bank compiles a set of Worldwide Governance Indicators for all world economies. These indicators are important barometer in terms

of risk assessment. The WGI country reports are based on the six following aggregate governance indicators: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. Countries are ranked (percentile rank model) for each of the six governance indicators on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 corresponds to lowest rank and 100 corresponds to highest rank (better governance). [Access the 2013 Worldwide Governance Indicator for Cameroon.](#)

CIFOR has indicated concerns about high levels of corruption within Cameroon's Ministries and this report raises alerts that attempts to reform the law may be contested. [Access the CIFOR Report: Cameroon's Hidden Harvest \(2010\).](#)

Making the Forest Sector Transparent is a four year project managed by Global Witness that supports civil society groups in forest-rich countries to engage with policy makers and advocate for accountable forest sector governance. The project has designed and piloted a "transparency report card" that gathers data on the level of public access to information, as a means of assessing transparency and any progress made towards the improvement of forest sector policy and practice. The project focused on a few pilot countries, including Cameroon. [Read the Global Witness Transparency Report: Cameroon.](#)

Cameroon will be one of six central African countries to benefit from an approximately \$1.65 million dollar spy satellite, funded by the UK, which will help governments, NGOs and communities track illegal logging. [Read the Illegal Logging Portal Article: Spy satellite will monitor illegal logging across six African countries.](#)

Global Witness and Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM) carried out independent monitoring of logging operations in Cameroon from 2000-2005 and 2005-2009 respectively. Currently, Agreco-CEW, funded by the EU, has assumed this task. The Government however does not always follow the recommendations of the [Independent Observer.](#)

Cameroon also makes infractions by timber operators publicly available. Beginning in 2012, violations have been published in the national daily newspaper (Cameroon Tribune) and on the [MINFOF website](#). This list of forest and wildlife infractions, plus their current legal status, is divided into three sections, including:

- Active court cases
- Forest administrator cases
- Settled cases

Overall, the summary contains references to the inspection; the name of the company; the infraction; references to the report establishing the facts of the case; the reference number; fees paid, and the remarks or the outcome of the case. While these publications have improved transparency and access to information, there are still no mechanisms to disseminate this information at a local, community level.

## **Laws and Regulations**

### **Forestry Laws**

Beginning with its Forest Code passed in January 1994, Cameroon has been a leader in West African forest policy and has several laws and policies addressing forest governance and trade. In

addition to the Forest Code, the Presidential Decree 94/436/PM, which applies the Forest Regime associated with the Forest Code, and the 1996 Frame Law on Environmental Protection are the leading forest policies in Cameroon.

Here is a list of Cameroon's laws and policies pertaining to forests and timber production. Many of the texts are available here, but be sure to check for additions and amendments: [Cameroon Forestry Legislation](#)

**The Forest Code, No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994** (in [English](#) and [French](#)) provides clear orientations toward sustainable forest use in Cameroon. It was seen as very innovative when adopted. Over time, it has become more controversial. As a very decentralized government, subsidiary legislation to regulate the details of activities at a general level were slow to be issued, and the capacity of the Government to promptly issue follow-up legislation has generally been considered an obstacle to the full implementation of legislation in the forestry sector.

Forest Code is the most important law regulating forests, fauna and fisheries in Cameroon. It permits the zoning of all of Cameroon's forest lands as planned by the 1993 zoning system. It also introduces the concept of community forests for the first time by allowing forests outside the permanent domain that are less than 5,000 hectares to be divided and managed by "communities" or villages. Order No 2001/ 0518/MINEF/CAB of December 21, 2001 specifies additional community rights in acquiring community forests under the Forest Code.

#### **The Forest Code also establishes three main types of harvesting rights:**

1. Forest management units or FMUs (Unité forestière d'aménagement or UFA in French) can be allocated inside the permanent domain for a 15-year period renewable twice. Forest management plans are prepared for FMUs during the interim convention period that the operator signs with the State for a (non-renewable) period of 3 years. The operator assumes the cost of drawing up the plans and an inter-ministerial committee validates the plans;
2. Logging sales (ventes de coupe) permit harvesting over a maximum of 2,500 ha for up to three years outside the permanent domain in forests to be converted to non-forest use;
3. Small titles such as personal authorisations with a maximum of 30 m<sup>3</sup>, cutting permits (permis de coupe) of up to 300 m<sup>3</sup>, and authorisations to recover timber following land conversion or special authorisation (autorisation de récupération de bois or ARB).

The law also introduces a competitive bidding system for awarding the harvesting rights to forests in concessions. Once bidders have filed their application for a forest title, an inter-ministerial committee including an Independent Observer (IO) examines and verifies their eligibility. At the end of the process, it draws up an unpublished report with recommendations on the allocation of titles. This goes directly to the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF). The independent verification of the eligibility of logging permit applicants is still limited to forest concessions and sales of standing timber (i.e. small titles are excluded from the process). The law further regulates ownership by stating that "the State, local councils, village communities and private individuals may exercise on their forest and aquacultural establishments all the rights that result from ownership subject to restrictions laid down in the regulations governing land tenure and State lands and by this law" (Forest Code, Part I, Section 7). Of the types of logging permits available, concessions (FMUs) are the only ones that require forest management plans and they are allocated through a competitive bidding process by logging operators. This process has been criticized for over-emphasizing concession price compared to its technical production quality, which results in too high a price on poor to average concessions. As a result, many concession holders feel pressured to recover their costs. Logging illegally is often the easiest way to make up

these added costs.

For communal forests, the plans are prepared before logging operations begin. A simple management plan is required for community forests before logging can start.

The 1994 Forest Code limits community rights, however. It grants some usage rights while stipulating that: “usufruct rights (or customary rights) are those recognized to local populations to exploit all forest, wildlife and fish products, with the exception of protected species, for their personal use. They may be temporarily or permanently suspended when the need arises for reasons of public interest.” They exist unless suspended or terminated by the minister for public purposes, in accordance with the legislation applicable to expropriation of land for public purposes (Forests, Wildlife and Fisheries Law, Article 8). Unfortunately, the terms for exercise of these rights have not been established by decree. As a result, there are no coherent standards or procedures to institute customary law in practice. The interpretation of these usage rights therefore differs from one forest stakeholder to another, leading to disputes.

A major point of contention with the 1994 Forest Code is its failure to recognize indigenous peoples’ rights to the lands, territories, and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used and acquired. This has been a major issue during Cameroon’s recent Forest Code reforms. Civil society organizations worry that the process for reviewing the Code and the content of the new drafts raise questions about the government’s intentions to honor indigenous rights and other forest-based communities with respect to their historic lands and resources. See [CSO Letter to UN Criticizing Draft Forest Code 2013](#).

**Law No 96/12 of 05 August 1996** ([Environmental Management Framework Policy in French](#)) lays the framework of environmental management under the Forest Code. It includes the right of access to environmental information and a “Polluter Pays Principle” (Section 9(c)). The Polluter Pays Principle provides that one who pollutes must pay for the mitigating costs associated with their conduct, including measures aimed at preventing, reducing and combating pollution, and costs associated with rehabilitating polluted areas. Section 9(d) of the Forest Code also imposes liability for causing environmental harm, stating that “any person who through his actions creates conditions likely to endanger human health and the environment shall eliminate or cause the said condition to be eliminated in such a way as to avoid the said effects.”

**Law No 98/015 of 14 July 1998** Addresses establishments classified as dangerous, unhealthy or inconvenient. Sections 5, 7, 9 and 12 state that the person in charge of such establishments must carry out a risk study before initiating such an establishment. The law also stipulates that a safety zone must be set up around such establishments prohibiting dwellings and any activity incompatible with this operation. Polluting establishments are subjected to an annual pollution tax, and those who take actions to protect the environment profit from a deduction on their taxable profit according to the methods stated by the finance law.

## **Decrees**

**Decree No 95-466-PM of 20 July 1995** establishes the conditions for the implementing Cameroon’s wildlife regulations.

**Decree No 95-531-PM of 23 August 1995** details the rules for the implementation of the Forestry Code. In particular, it sets out the procedures and requirements for allotting forest concessions. Concession holders must either be natural persons residing in Cameroon or be a company registered in Cameroon and whose shareholders are known to the forestry service. If these requirements are not met, a concession will not be granted.

Before a concession can be granted, a public call for tenders must occur. An interministerial committee pre-selects bidders according to technical, financial, and professional criteria. The winner has to pay a fee to the Public Treasury before the Minister then signs a provisional exploitation contract with the winner. The provisional exploitation contract has a maximum duration of three years, and is not renewable. Within the three years, the winner or owner of the concession must develop an inventory, a schedule and a five-year management plan under technical control.

The management plan includes (i) dividing the FMU into conservation areas where activities are banned, agroforestry zones and actual timber production zones; (ii) splitting the FMU into 30 annual sub-areas (assiettes annuelles de coupe or AAC), each of which will be logged in a year; and (iii) establishing minimum diameters for species to be felled at, based on reconstitutions rates and frequency of each species.

Once the owner has fulfilled these obligations, the Forestry Service issues a certificate of conformity with the specifications of the provisional exploitation contract. The owner can then apply for a permanent or final exploitation contract. The final exploitation contract takes the form of a forest concession granted by decree of the Prime Minister. The final exploitation contract is valid for 15 years, and is renewable.

**Decree No. 95/678 of 18 December 1995-** Cameroon has no national policy on land tenure. Instead, the country relies on a series of legal texts to organize its land tenure policies in the dense forests of southern Cameroon. This zoning plan defines two main categories of forest estates in Cameroon; forests are either (a) permanent forest estates (PFEs) or (b) non-permanent forest estates (NPFES).

PFEs consist of land formally assigned to forestry operations or protected as wildlife habitats. NPFES are forested lands subject to other uses. This zoning structure is designed only for forested areas of Cameroon. Classification is intended to assign an area of forest for a particular use, which cannot be changed unless later declassified. The current zoning plan is believed to be inaccurate due to outdated information, poor imagery, and failed consultation with local people and communities.

The original zoning plan was prepared one year after the enactment of the 1994 Forest Code, but it needs to be updated. For instance, existing legal texts on land tenure in Cameroon explicitly refer to the issue of customary interests of local people but these references come with strict limitations. As a result, land rights of local and indigenous people are not secured.

In addition to Decree No 95/678, there are additional texts addressing zoning and land tenure, including:

1. Decision No 135/D/MINEF/CAB of 26 November 1999 establishing the procedures for the classification of the forests in the permanent forest areas of the Republic of Cameroon.
2. Order No 74-1 of 6 July 1974 establishing the land tenure regime
3. Order No 74-2 of 6 July 1974 establishing the domanial regime.

**Decree No 2000-092-PM of 27 March 2000** amends Decree No 95-531-PM (see above) and establishes detailed rules for the implementation of the forest regime.

**Decree No 99/781/PM of 13 October 1999** details the rules for the application of Article 71 (1) (amended) of the Forest Code.

**Decree No 95/678 of 18 December 1995** sets up an indicative framework for land use in southern forest areas.

**Decree No 2005/0577 of February 23, 2005** lays out the procedures for performing environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Article 11 states that EIAs must include stakeholder involvement through consultations and public hearings.

**Decree No 99/818/PM of November 09, 1999** fixes the procedure for setting up and operating of companies classified as dangerous, unhealthy or inconvenient.

**Decree No. 2005/099 of 2005, Articles 53-57** sets out the organization of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife. The Wildlife Directorate's functions include the preparation of wildlife surveys and management plans and the formulation of related rules, the study of animal population dynamics, the creation of hunting areas, game ranches and village hunting areas, and the formulation of strategies for participatory management and their implementation.

**Decree No 2001/718/PM**, amended 2006 An Inter-ministerial Environmental Committee to assist the government in formulating and implementing environmental and sustainable development policies was created by this Decree in 2001, amended in 2006. The Committee is composed solely of ministry representatives, excluding CSO and other non-governmental stakeholders.

## **Orders**

- Order No 0069/MINEP of 08 March 2005 Describes those activities that are subject to carrying out an environmental impact assessment, which include.
- Order No 0070/MINEP of April 22, 2005 Defines the different categories of operations whose realization is subjected to an environmental impact assessment.
- Order No 00001/MINEP February 3, 2007 Defines the general content of Terms of Reference for Environmental Impact Assessments and provides guidelines for its formulation.
- Order No 0222/A/MINEF of May 25, 2002 Establishes procedures for developing, approval, monitoring and control of the implementation of forest management plans for the production forests in the permanent forest estate.
- Order No 0872/MINEF of October 23, 2001 Clarifies forest species classification.
- Order No 013/MINEE/DMG/SL of April 19, 1977 Lists dangerous, unhealthy or inconvenient establishments.

## **Ordinances**

- Ordinance No 99/001 of August 31, 1999 This Ordinance supplements certain provisions of the Law No. 94/01 of January 20, 1994 on the forests, wildlife and fisheries.

## **Decisions**

- Decision No 0108/D/MINEF/CAB of February 9, 1998 This Decision applies the Operating Inventory Standards in forest areas (NIMF).
- Decision No 1354/D/MINEF/CAB of November 26, 1999 This Decision fixes procedures of forests classification in the permanent State property.

## Processing/Manufacturing Laws

**Law No 94/01 of 20 January 1994** aims to increase local transformation of timber among others to increase added value. It does so by stipulating a set of tax incentives favouring transformed timber, but also by imposing a partial log ban through the establishment of quotas on certain species and a tax surcharge.

More than 90% of the total raw log production is processed within the country, and includes both sawmills and veneer/plywood factories. However, most timber transformation does not go beyond sawn timber, mainly due to stiff processing competition with other manufacturing hubs such as China and Indonesia.

For communities to extract timber, they must obtain an Annual Exploitation Certificate (AEC) from the Ministry of Forests (MINFOF). Communities must follow these steps to legally harvest timber from their concessions:

1. verify the boundary of the annual logging unit;
2. verify the logging inventory carried out in the annual logging unit;
3. write an Annual Activity Report for the previous exploitation year;
4. write an Annual Plan of Operations for the current exploitation year;
5. photocopy all waybills from the previous year;
6. photocopy the Simple Management Plan approved by MINFOF, and
7. write a request to obtain an AEC.

All these steps must be approved and verified by a departmental and regional forestry delegate.

## Transport Laws

**Decree No 95-531-PM of August 23, 1995** establishes the implementation details for the 1994 Forest Code. The 1994 Code and this implementation decree lay out a new classification of forests and forest titles, logging rights and conditions and norms for management of forests in Cameroon. In addition, the Decree establishes logging transportation requirements.

Under the law, forestry authority must sign the departure and destination forms of the timber and truck. The Cameroon transport law permits each truck to carry a maximum of twenty two cubic meters of timber (22 m<sup>3</sup>).

To export timber, parties are required to pay the free on board (FOB) value. In Cameroon, this is the cost of exportation per cubic meter of timber, which varies by timber specie. The Cameroon forestry law prohibits the exportation of some timber species in unprocessed round logs, such as Padouk, Bubinga, Zingana, Pachyloba, Wengue and Dousie (*Pachyloba africana*). The strategy is to encourage local processing of logs into sawn timber or timber-based goods. A special fee can be paid to the Ministry of Forestry to transport the above species. Transit companies also have an organized network to export round logs of the above species at extra charges. Most timber logs that are exported are then loaded into forty foot containers at various timber parks in Douala and transported to the Douala seaport to be shipped.

For timber transportation among community forestry operations in Cameroon, the Ministry of Forestry harvest manual focuses on three points:

- The Forestry Administration must issue the required documents to communities (waybills, certificates of origin, etc.);
- These timber transportation documents — which are marked, numbered and initialed by the local Forestry Administration official — must state the quantity and specifications of products transported, their origin and destination; and
- Forest product exploitation and transportation documents cannot be transferred to another community or another private logging company.

## Tax Laws

**Law No 94/01 of 20 January 1994** aims to provide the state with greater revenue and a set of economic incentives favoring greater sustainability in logging activities. It shifts the tax basis from the product (timber) to the area of the concession. For example, it introduces a sawmill entry tax to help control timber flows and shift the bulk of taxation away from exports and towards timber operations. Among the various taxes introduced, the annual area fee (Revenu forestier annuel or RFA) is submitted to a bidding system and half of the RFA is paid to local councils. The fee fluctuates, but the minimum required is 1000 FCFA per hectare (approximately \$2.11 USD). The average winning bid for concessions was around 2800 FCFA per hectare (almost \$6 USD) in 2006. The highest recorded fees have reached 8000 FCFA per hectare (\$17 USD). A fifth of these fees is theoretically earmarked to fund community-based development projects. Other taxes include:

1. A timber harvesting tax of 2.5% of the total value of felled timber;
2. A customs duty at export of 17.5% of the export value of the logs;
3. A factory/processing tax of 2.25 % the value of the logs entering a factory; and
4. An export surcharge on logs ranging from 500 to 4,000 FCFA (around \$8 USD) per cubic meter depending on the species. For important commercial species like ayous (african maple), the surcharge for export is often 4,000 FCFA per m<sup>3</sup> Note, these values fluctuate and are passed every six months by the National Assembly on customs.

**Finance Law No 2002/003 of April 19, 2002** determines on an annual basis the exact rates for different taxes applicable to forestry activities (felling tax, annual royalty for forest concession areas, etc.). In collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Forestry negotiates the terms of benefit sharing. The law also fixes the percentage paid to the local community living around the State forest for development purposes. The real purpose of the Finance Law, however, seems to be to generate revenues through fines for illegal activities rather than to encourage legal trade practices in the forest sector as intended by the Forest Law.

**Decree No 96/642/PM of 17 September 1996** covers the basis and methods of collection of royalty and taxes on forestry activities.

**Order No 00122/MINEFI/MINAT 29 April 1998** obligates the establishment of a management committee responsible for managing forest royalties in all sub-divisions and villages where forest concessions are situated.

**Decree No 99/370/PM of 19 March 1999** establishes the securitisation programme for forestry revenues.

**Joint Order No 0000076/MINADT/MINFI/MINFOF of 26 June 2012** establishes the modalities of planning, use and monitoring of the management of revenues brought in from

forestry operations and wildlife resource exploitation. It is aimed at municipalities and local village communities. Despite recent revisions, this law has kept royalty revenue distribution largely the same (50% for the State, 20% for the local municipality, 20% for local authority payments and 10% for local village communities).

## Trade Laws

Foreign trade is distorted by state regulation, special rules, and tariff barriers. However, Cameroon is visibly integrated into the world market and it is fairly liberalized. Export of certain timber in unprocessed form has been forbidden since 2002 in order to curb additional forest due to uncontrolled and illegal logging. Cameroon's membership in CEMAC has facilitated the establishment of some common trade rules. Timber exploitation in Cameroon has changed tremendously over time as investments in this sector have increased and donor-driven policies have taken root. The VPA agreement with the EU hopes to increase transparency in the industry and ensure there is evidence of legal harvest.

Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), Cameroon signed a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union in 2010. VPAs aim to ensure timber exported to the European Union has been produced according to Cameroonian laws and regulations. Cameroon is currently in the Systems Development phase, meaning it is developing its Legality Assurance Systems including a rigorous tracking system. The Cameroonian definition of legality used by the VPA was developed with strong stakeholder input. For Cameroonian timber to be legal, it must abide by all legislation applicable to Cameroon's forest sector (including forestry, environment, human rights, labour and trade) and ratified international agreements. The "legality grid" however, a matrix which defines each legislative reference and the means of verifying that it has been implemented, is complicated. The implementation of the VPA should address further shortcomings identified during the development of the legality grid (eg. incoherences between laws, need to define social criteria etc.) but strong civil society input and vigilance will be required.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Cameroon ratified the CBD in 1994. See [CBD website](#) for more information on the CBD application in Cameroon.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Cameroon signed the CITES Convention in June 1981 and ratified it in September of the same year. To guarantee the effective implementation of this Convention, and in pursuance of the relevant provisions of its Articles 8 and 9, Cameroon adopted the three legislations below.

- **Decree No 2005/2869/PM of July 29, 2005** sets forth the enactment provisions of a number of provisions of the CITES.
- **Order No 067/PM of June 27, 2006** provides the organizational set-up and operational procedure of the Inter-ministerial Coordination and Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the CITES.
- **Decision No 104/D/MINFOF/SG/DF/SDAFF/SN of March 02, 2006** provides the designation and definition of the role of the CITES Scientific Authority in Cameroon. See [CITES Species Online Database](#).

## CITES

[CITES \(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora\)](#) is an international agreement among governments whose purpose is to ensure that international trade

in wild animal and plant species does not threaten the survival of these species. A total of 180 countries have agreed to the CITES regulations, which is a legally binding agreement. It is up to each CITES Party to draft its own domestic legislation in order to comply with its CITES obligations. [See current list of member countries here.](#)

Cameroon acceded to CITES in 1981. There are 133 plant species from Cameroon listed in CITES, including two Appendix II tree species: *Pericopsis elata* and *Prunus africana*.

**For more information, refer to these CITES websites:**

- [CITES Species Checklist: Cameroon](#)
- [CITES National Contacts: Cameroon](#)

*Pericopsis elata*, commonly known as Assamela or Afromosia, has been an important commercial species in Cameroon for over 60 years. This has resulted in significant overharvesting and an “endangered” status on the IUCN Red List. The species is predominately found in the South Eastern regions of Cameroon. It is considered as having high economic value and importance with key export destinations, including Europe, USA, China and South Africa. The harvesting of *Pericopsis elata* in Cameroon is subject to a number of regulations and since 1999 there has been an export ban of unprocessed *Pericopsis elata* logs. The CITES listing for *Pericopsis elata* applies to logs, sawn wood and veneer sheets and plywood.

The bark of *Prunus africana* is an important raw material for the pharmaceutical industry and commands a high economic value. Over-exploitation is considered the main threat to the species which has a “vulnerable” status on the IUCN Red List. Cameroon is the world’s largest exporter of *Prunus Africana* bark, and Europe is its main importer. Nearly all of the bark is harvested from wild populations and in Cameroon these are predominately located in three main montane forest regions where it forms an important source of income for local people.

The CITES listing for *Prunus Africana* applies to all parts and derivatives except: a) seeds, spores and pollen; b) seedling or tissue cultures obtained in vitro, in solid or liquid media, transported in sterile containers; c) cut flowers of artificially propagated plants; d) fruits, and parts and derivatives thereof, of naturalised or artificially propagated plants of genus *Vanilla* and of the family of Cactaceae; e) stems, flowers, and parts and derivatives thereof, of naturalised or artificially propagated plants of the genera *Opuntia* subgenus *Opuntia* and *Selenicereus*, and f) finished products of *Euphorbia antisyphilitica* packaged and ready for retail trade.

The CITES listing for *Diospyros spp.* (ebony trees) applies to logs, sawn wood and veneer sheets. The *Diospyros* applies to around 500 species, distributed throughout the tropics, several of which can be found in Cameroon. *Diospyros crassiflora* is on the IUCN endangered species Red List, and is one *Diospyros* species that is found in Cameroon.

**For more information on CITES and Cameroon, see the following resources:**

- [An assessment of the conservation status, management and regulation of the trade in \*Pericopsis elata\* \(2005\)](#)
- [Diospyros crassiflora \(IUCN Redlist\)](#)
- [Exploitation and exportation of \*Pericopsis elata\* \(fabacea\) in Cameroon \(2007\)](#)
- [Preliminary report on sustainable harvesting of \*Prunus africana\* \(rosaceae\) in the north west region of Cameroon \(2010\)](#)

- [\*Prunus africana\*: Money growing on trees? A plant that can boost rural economies in the Cameroon Highlands \(2007\)](#)
- [Prostates, \*Prunus\* and policy: A remarkable tree, a contested study, and tough choices ahead](#)
- [Review of \*Prunus africana\* from Cameroon \(2008\)](#)
- [Review of significant trade \*Pericopsis elata\* \(2003\)](#)
- [Workshop on Implementation of Review of Significant Trade \(RST\) Recommendations for \*Prunus africana\* \(2008\)](#)

## Forest Resources

The forests of Cameroon make up a significant portion of the Congo Basin, the world's second largest forest ecosystem after the Amazon. The country's forests cover make up around 20 million ha, representing 48% of the national territory. Of this area, 17 million ha (approximately 75%) is dense, closed semi-deciduous tropical rainforest. As a result, Cameroon is a biodiversity hotspot with many endemic forest plants and animal species. The Biafram forest, near the Gulf of Guinea, is a low altitude coastal forest, and home to frequently harvested species, including: azobé (*Lophira alata*) and ilomba (*Pycnanthus angolensis*). Other commercial tree species harvested out of Cameroon's dense tropical forests include: sapelli (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) and sipo (*Entandrophragma utile*).

Most of Cameroon's forest areas have been permanently designated for long-term forest production or conservation, while the rest is intended for community forestry. Since they were established, community forests have exhibited mixed results throughout Cameroon, particularly because of the Forest Law of 1994, which decentralized forest management. The Government is also promoting the development of community and private timber plantations. However, this sector is rather small; there are currently only 17,000 hectares of industrial timber plantations in Cameroon.

## Forest Products

In the 1990s, Cameroon reformed its timber and forest sector by introducing sustainable forest management systems and developing an efficient timber industry. Two main measures were introduced as part of this reform. One was the obligation to set up one timber processing industry for each forest management unit (FMU) logged as of 1997, and the second was a log export ban for most common species, including iroko, moabi, bibolo, wenge, and bubinga.

In general, there are two main categories of title in Cameroon: those that are allocated by tender (forest concessions and sales of standing timber), and those that can be granted by auction or by mutual agreement (logging permits and other permits for the exploitation of special forest products, personal logging permits, permits for the recovery and withdrawal of timber). In effect, logging permits for timber and certain special forest products are drawn up by the administration and are agreed to after the recommendation of a competent committee. Timber Removal Authorisations (which allow road building, plantations, etc.) are allocated through a tender procedure on the basis of inventory results, and are issued by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) following consultation with an inter-ministerial committee.

For titles allocated by tender, the process is subject to the rules of transparency: the zones for

logging operations are identified, a tender is called, the technical and financial offers are considered and the forest concessions are allocated to the highest bidder. "For permits, the allocations of Timber Removal Authorisations and Timber Salvage Permits sometimes contravene legal provisions and regulations and are strongly linked to illegal operations in Cameroon. As a result, following pressure to bring these permits in line and make them compatible with the new VPA, the Minister of Forests in 2011 decided not to renew any small title permits until the process had been stabilized and the consolidation of the two authorizing processes finalized. The government noted that a coherent, comprehensive and rigorous framework was needed for all stakeholders.

Since then, the country's forest sector has increased its logging activities and is currently the leading exporter of timber in Africa. The forestry sector now contributes around 6% of GDP, and annual production stands at approximately 2 million m<sup>3</sup>. Most of its sawn timber is destined for the EU (80%), in particular for Italy and Spain. Asia (namely China and Vietnam) is the main destination for logs outside the scope of the timber ban. Italy is also the main destination for plywood and veneer exports. Cameroon's dependence on the European market is also visible in export value: about 74% of the value of total timber product exports are obtained in the EU market for a total value estimated at 261.5 million US\$. The main export products are logs, sawnwood, plywood and veneer. With production of highly processed products still being relatively rare, the Government wants to adopt policies aimed at stimulating value added and to improve demand-supply considerations.

About 80 different species are extracted and marketed from Cameroonian forests. Main commercial timber species include: Ayous (Obeche), Sapelli, Tali, Azobe (Bongossi), Iroko, Okan (Adoum), Frake (Limba), Movingi, Kossipo and Padouk rouge. Ayous, a light white wood, and sapele, a heavy red wood, account for one third of exports, but Cameroon production also includes mahogany, moabi, azobé.

More than 90% of the total raw log production is processed within the country in 60 timber processing mills including 51 sawmills and 9 veneer/plywood factories. An estimated 13,000 people work in the formal forestry sector. About 8,000 of these jobs are located in very remote parts of the country, constituting the main financial source of local economies. The domestic timber market employs some 45,000 people, three times more than the number employed by export-oriented industrial companies.

Approximately 75% of the timber harvested for domestic use is produced by chainsaw millers operating illegally. Bringing the domestic sector into formality will be a big challenge for the Government when implementing the Voluntary Partnership Agreement, a bilateral Agreement that Cameroon signed with the EU to ensure all timber production and exports are verified legal.

## Production Status

In the 1990s, Cameroon reformed its timber and forest sector by introducing sustainable forest management systems and developing an efficient timber industry. Two main measures were introduced as part of this reform. One was the obligation to set up one timber processing industry for each forest management unit (FMU) logged as of 1997, and the second was a log export ban for most common species, including iroko, moabi, bibolo, wenge, and bubinga.

In general, there are two main categories of title in Cameroon: those that are allocated by tender (forest concessions and sales of standing timber), and those that can be granted by auction or by mutual agreement (logging permits and other permits for the exploitation of special forest products, personal logging permits, permits for the recovery and withdrawal of timber). In effect,

logging permits for timber and certain special forest products are drawn up by the administration and are agreed to after the recommendation of a competent committee. Timber Removal Authorisations (which allow road building, plantations, etc.) are allocated through a tender procedure on the basis of inventory results, and are issued by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) following consultation with an inter-ministerial committee.

For titles allocated by tender, the process is subject to the rules of transparency: the zones for logging operations are identified, a tender is called, the technical and financial offers are considered and the forest concessions are allocated to the highest bidder. "For permits, the allocations of Timber Removal Authorisations and Timber Salvage Permits sometimes contravene legal provisions and regulations and are strongly linked to illegal operations in Cameroon. As a result, following pressure to bring these permits in line and make them compatible with the new VPA, the Minister of Forests in 2011 decided not to renew any small title permits until the process had been stabilized and the consolidation of the two authorizing processes finalized. The government noted that a coherent, comprehensive and rigorous framework was needed for all stakeholders.

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## **Contacts**

## Industry Associations

### [Inter African Forest Industries Association \(IFIA\)](#)

Many forest operators in the Congo Basin are members of the IFIA. The IFIA unites more than 300 companies through various trade and industry associations. Since 1996, IFIA has been promoting African timber while focusing on sustainable forest management. Along with the U.S. Forest Service, the Forest Legality of Alliance, the Central African Forest Commission, and the European Forest Institute, the IFIA is collaborating to highlight technologies and systems designed to improve transparency in Central Africa's forestry sector. These groups are trying to improve forest governance to help countries meet demands legally and sustainably. They are working on new methods of monitoring, verification, and determining wood origin through genetic testing.

#### **Learn more about IFIA here:**

- [ATIBT IFIA](#)
- [IFIA's Institutional Partners](#)
- [Observatoire des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale: Managing Actors in Central African Forestry](#)

## Civil Society Organizations

### [Forêts et Développement Rural \(FODER\)](#)

Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER) is a non-profit environmental organization based in Cameroon. It was established in 2002 by a group of students and professors who were all part of a nature conservation club at the same university. They have over 10 years of experience on issues of forestry and environmental governance in Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

### [Central Africa Forest Commission \(COMIFAC\)](#)

COMIFAC was organized to develop policy and technical guidance, coordination, harmonization and decision-making in conservation and sustainable management of forests and savannah ecosystems in Central Africa. It ensures the implementation of international conventions and forest development initiatives in Central Africa. Cameroon is an active participant in COMIFAC. The legal framework is the COMIFAC Treaty signed in 2005. The COMIFAC Convergence Plan defines common intervention strategies of states and development partners in Central Africa to achieve conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems and savannahs.

### [Central African Regional Program for the Environment \(CARPE\)](#)

CARPE aims to reduce the rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity in the Congo Basin by increasing local, national, and regional natural resource management capacity. [CARPE Website](#)

### [WWF Central Africa Regional Program Office \(CARPO\)](#)

Provides support to WWF's projects in Cameroon and the Congo Basin.

### [WWF Global Forest & Trade Network \(GFTN\)](#)

WWF works in Cameroon and the surrounding area to promote wildlife conservation, sustainable forest management, timber certification, and capacity building. [WWF GFTN Central Africa](#)

## [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)

IUCN's West and Central Africa Programme (IUCN-PACO) and Cameroon are working to improve the conservation of biodiversity and improve livelihoods of populations in collaboration with stakeholders at all levels (local, national and regional). IUCN Member Page: Cameroon (in French)

## Government Ministries

### [Agence National d'Appui au Developpement Forestier](#)

ANAFOR supports the implementation of the national development program of private and community forest plantations, and handles national and international funding. It also performs any task entrusted to it by the Minister of Forests toward the implementation of its objectives.

### [Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection \(MINEP\)](#)

MINEP is responsible for the development of environmental policies in Cameroon, plus the implementation and evaluation of related government policies. In this capacity, he is responsible for the definition of measures for the management of natural resources. It works in conjunction with departments and specialized agencies to provide information to the public and raise its stake in the management, protection and restoration of the environment. MINEP also develops sectoral master plans for environmental protection.

### [Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife \(MINFOF\)](#)

MINFOF is responsible for the management and monitoring of Permanent Forest Estates (which includes protected areas, communal and national forests) and for the development, implementation and evaluation of government policy on forest and wildlife. In this capacity, MINFOF manages and protects national domain forests; develops and monitors the implementation of regeneration programs, reforestation, inventory and forest management; It also enforces forestry regulations and acts as a liaison with professional organizations in the forestry sector. The MINFOF also oversees the National Forestry Development Agency, the National School of Forestry, School of Wildlife, and acts as the liaison with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization with regards to forestry.

## Tools and Resources

- [The Timber Sector in Cameroon: Towards Sustainable Forest Management and Efficient Industrial Processing?](#)
- [Forest Climate Change Article: Forests and climate change in Central Africa — what will 2014 bring?](#)
- [EU FLEGT Country Briefing - Cameroon](#)
- [Cameroon Ministry of Forestry Website \(in French\)](#)
- [Illegal Logging Portal](#)
- [Tropenbos International](#)
- [EU FLEGT Facility](#)
- [The REDD Desk](#)

- [Cameroon Ministry of Forests and Fauna](#)
- [CIFOR](#)
- [International Tropical Timber Organization](#)
- [de Wasseige et al., 2012, Les forets du Bassin du Congo, Etat des Forets, 2010](#)

## **Citations**