

# Congo Basin

Enhancing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Forest Rights and Promoting Sustainable Economies

*Photo: Guenter Guni*



Forests, People, Climate (FPC) is a collaborative of philanthropic funders, civil society and community-based organizations seeking to halt and reverse tropical deforestation while supporting just, sustainable development. We focus on equitable and enduring solutions that safeguard tropical forests and support those stewarding them, in particular Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Afro-descendants in tropical forest countries. For more information, please contact us at [info@forestspeopleclimate.org](mailto:info@forestspeopleclimate.org)

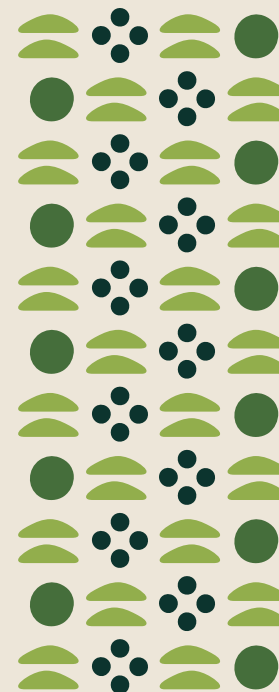
# Why Congo Basin?

The Congo Basin forests are home to 30 million people and support the livelihoods of more than 75 million people from more than 150 ethnic groups. Spanning over 6 million km<sup>2</sup>, the Congo Basin forests account for roughly 70% of the forest cover on the African continent<sup>1</sup>. These forests hold 25% of the total carbon stored in tropical forests worldwide<sup>2</sup>.

However, increased extractivism of natural resources has fueled deforestation in the Congo Basin. As a result, primary rainforest loss in the region has more than doubled between the first and second half of the period from 2002 to 2019<sup>3</sup>. Deforestation is projected to continue to increase unless the pressures driving deforestation are addressed, including logging, expansion of agro-industrial monocultures, extraction of oil and gas, mining, and other unsustainable large infrastructure projects.

Despite progress made recently, policies must be implemented supporting communities protecting their land rights. Support is also needed to further the capacity of organizations at all scales, including financial management, negotiation, and communication skills.

Forests, People, Climate (FPC) will support the efforts of communities and civil society in the Congo Basin as leaders in protecting natural forests, ensuring forest communities' livelihoods and well-being, and generating climate and biodiversity benefits. These strategic priorities extend primarily to five countries in the Congo Basin: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, and the Republic of Congo.



<sup>1</sup> <https://pfbc-cbfp.org/forest-ecosystems.html>

<sup>2</sup> Megevand & al. (2012). Deforestation trends in the Congo Basin: Reconciling Economic Growth and Forest Protection. The World Bank Group.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210107-congo-basin-a-bold-plan-to-save-africas-largest-rainforest>

# Our Goal

Strengthen local, regional, and national civil society voices to enhance the land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as a means to restore degraded forests, promote sustainable and inclusive rural economies, and advocate for appropriate policies to safeguard forests, and their biological and cultural diversity.

To prevent deforestation and promote just and equitable development in the Congo Basin, it is vital to recognize and secure the land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and promote community-led sustainable forest management and poverty reduction initiatives which are inclusive of all community members, especially women and vulnerable groups.

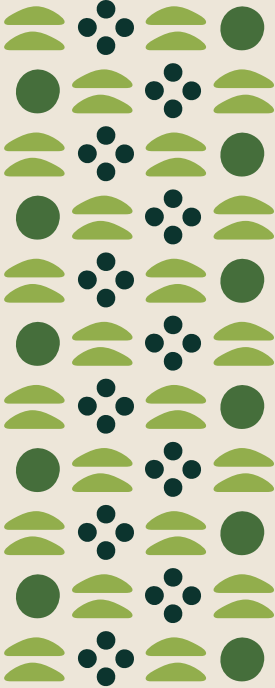


Photo: Annie Spratt

# Focus Areas

In the Congo Basin, FPC focuses on five interconnected areas that will, together, significantly strengthen Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' rights and forest stewardship while promoting sustainable and inclusive rural economies. These focus areas include:

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|-----|---|--|
| 01. | <b>Securing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Tenure</b> | Encourage the formal recognition and promotion of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' rights to land and forest as a means of enhancing sustainable forest management.                                     |
| 02. | <b>Promote Sustainable and Regenerative Rural Economies</b>     | Promote Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities well-being through initiatives such as forest restoration, agroecology, and tourism in ways that incorporate local wisdom and values as well as promote equity. |
| 03. | <b>Support Governance, Transparency and Law Enforcement</b>     | Strengthen institutional arrangements, structures, and governance processes to address drivers of deforestation, with the involvement of civil society organizations.  |
| 04. | <b>Improve Financing For Civil Society</b>                      | Enhance access to financing for sustainable actions and interventions by local, regional, and national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to reduce forest degradation and enhance development.                  |
| 05. | <b>Enhance the Capacity of Civil Society</b>                    | Strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of local, regional, and national CSOs for improved service delivery for just and sustainable development.  |

# Further Information

*These strategic priorities have been informed by country-level assessments that consider political, social, historical, and economic specificities. This overview of FPC priorities in the Congo Basin draws on a longer strategy that was developed through a widely participatory process with representatives from communities in the region.*

## About FPC Strategies

FPC has nine strategies – three regional strategies in the Brazilian Amazon, Congo Basin, and Indonesia, and six cross-cutting thematic strategies: Enabling Conditions, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, & Afro-Descendants (IP, LC, & AD), Supply Chains, Strategic Communications, Private Finance, and Carbon Markets Integrity.

The primary purpose of the FPC strategies is to provide a roadmap for grantmaking, action, monitoring progress, and learning. The strategies are also a tool to align a number of actors around strategic goals, whether it's where FPC focuses on implementation or funding. These are 'living strategies' that FPC intends to iteratively update to respond to changing contexts.

