

# Central Africa Forest Observatory

## What is the state of Central African Forests?

Preservation, Progress and Partnerships for Future

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#ForestsMatter

**This hybrid event serves as a vital nexus between scientific knowledge and policy discourse. By convening experts, policymakers, practitioners, youth and media, the event bridges the gap between data-driven insights and actionable policy decisions to protect Central Africa's invaluable ecosystems.**

Central African ecosystems, such as the Congo Basin, the second largest rainforest in the world, are the lifeblood of local communities, providing everything from food and water to wood and medicines. These ecosystems also regulate climate on a global scale. But keeping them healthy requires more than just good intentions. It takes data-driven policies and collaboration.

To make informed decisions, policymakers need access to up-to-date information from various sources, including satellite imagery, databases

and research. Since 2007, the **Central Africa Forest Observatory** (L'Observatoire des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale OFAC) has been addressing these challenges by gathering region-specific data, creating a digital hub for validation and producing scientific insights into forest status in the region.

This hybrid event will delve into the challenges, opportunities and solutions for sustainable forest management in Central Africa and showcase how initiatives like the Central Africa Forest Observatory are making a difference.



## The Central Africa Forest Observatory (OFAC)

The **Central Africa Forest Observatory**, supported by the EU-funded RIOFAC project, was born of a multi-donor initiative in 2007 and has evolved into the premier source of regional information on forest ecosystems and related sectors in Central Africa. With the backing of the Central African Forests Commission (Commission des forêts d'Afrique centrale COMIFAC) since 2007, OFAC has solidified its position as the foremost technical body in the region.

The State of the Forest report, produced every two years by the COMIFAC and the stakeholders of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, has become the gold standard for those looking for a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the status of the tropical forests of Central Africa.

Leveraging its status within COMIFAC, OFAC has effectively gathered, managed and disseminated credible and timely data on Central Africa's forests and ecosystems, supporting governmental and environmental stakeholders in their decision-making processes. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations, OFAC has become a pivotal hub for knowledge dissemination, capacity building and the development of decision-making tools for natural ecosystem management across Central Africa.

The Central Africa Forest Observatory is geared towards bolstering understanding and influencing decision-making amidst pressing challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, including climate change, environmental degradation, population growth, technological advancements, diversification and security concerns. There is significant potential to expand the distribution of OFAC's findings and share solutions among the tropical forest community, both regionally and globally.

## Objectives

The event seeks to:



**Identify solutions and share the latest knowledge** by experts and practitioners working in forest information management in Central Africa and the Congo Basin.



**Shape regional and global policy discussions** to recognize the critical role of research in advancing sustainable development and facilitating ecological transitions, emphasizing the importance of data collection, processing and validation in forest and environmental contexts.



**Reflect on the evolution of technology** and its implications for data generation and dissemination in forest and environmental contexts, and consider future opportunities to ensure that emerging technologies are leveraged to enhance data collection, processing and dissemination.



**Build partnerships and identify collaboration opportunities** with key stakeholders to highlight the significance of Congo Basin forests, emphasizing their crucial role in climate regulation and their impact on the livelihoods of dependent populations.

## Who should join?

This event welcomes a diverse array of stakeholders committed to the preservation and sustainable management of the world's vital forests

and ecosystems and those who would like to dive into these topics with the contextual realities of Central Africa: policymakers, researchers, representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as industry leaders, community members and media.