

# INVESTING IN NATURAL RESOURCES AND BIODIVERSITY FOR THE RESILIENCE AGAINST CLIMATE RISKS IN GABON

The [Africa Climate Week 2022](#) will be hosted by the Government of Gabon in Libreville from 29 August to 2 September 2022. The [Regional Climate Weeks are organized by UN Climate Change](#) as collaboration platforms to engage stakeholders to drive climate action and establish partnerships across countries, communities and economies for the resilience against climate risks and the transition to a low-emission economy. The Africa Climate Week 2022 is a step on the road to the COP 27 Conference planned from 7-18 November in Egypt.



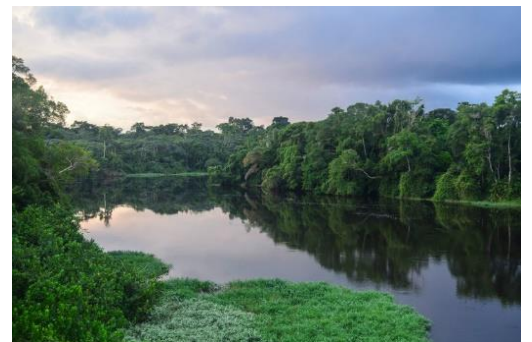
In the framework of these international events, Gabon is drawing the attention of the international community with the results achieved thanks to policies and initiatives aimed at protecting and enhancing its natural resources.

Gabon, in fact, is one of the few countries that absorbs more CO<sub>2</sub> than it emits. With forest covering 88% of the area, 13 national parks and 20 marine protected areas, the country is making a strong contribution to protect the Central African rainforest, called *the second lung of the Earth* after the Amazon. The country has an average deforestation rate of less than 0.1% resulting in a high-forest, low-deforestation (HFLD) country.



With the results achieved through its policies, Gabon is a successful example for many other countries and can not only boast in international meetings the significant records in carbon sequestration by preserving its tropical forests, but it also underlines the importance of attributing a high level of priority to the protection of biodiversity for a sustainable development.

[The document presented in October 2021 by the Government of Gabon to UNFCCC](#) (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) offers an updated overview of the initiatives underway in the country and the results achieved. Forest covers 88% of the area of Gabon (267,667 km<sup>2</sup>), making it the second most forested country in the world after Suriname. Gabon boasts exceptional biodiversity and a large number of endemic and emblematic species. Its forests represent about 11% of the rainforest of the Congo Basin and they are home to 50% of the remaining forest elephants in Africa, recently listed as critically endangered. Habitat conservation has helped Gabon's population of elephants growing from 60,000 to 95,000 animals and forests are also home of important populations of primates such as gorillas, chimpanzees and mandrills.





Three Global priority terrestrial ecoregions are located in Gabon, including important areas of mangrove forest as well as coastal and lowland forest. Protection is afforded through a network of protected areas that includes 13 national parks, a presidential reserve, a faunal reserve, 4 hunting domains, 2 arboretums, 9 [wetland sites under the Ramsar Convention](#), 1 [site recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage](#), several cultural sites and 20 marine protected areas. All together, these protected areas cover nearly 25% of the national territory (including land and ocean). Gabon's forests contain over 400 tree species of above 50cm diameter at breast height (DBH), about 60 of which are commercially exploited. The flora and fauna are all remarkable as the equatorial forest is still well preserved.

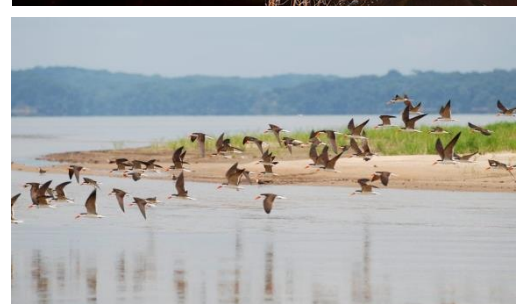
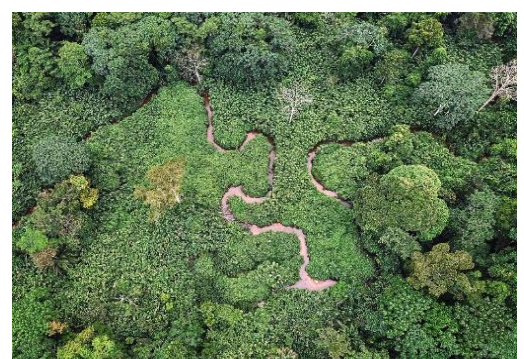
Gabon has also made significant advances in sustainable management of its timber resources outside the 13 parks. To be financially as well as ecologically sustainable timber industry needs to make and retain as much value as possible in-country and since 2010, Gabon has allowed timber to be exported only after it has been processed to some degree. Gabon has also adopted a sustainable approach to forestry to minimize degradation, with timber companies required to harvest on a 25-year cycle to allow regrowth. In 2018, the President of Gabon also declared that all [forestry concessions must be FSC-certified](#) by the end of 2022.

At the 2019 Climate Action Summit, Gabon signed an agreement with the [Central African Forest Initiative \(CAFI\)](#) for \$180 million in result-based payments for carbon absorption and in June 2021, Gabon received its first payment for the country's efforts towards the preservation of forested lands. [Gabon y CAFI](#) have agreed that the first payment will go towards activities that further decrease CO2 emissions and contribute to local communities' sustainable development, improving the productivity of agricultural and forestry activities, creating new jobs as well as new income-generating projects while keeping the ecological footprint of human activities low. The other [Central African countries](#) partners with CAFI have also joined these efforts for sustainable forests.

Gabon is also part of the [High Ambition Coalition](#), a group of over 100 countries advocating for a global commitment through the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030. In this framework Gabon is one of several countries pushing for the inclusion of a 30% goal for freshwater.

In 2022, the Equator Prize organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and partners, recognized the [Organisation Écologique des Lacs et de l'Ogooué \(OELO\)](#) of Gabon as one of the 11 winners. OELO created in the Bas Ogooué, the Gabon's largest Ramsar site, [the first community-written sustainable freshwater fisheries management Plan](#). This Plan was signed into law in 2018 by the National Government, improving the lives of local fisherfolk and creating numerous economic opportunities in the region being an example for many other countries. In this framework, for example, by 2020 the local organization of fishers has implemented three sustainable fishing cooperatives that, with the support of OELO, carry out different activities to improve their income by reducing the fishing pressure on the lake, valuing local resources also through ecotourism initiatives.

By integrating efforts of local organizations and the international community, the Government of Gabon is determined to continue its commitment to protect and enhance all great natural resources of the country, also contributing to the preservation of the Congo Basin, a strategic area for the fight against climate change.





**To know more**

[Africa Climate Week 2022 \(unep.org\)](https://www.unep.org/africa-climate-week-2022)

[Africa Climate Week 2022 | UNFCCC](https://unfccc.int/news/africa-climate-week-2022)

[Gabon-Conseil National Climat 2021 in unfccc.int](https://unfccc.int/news/gabon-conseil-national-climat-2021)

[Gabon in CAFI website](https://www.cafi.org/gabon)

[Article in UNDP website](#)

[OELO Organization Gabon](#)

[Cultural Landscape of Lopé-Okanda - UNESCO World Heritage Centre](#)

[National biodiversity strategy and Action Plan – Gabon](#)

[Republic of Gabon Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in cbd.int](#)

[Gabon in Declaration for Sustainability in Africa \(GDSA\)](#)

[High Ambition Coalition website](#)

[Article in Society for Conservation Biology website](#)

[Central African Forest Initiative \(CAFI\)](#)

[Article in nature.org](#)

[Article in nature.org](#)

[Article in nature.org](#)

[Article in mongobay.com](#)

[Article in euronews green website](#)

[Gabon in Space Climate Observatory](#)

