CONGO BASIN
LANDSCAPES INITIATIVE

2025 Annual Conference of the GEF-Funded Critical Forests Integrated Programmes

Advancing South-South Exchange in the Conservation of Critical Forest Landscapes in the Congo Basin and Guinean Forests of Central and West Africa

The inaugural South-South Learning and Knowledge Exchange Conference brings together stakeholders committed to protecting two of Africa's most critical forest ecosystems: the Congo Basin and the Guinean Forests of West Africa. *This conference aims to facilitate collaboration among governments, local communities, and conservation organizations in fostering sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.*

Date: 16-20 June 2025 | Location: Kribi, Cameroon

About the event

The 2025 Annual Conference is Africa's first South-South learning and knowledge exchange regional conference on the GEF-funded Critical Forests Biomes Integrated Programmes. This pivotal event aims to advance the conservation of intact forests in the Congo Basin and the Guinean Forests of West Africa, uniting diverse stakeholders committed to sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

Conference Objectives

Showcase Transformational Changes from GEF-7:
Presenting success stories and results from the GEF-7 Congo Basin Integrated Programme (Phase 1), this conference will highlight impactful case studies from both the Congo Basin Regional Coordination Project and its country-level initiatives. The goal is to demonstrate how these efforts have catalyzed significant advancements in sustainable forestry practices and biodiversity outcomes.

Launch New GEF-Funded Integrated Programme:
This conference will serve as the platform for launching two flagship GEF-funded initiatives aimed at protecting critical forest landscapes. These include:

- *The GEF-8 Congo Basin Integrated Programme (Phase 2), led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), designed to build upon the successes of its predecessor.*
- *The GEF-8 Guinean Forests Integrated Programme, spearheaded by Conservation International (CI) in collaboration with BirdLife International, targeting improved governance and conservation efforts across the region.*

Enhance Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration:
Establish frameworks that foster ongoing knowledge sharing, coordination, and collaboration between the Congo Basin and Guinean Forests Integrated Programmes, ensuring that best practices and innovative solutions are disseminated effectively across geographies.

Plan for the Future (GEF-9):
Identify key priorities for the next phase of the Critical Forests Integrated Programmes under GEF-9, defining actionable steps to sustain momentum and impact in forest conservation efforts.

Background and Context

Agenda Highlights:

June 16
Field Trip

June 17
- Official Opening & Launch of GEF-8 Programmes
- Welcome Remarks by UNEP and Partners
- Keynote Speech by Minister of Environment (Cameroon)

June 18
Sessions on Implementation Progress and Integrated Land Use Management Planning

June 19
Addressing Wildlife Crime and Engaging Communities in Conservation

June 20
South-South Cooperation Strategies and Closing Remarks

For more details about the conference, please contact us at:
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Led by: UN environment programme

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