



Timber Legality Risk Dashboard: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Drafted as of: December 2021

SUMMARY OF LEGALITY RISKS

Risk Score: 97.7 (Higher-Risk^a)¹

Conflict State: YES (Medium Intensity Conflict)²

Log Export Restriction in Effect: YES³

Import Regulation in Effect: NO

- **Illegal logging is increasing and driving deforestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).**
- **There are well-publicized governance challenges, subnational conflict, and reports of corruption in the DRC's timber sector.**
- **There is a high risk that timber has been logged without the proper permits or that the permits were corruptly obtained.**
- **There remains a risk of unsustainable and illegal trade in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listed species.**
- **Forest laws are not well-enforced.**
- **Non-mandated independent monitoring and watchdog groups are facing intimidation.**
- **Tax evasion is widespread.**
- **Direct exports to U.S. and European Union (EU) markets have fallen significantly, while exports to Vietnam and India have rapidly risen.**

TRADE PROFILE OF FOREST PRODUCTS^{b, c, 4, 5}

Total Imports (2018): \$93.86 million

Total Exports (2018): \$110.38 million. \$36.52 million (33.1 percent) exported to "regulated markets"^d

SUMMARY OF HIGHEST PRODUCT-LEVEL RISKS

Exports - Top Products Exported to the US by 2018 Value⁶

- Sawnwood (HS4407)
- Wood Furniture - Bedroom (HS940350)
- Veneer (HS4408)
- Particleboard (HS4410)
- Marquetry (HS4420)
- Paper (HS48)

The DRC has restricted the export of logs since 2002, establishing a maximum log export quota of 30 percent of annual timber production for each authorized forestry or processing company, for a 10-year period starting from the date on which forest exploitation commenced.^{7,8,9} While this policy was designed to promote local timber processing, this objective is reportedly far from being achieved due to the challenges associated with timber industrialization.¹⁰ This restriction is presumed to remain in force *de jure*.¹¹ A moratorium on new logging concessions has been in place since 2002.¹² However, new contracts have continued to be allocated.

Summary of Highest Product-Level Risks (continued)

In June 2017, the DRC reportedly began pursuing a new policy banning the export of logs,^{13,14,15} although this policy was never fully implemented and has reportedly since been abandoned.^{16,17} In September 2020, the DRC and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) jointly announced a ban on all log exports from Congo Basin countries effective as of January 1, 2022.¹⁸ In August 2021, it was reported that implementation has been delayed until 2023.¹⁹

Ten urgent measures aimed at promoting sustainable management of natural resources in the DRC were adopted in July 2021. One of these ten measures included an inter-ministerial decree banning the export of all timber regardless of the species or level of processing.²⁰ In October 2021, Environment Minister Eve Bazaiba announced the suspension of log exports to reporters but did not say when it would come into effect.²¹ This has created uncertainty around when the suspension of exports will apply.

SUMMARY OF HIGHEST SPECIES-LEVEL RISKS

Illegal logging and trade affect many timber species, but highly valuable - often rare and endangered - species that are protected under harvest and/or trade regulations are a key target and at an elevated risk for illegality. The following species are either currently, or have recently, been protected in the DRC.

CITES-Listed Species:²²

Appendix II:

- **Afrormosia** (*Pericopsis elata*)
- **African Cherry** (*Prunus africana*)
- **Bubinga, kevazingo** (*Guibourtia demeusei* *Guibourtia tessmannii*)
- **Rosewood** (*Dalbergia* spp.)²³
- **Mukula** *Pterocarpus tinctorius*²⁴

The following species are protected by DRRC national law:²⁵

- **Ebony** (*Diospyros crassiflora*)²⁶
- **Wenge** (*Millettia laurentii*)^{27,28}

All protected species should be considered high-risk due to the domestic challenges in securing valid logging and export permits.

FORESTRY SECTOR

Forested Area: 126.15 million ha²⁹ (19.3% protected)³⁰

Deforestation Rate: 0.83 percent annually³¹

Forest Ownership (as of 2015):³²

- 131.6 million ha publicly-owned (100%).^e

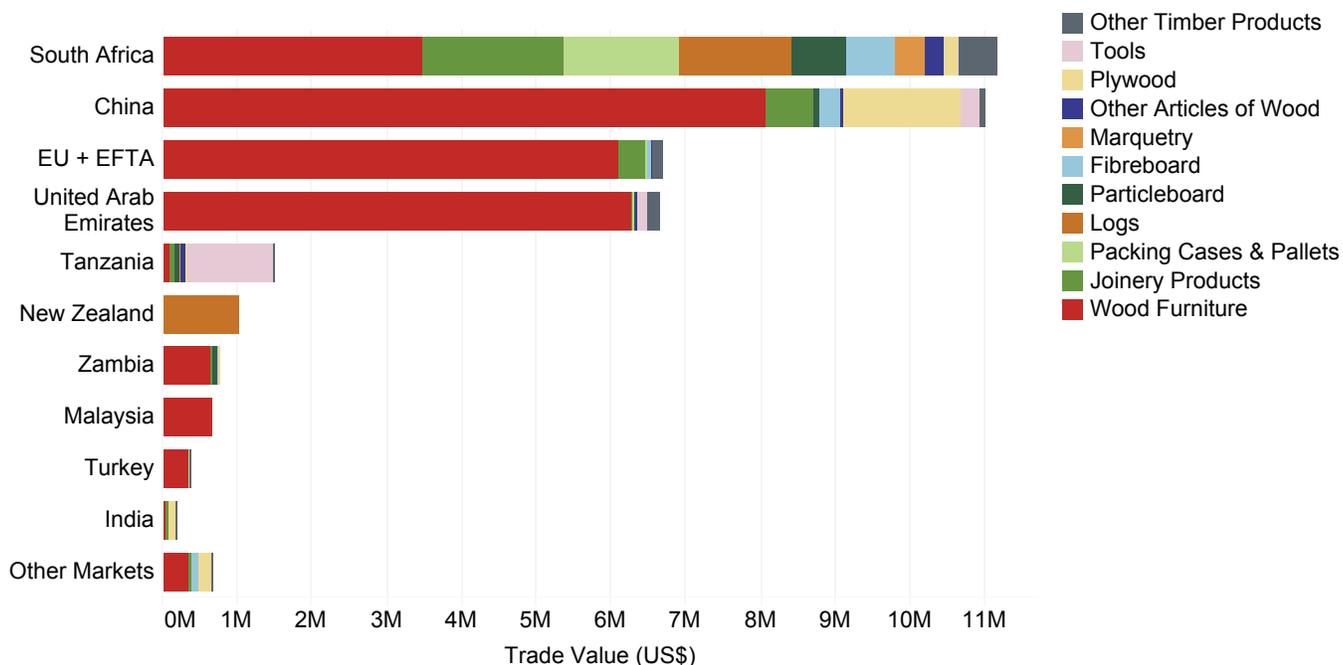
Certified Forests:

- The Democratic Republic of Congo has no FSC- or PEFC-certified forests.
- Compagnie Forestière de Transformation (CFT): certificate of legality issued by Preferred by Nature (May 16 2019) according to the Legal Source standard for an area of 544,145 ha located near Kisangani and its processing activities.³³
- Industrie Forestière du Congo (IFCO): certificate of legality issued by Preferred by Nature (April 10 2020) according to the Legal Source standard for the Alibuku forest concession and for the processing plant in Kinkole.³⁴

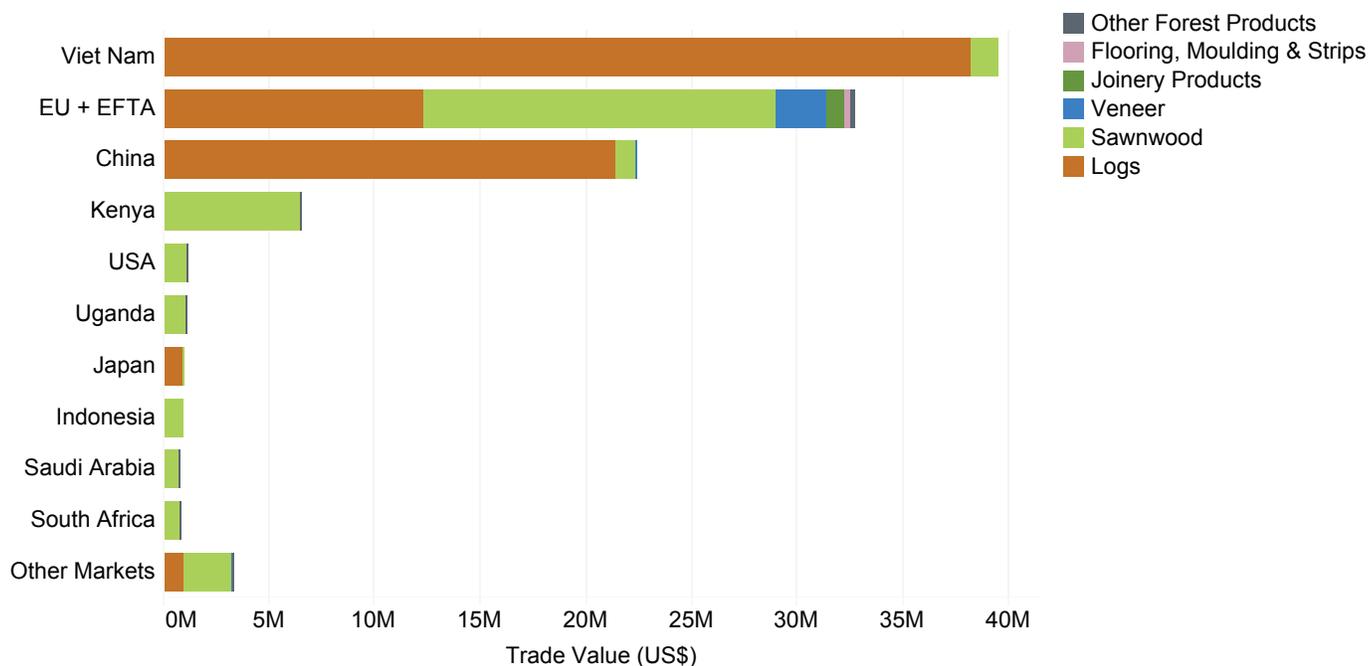
Domestic Production:³⁵

- Wood Fuel: 85.62 million m³ (2019)
- Logs: 4.61 million m³ (2019)
- Charcoal: 2.63 million tonnes (2019)
- Sawnwood: 150 thousand m³ (2019)
- Paper: 6 thousand tonnes (2019)
- Veneer: 5 thousand m³ (2019)
- Plywood: 2 thousand m³ (2019)

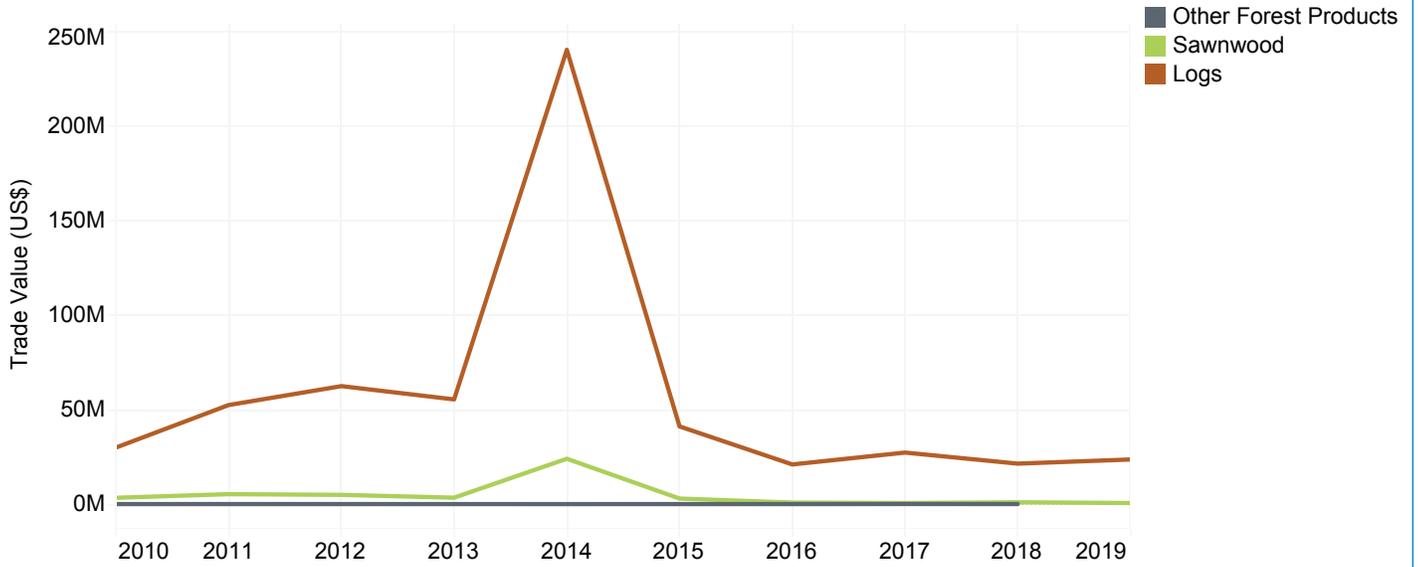
DRC'S TOP SOURCE MARKETS FOR TIMBER PRODUCTS BY VALUE (2018)³⁶



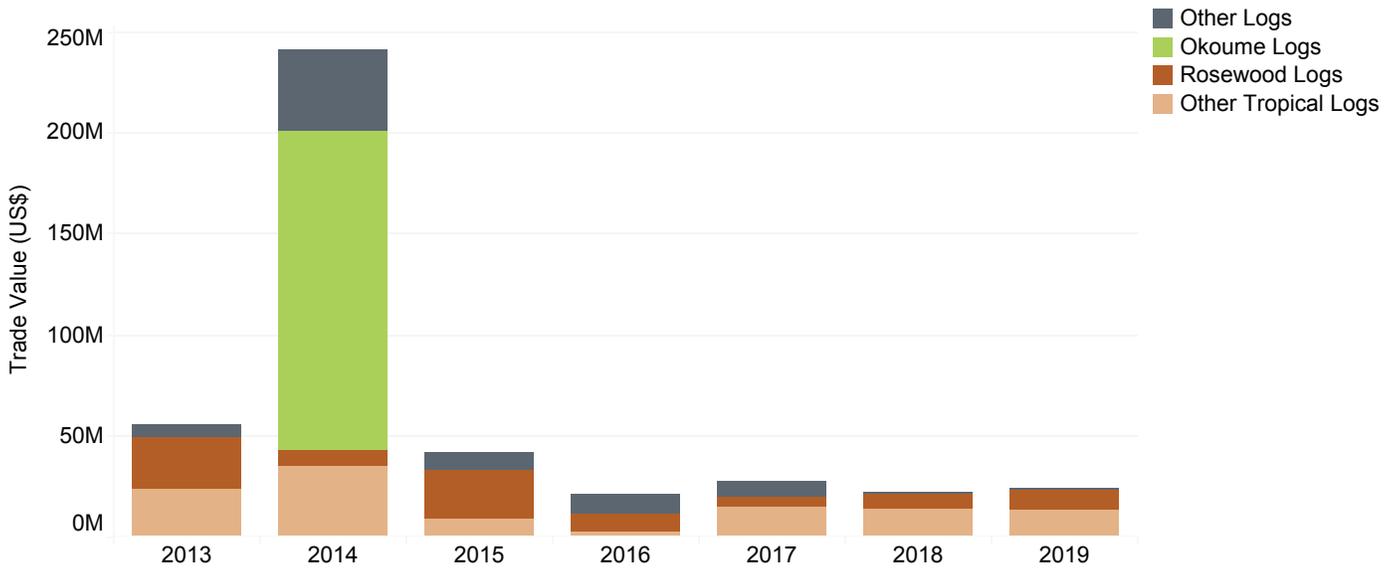
DRC'S TOP DESTINATION MARKETS FOR FOREST PRODUCTS BY VALUE (2018)³⁷



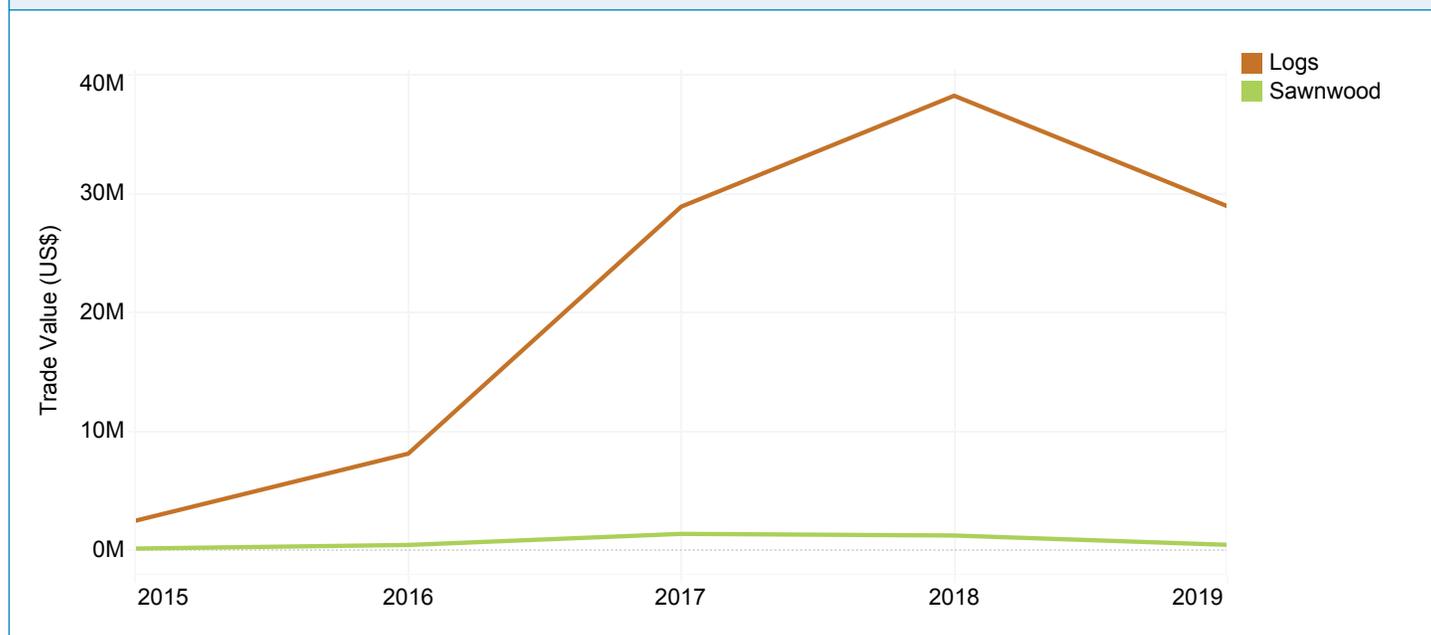
HIGH-RISK EXPORTS: TIMBER EXPORTS TO CHINA (2015 - 2019)³⁸



HIGH-RISK EXPORTS: LOG EXPORTS TO CHINA BY SPECIES (2013 - 2019)³⁹



HIGH-RISK EXPORTS: TIMBER EXPORTS TO VIETNAM (2015 - 2019)⁴⁰



TIMBER LEGALITY

- **Illegal logging is increasing and driving deforestation in the DRC.**

The DRC's forest area is estimated at 155 million hectares (70 percent of DRC total area and 60 percent of the Congo Basin's forest area).⁴¹

Deforestation rates have almost doubled in the last decade (2010-2020) compared with 2000-2010.⁴² The DRC reported a loss of over one million hectares annually between 2010 and 2020, the third highest in the world behind China and Brazil.

Much of this recorded loss has taken place in the last few years, with the University of Maryland reporting that 2017 was a record year for tree cover loss in the DRC.⁴³

Deforestation is reportedly driven by a range of factors, with studies pointing to slash-and-burn agriculture and, increasingly, artisanal logging which is often illegal, as well as charcoal production.^{44,45} Industrial forest concessions only cover roughly 7 percent of the DRC's forests⁴⁶ with the World Resources Institute suggesting that just 10 percent of the 2017 forest loss occurred inside logging concessions.⁴⁷

- **There are well-publicized governance challenges, subnational conflict, and reports of corruption in the DRC's timber sector.**

The DRC ranks extremely low on many indices measuring governance and corruption including the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (listed at number 47 out of 54 countries) for 2020,⁴⁸ and ranked 170 out of 198 on Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index.⁴⁹ The size of the country and its geographic spread, low state penetration into the regions, weak institutions, and ongoing regional violence, particularly in the east of the country, make governance a significant challenge. Corruption and the lack of political will are considered to be the biggest obstacles to improved forest sector governance.⁵⁰ Corruption reportedly permeates all levels of government and all sectors of the economy, rendering the country's investment climate as one of the least competitive in the world.⁵¹ Mining and forestry are most frequently cited as affected by corruption (along with taxation, customs administration, and public enterprises).⁵²

The DRC is classified as a *Medium-Intensity Conflict* situation in 2021 by the World Bank, due to sub-national violence following high-intensity conflict between 1999 and 2003. The security situation can deteriorate quickly due to deep socioeconomic, political, and military tensions.⁵³ During the height of the war, 'conflict timber' provided finance to several armed groups and reportedly continued to fund the ongoing rebel activity in eastern DRC even after the war officially ended in 2003.⁵⁴ In its 2019 report, the UN Group of Experts on the DRC noted that the rebel group Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) continued to collect "taxes" from timber and charcoal dealers. Rebel groups NDC-R, Mai-Mai Yakutumba, Mai-Mai

Malaika and Nyatura reportedly earned revenue from the production, illegal taxation and the sale of natural resources, including mineral ore and timber for their survival and the purchase of arms and ammunition.⁵⁵

The DRC significantly revised forest sector laws and regulations following 2003 peace accords.⁵⁶ Most of the pre-war logging concessions were annulled: logging concessions decreased from 40 to 12 million hectares between 2000 and 2010.⁵⁷

The 2002 Forest Code is the main national-level legal framework for forest management. While it includes many best-practice elements (public competitive bidding for forest concession allocation, recognition of customary ownership and user rights), several key implementing regulations are still missing, creating loopholes and undermining the law's intent. In particular, a Ministerial Order establishing the conditions for granting timber export quotas was never implemented as required by Article 109 of the Forest Code.⁵⁸ Businesses consider bribery routine and are subject to around 108 "taxes", most of which have no legal basis.⁵⁹

The DRC anti-corruption institutional and legal framework is considered largely ineffective due to weak capacity and political will to address corruption.⁶⁰

The DRC and the European Union (EU) began negotiating a Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) in 2010 to promote trade in legal timber products and improve forest governance. Despite an informal suspension of the process in 2013, some progress has reportedly been made on a few core elements of the VPA since November 2016.⁶¹ However, these efforts have not yet resulted in the signing of the VPA between the DRC and the EU and FLEGT licensing is not operational.

- **There is a high risk that timber has been logged without the proper permits or that the permits were corruptly obtained.**

The State has the power to grant access rights to the forest area or the forest resources. Poor management of land rights and land allocation processes has resulted in land use disputes and conflicts⁶² due to failure of government agencies to consult local communities.⁶³

Industrial Logging Concessions

Industrial timber companies are expected to apply for an industrial logging concession permit. Most companies logging in industrial concessions are foreign-financed, particularly from Europe and China,^f and operate in eight of the twenty-six provinces (Table 1). As of early 2019, fifteen of the twenty-seven companies with concessions were active. Eight companies held rights to 81 percent of the forest areas intended for industrial logging including SODEFOR (28.9 percent of industrial logging area), Maniema Union (11.6 percent), Booming Green DRC (11 percent), FORABOLA (10.3 percent), CFT (5.8 percent), IFCO (5 percent), Kitenge-Lola Establishment (4.8 percent) and Motema (3.6 percent).⁶⁴ However, Maniema Union 2 reportedly no longer exists. In October 2019, the company changed its name to LONG XIN SARLU. The company sold nine of its concessions to two new Chinese owned companies: i) Congo Sunflower Forestry Development Sarlu, (a total of 779,870 ha) and Congo King Basheng Forestry Development Sarlu, (a total of 791,675 ha).⁶⁵

While forest loss has soared, the DRC had a moratorium on granting new industrial logging concessions since 2002.⁶⁶ However, new logging permits continued to be issued, with numerous cancellations and re-issuances in subsequent years leading to confusion and questions about the legal basis and the extent to which corruption plays a role. In July 2003, the World Bank estimated that around 9.5 million hectares of land had been newly allocated since the moratorium.⁶⁷ A legal review of existing titles led to the cancellation of many in 2009, some of which were re-issued in 2011.⁶⁸ In 2015 and 2016, the government gave out eight concessions in breach of the moratorium, which were subsequently canceled following pressure from NGOs and donors,⁶⁹ but then three were subsequently reissued (including to two Chinese companies).⁷⁰ In January 2020, the DRC also granted nine concessions to Chinese companies.⁷¹ Civil society groups subsequently obtained documents showing that four logging concessions covering more than 770,000 hectares had been allocated in June 2020 to a Congolese company called Groupe Services.⁷² Greenpeace has suggested that these allocations have been in violation of the moratorium instituted in 2002. They also suggest that the concession allocations substantially exceeded the legal limits of area that can be assigned by ministerial signature (by more than 400,000 hectares) and also exceeded the limit of forests that can be assigned "to the same person, together or separately" by more than 200,000 hectares.⁷³ The legality of the relevant contracts is being contested in court by local NGOs.⁷⁴ In October 2021, the President of DRC, Felix Tshisekedi, ordered an audit of all logging contracts and the suspension of all "questionable contracts" until the audit is concluded. Tshisekedi noted that there is a need to examine the legality of several contracts, including six concessions granted in September 2020 covering about 1.4 million hectares awarded by former Environment Minister Claude Nyamugabo.⁷⁵ In July 2021, the DRC Council of Ministers voted to lift the twenty-year moratorium on granting new logging concessions.⁷⁶ Reports have indicated that an implementing decree which could potentially open up 70 million hectares of natural forest to logging is imminent.⁷⁷

Timber Legality (continued)

Concession holders are required to submit and gain approval for a management plan. Roughly 40 percent have been validated by the CVPAF (Forest Management Plan Validation Committee); 18 percent have been submitted but are awaiting validation. In addition to this validation,⁷⁸ the management plan must also be approved by the Provincial Governor.

Failure to meet these requirements can mean that the concessions are returned to the State, with reports suggesting that such concessions should then be considered to be operating illegally if they are not returned to the state.⁷⁹ In many instances, the absence of a validated and approved management plan is usually justified by the company with an additional grace period requested.⁸⁰ Around 42 percent of forest titles have no management plan submitted or validated. Only a few concessions have actually been returned to the State⁸¹ and thus there is a lack of clarity around the extent to which many concessions should be considered to be operating illegally.

Adhesion to management plan requirements is reportedly poor. Global Witness has reported that European company Norsudtimber – the biggest single owner of logging concessions in the DRC – was operating illegally on 90 percent of its sites⁸² due to the failure to implement the management plan within the deadlines imposed by law, and/or due to signs of logging activity outside of authorized boundaries. Norsudtimber, through its subsidiaries, the Société de Développement Forestier (Sodefor), the Société Forestière et Agricole de la M'Bola (Forabola), and La Forestière du Lac holds twenty logging concessions covering 43,426 square kilometres of DRC's rainforest.

Artisanal Logging

Nearly 90 percent of logging in the DRC is small-scale, illegal or informal outside of industrial logging concessions. Small-scale operators are required to pay approximately \$500 in order to obtain a license granting them the status of artisanal logger for a period of five years. They can subsequently obtain a maximum of 2 cutting permits, each valid for one year, covering a maximum of 50 hectares. Logging without a permit is a crime punishable by up to three years in prison, a fine of between 10,000 to 500,000 francs (\$6 to 318), or both.⁸³ Logging without an artisanal logging permit is therefore common with gifts or bribes offered instead to both local communities and government officials.⁸⁴ There are no competitive, public bidding requirements for artisanal logging licenses.⁸⁵

TABLE 1: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FOREST CONCESSION CONTRACTS

Province	Number of Forest Titles	Area (Ha)
Tshopo	14	2,957,661
Ma -ndombe	16	2,635,520
Equateur	12	1,939,626
Mongala	7	1,258,217
Ma -ndombe/Equateur	2	569,517
Mongala/Tshuapa	2	499,643
Equateur/Sud Ubangi	1	284,323
Tshuapa	1	275,064
Ituri	1	60,182
Kasa	1	13,925
Total	57	10,715,678

Source: ATIBT, 2020.

Several large industrial logging companies, some foreign, have been historically circumventing the moratorium on new industrial logging by improperly obtaining 'artisanal' permits,⁸⁶ particularly in the regions of Bandundu and Equateur. Wood valued at between 5 and 56 million Euros was illegally harvested by industrial operators using artisanal logging permits from 2010 to 2012.⁸⁷ In the same period, as much as 94 percent of artisanal logging permits were issued illegally to companies instead of individuals – either directly, or indirectly via agreements reached with individuals from local communities.⁸⁸ The 2016 Ministerial Order on timber logging⁸⁹ requires the publication of the following information in the Official Journal of the DRC and on the Ministry website:

Timber Legality (continued)

- A directory of artisanal loggers;
- A directory of artisanal logging permits, including their cartography;
- A quarterly report on timber production (available only on the website); and
- A quarterly report on timber exports.

To date, this information has not been published. This lack of transparency reinforces the opacity and illegality in this sector.

Artisanal loggers can trade and export timber and this illegally logged timber under artisanal licenses can still be exported to international market.⁹⁰ An enormous quantity of timber is smuggled by small-scale loggers across land borders, particularly in the east to Uganda and Rwanda and in the north to South Sudan.⁹¹ This includes operators seeking to avoid paying export or reforestation taxes.⁹²

Special logging permits

Logging companies were reportedly regularly harvesting protected forestry species without acquiring a special logging permit or a special logging authorization.⁹³ No official template existed for the special permit for logging of protected species, encouraging exports of protected species without legal permits or with a forged permit.⁹⁴ Enforcement authorities in the European Union have reported fraud with regards to imports of wengé (*Millettia laurentii*) logs from the DRC. German authorities confiscated imported logs from two German companies after establishing that documents supposedly from The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) were forged.⁹⁵ The DRC has reportedly cancelled the requirement for special logging permits. All species are now required to be included in the annual harvesting permits and CITES-listed species are subject to a quota allocation license.⁹⁶

Transparency

While transparency of information on industrial concessions has improved slightly, most new logging in recent years has been under 'artisanal' permits and transparency of information regarding these permits is extremely poor. DRC legislation requires MEDD to publish industrial concession contracts, management plans, social agreements and quarterly declarations of timber logged by each concession. Reports suggest that there are no maps, no copies of contracts and no management plans or other data provided for these permits which can be issued by both provincial and central government authorities.⁹⁷ Global Witness has found that only a small selection of these documents is available on the MEDD website, which has been offline for long periods of time.⁹⁸ A Ministerial Order⁹⁹ requires the publication of the volume of timber production and the quantity of timber exports; however, these legal obligations are rarely respected, both by loggers who do not submit reports on their timber production and exports, and by the government which does not publish this information.

• There remains a risk of unsustainable and illegal trade in CITES-listed species.

DRC authorities have struggled to effectively implement CITES, despite having national legislation that meets its requirements.¹⁰⁰ There continue to be substantial concerns about the scale of unsustainable and illegal trade in several species. Subject to a brief suspension of trade in all CITES-listed species in 2015, in 2021 DRC is currently subject to a trade ban for unsustainable and illegal trade in grey parrot and pangolin.

Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*) is listed on Appendix II of CITES, and in April 2014, the CITES Secretariat notified Parties of the existence of a "large number of fake or falsified [export] permits apparently issued by the Democratic Republic of the Congo," providing a long list of "permits... that are unaccounted for," suggesting that further clarification was required as to whether the CITES authorities in the DRC had correctly issued them.¹⁰¹ MEDD had authorized industrial loggers to cut at least 55,373 m³ of Afrormosia despite a CITES national export quota of 25,000 m³. Export quotas continue to be discussed between the DRC, CITES Parties and the Standing Committee and have continued to be challenged. There are several quotas currently in place which may be updated annually.⁹

Since 2015, the DRC moved the CITES Management Authority to the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and began to build an improved permitting system.¹⁰² Scanned copies of all CITES export permits were sent to the Secretariat starting in December 2017. From July 2020, all permits are expected to include a QR code for verification. EU countries importing CITES-listed species from DRC started to report a lack of CITES documents for some products that the DRC authorities claimed had undergone some processing/second transformation (sometimes very minimal) which would fall outside the scope of the CITES requirements.¹⁰³ In 2019, the annotation for *Pericopsis elata* was amended to also include "transformed wood."¹⁰⁴

- **Forest laws are not well-enforced.**

Enforcement-related information is very limited outside publication of the mandated independent monitor reports, and information is generally difficult or impossible to obtain on request.¹⁰⁵ Enforcement is under-resourced with infractions rarely uncovered.¹⁰⁶ DRC law requires that authorities visit each logging concession at least four times a year but very few missions are ever undertaken. According to the Control and Verification Unit (CCV), there are roughly 139 officers responsible for enforcing the DRC Forest Code and most are based in cities far from the logging concessions. Recent estimates suggest 80 officials are based in Kinshasa, 36 in Tshopo, 10 in Equateur, 10 in Mai Ndombe and 3 in Mongala.¹⁰⁷ There is a limited modern communication infrastructure and travelling to concessions is reportedly very difficult.¹⁰⁸

In the few cases where penalties have been applied, they have been small and insufficient to dissuade future illegal activities. Despite multiple studies by local and international NGOs, think tanks, as well as independent forest monitors listing multiple breaches of the Forest Code, there are no documented cases of fines, or imprisonment of industrial loggers found guilty of breaching DRC law.¹⁰⁹ Rainforest Foundation report the arrest of a company official in March 2019 – believed to be the first of its kind against a logging company in the DRC – but the company was acquitted on all counts in May 2019.¹¹⁰

- **Non-mandated independent monitoring and watchdog groups are facing intimidation.**

An Independent Monitor of Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (IM-FLEG) started checking forest operations in the field in 2010. The IM-FLEG has an official mandate from the government and was established with funding from international donors.^h Its field missions are conducted jointly with government officials and its reports are published only after they have been discussed by a Committee, including representatives of the DRC government, donor institutions, the forestry sector and civil society. The UK-based non-profit Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM) acted as IM-FLEG from December 2010 to April 2013, at which point the DRC-based Observatoire de la Gouvernance Forestière (OGF) took over the role.

Unofficial monitoring has become increasingly difficult, with civil society reporting intimidation and restrictions on their activities. International NGOs have also reported an increase in efforts to prevent visits to communities living in logging concessions. In 2016, Global Witness reported that their visit had been cut short with passports confiscated, while in March 2017, Greenpeace researchers and a filmmaker were also expelled from the country for visiting a logging concession.¹¹¹ Other civil society organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, and journalists have also had their visas or visa renewals denied in recent years.¹¹²

- **Tax evasion is widespread.**

There has been a very significant problem with the absence of appropriate billing and collection of forest taxes by the government and the non-payment by companies.¹¹³ More than 90 percent of the forest taxes in the DRC were not paid in 2012, according to a 2013 Global Witness report,¹¹⁴ with much of the shortfall attributed to illegal arrangements between the forestry sector and MEDD officials, whereby the area tax is charged only on the exploitable area of a concession, as opposed to the entire area as required by law. This practice is legal if a management plan has been validated and approved, but it has been reportedly applied in instances where the management plan has not been approved, which is illegal. In more recent years, however, there appears to have been some improvement. Preferred by Nature reports that Ministerial Decree 050 in 2015 on forest management resolved the questions around the area tax so that calculation and payment of area tax is now under control and is considered to be low risk. However, there remains a risk that all other forestry related taxes are evaded as identified laws are not upheld consistently by all entities and/or are often ignored, and/or are not enforced by relevant authorities.¹¹⁵

REM reports that the price used for the sale of timber by the loggers is often lower than the price prescribed by law through the Mercurial (report of official selling rates on public markets), which contributes to tax evasion.¹¹⁶

Control by customs officials is lacking or circumvented through bribery.¹¹⁷

- **Direct exports to U.S. and EU markets have fallen significantly, while exports to Vietnam and India have rapidly risen.**

DRC's exports to the U.S. have decreased 78 percent since 2014, while exports to the EU + EFTA have decreased 29 percent. Meanwhile, timber exports have increased 290 percent to India and 1,812 percent to Vietnam since 2014. China also remains one of the DRC's main export markets, although log exports have decreased in the last few years, particularly since a large one-year spike in 2014.

While U.S. or EU companies are decreasing direct sourcing from the DRC, EU and U.S. operators importing from China, India and Vietnam may, in fact, be importing manufactured wood products made from wood harvested in the DRC.

REPORTS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Forest Trends has compiled a list of relevant reports and additional online tools to complement this country report. The full list is available at Forest Trends' IDAT homepage: <https://www.forest-trends.org/fptf-idat-home/>

Key resources:

1. Diansambu, Isaac, Mumbere Musavandalo, Charles, Pasteur Bamenga, Louis, Bessia, Timothee, and Paulson Kasereka. 2019. "État des Lieux des Acteurs de la Filière Forêt-Bois en République Démocratique du Congo." Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT), l'École Régionale Post-Universitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrés des Forêts et Territoires Tropicaux (ERAIFT), and Fédération des Industriels du Bois (FIB).
2. Global Witness. 2018. "Total Systems Failure. Exposing the Global Secrecy Destroying Forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo." Global Witness.
3. Global Witness. 2015. "Exporting Impunity: How Congo's Rainforest is Illegally Logged for International Markets." Global Witness.
4. Preferred by Nature. 2017. "Timber Legality Risk Assessment Democratic Republic of the Congo." Preferred by Nature.

METHODOLOGY & TERMINOLOGY NOTES

^a Risk scores reflect Preferred by Nature's Timber Risk Assessment which measures the risk of illegality occurring in 21 areas of law relevant to timber legality, as well as Forest Trends' national governance scores which provides an average relative governance and corruption risk score for 211 countries globally. Preferred by Nature's scores have been flipped to ensure compatibility with Forest Trends' national governance scores, where higher scores are associated with greater governance and corruption challenges. An average of both the Preferred by Nature and Forest Trends scores has been calculated for 66 countries where both are available as of 2021. For all other countries, the risk score reflects Forest Trends' national governance scores. Countries scoring less than 25 are considered "Lower-Risk," countries scoring between 25 and 50 are "Medium-Risk" and countries scoring above 50 are "Higher-Risk." It is important to note that it is possible to source illegal wood from a well-governed, "Lower-Risk" state and it is also possible to source legal wood from a "Higher-Risk" country. As such, the risk scores can only give an indication of the likely level of illegal logging in a country and ultimately speaks to the risk that corruption and poor governance undermines rule of law in the forest sector.

^b The term "forest products" is used to refer to timber products (including furniture) plus pulp and paper. It covers products classified in the Combined Nomenclature under Chapters 44, 47, 48 and furniture products under Chapter 94. While the term "forest products" is often used more broadly to cover non-timber and non-wood products such as mushrooms, botanicals, and wildlife, "forest products" is used to refer to timber products plus pulp and paper in this dashboard.

^c Except where otherwise specified, for all trade statistics and charts, data on the Democratic Republic of the Congo's trade with China is sourced from the General Administration of Customs, P.R. China, compiled and analyzed by Forest Trends; and data on the Democratic Republic of the Congo's trade with Viet Nam is sourced from General Department of Vietnam Customs, compiled and analyzed by the Vietnam Timber and Forest Product Associations (VIFORES), the Forest Products Association of Binh Dinh (FPA Binh Dinh), the Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of Ho Chi Minh City (HAWA), and Forest Trends. All other data comes from UN Comtrade, compiled and analyzed by Forest Trends. The most recent comparable data from all three sources in this instance is for 2018.

^d Regulated markets reflect countries and jurisdictions that have developed operational measures to restrict the import of illegal timber. As of 2020, this included the U.S., Member States of the European Union (as well as the United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), Australia, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea. Some measures are more comprehensive in scope, implementation, and enforcement than others.

^e 131.6 million ha publicly owned (100%); however, in 2016 DRC established a regulatory framework for community forest management*. As of July 14, 2020, 66 community forest concessions have been granted across 7 regions, covering a total of 1.18 million ha roughly equivalent to 0.94% of total forest land**.

^f More than half of the concessions are managed by European capital of Portuguese, Belgian, Swiss and Finnish origin. It is estimated that 39.17% of forests allocated for industrial logging are financed by Swiss -based backers (in the case of SODEFOR and FORABOLA); around 22.56% by Chinese capital through Booming Green RDC and Maniema Union, SOMIFOR, FODECO and SCIBOIS. Belgian capital funds SICOBOIS and SEFOCO, U.S. finance funds SAFO, Franco-Lebanese capital is believed to support BBC, CFT, ITB and IFCO. Other companies operating with Congolese capital include Forestiere Du Lac, ENRA, Compagnie Duwood, Motema, NBK Service House and ETS Kitenge (ATIBT 2020).

^g In 2021, the DRC has the following national export quotas:

- *Guibourtia demeusei* (14,895 m³ logs sawn wood and veneer sheets);

- *Pericopsis elata* (54,747 m³ logs sawn wood veneer sheets);

- *Prunus africana* (102,000 kg dry bark). Quotas may change every year and are published on the CITES website

<https://cites.org/eng/parties/country-profiles/cd/domestic-measures#block-views-block-export-quotas-block-1>.

^h Independent forest monitoring (IFM) has become a component of the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), which are a pillar of the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan. The Action Plan entered into force in 2003 in response to rising international concerns about the social, economic and environmental impacts of illegal logging and related trade. Each VPA is a bilateral trade agreement negotiated between the EU and a timber-exporting country. While parties enter into a VPA voluntarily, the agreement becomes legally binding when both parties have ratified it.

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The Dashboards have been compiled from publicly available information sources to support risk assessments on the legality of timber products entering international supply chains. The Dashboards are for educational and informational purposes only. The Dashboards have been drafted with input from the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and are subject to external peer review. The Dashboards will be updated periodically based on newly available information.

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