Current policy projections

While the stated overall reduction target is 50%, Gabon projects that its current policies exceed this target. As a result Gabon has some flexibility.

Fair share

However, if Gabon continues along its current policy projections for industrial emissions, those emissions would increase by only 60% on 2000 levels. This would result in an "inadequate" rating for its contribution excluding LULUCF emissions, which is shown in the graph.

Emissions from industrial sectors could increase by between 60-500% by 2025 on 2000 levels without compromising Gabon's overall reduction target.

In 2000 Gabon reported a forestry sink of ~75 MtCO2e attributable to vegetation growth. As stated in the INDC, energy (other) emissions increase with population growth and waste emissions increase with GDP growth.

Forest degradation as proportion of total LULUCF emissions remains constant over the 2000-2025 period.

As of August 2015, most of the abatement was already delivered prior to 2015, as can be seen in the graph. We were not able to find any publicly available information on the methodologyGabon used to calculate forest degradation emissions (and abatement) from all drivers, on both managed and unmanaged lands.

The UNFCCC first recognised the importance of reducing emissions from forest degradation in Bali at COP 13 in 2007. Since then, forest degradation has been increasingly recognised as a key area to reduce emissions requirements for a 2°C pathway. While Gabon has put measures in place to protect the role of its forests in increasing carbon stocks, it has chosen to exclude this activity from its INDC.

The INDC includes a subsector of LULUCF which is a large source (forest degradation), but excludes another subsector which is a large sink (carbon in forest biomass). Further clarity is needed as to why some subsectors are excluded and the potential impact of accounting for forest degradation emissions, and given its significant contribution to Gabon's INDC target, a rating of the whole INDC was not possible.

Additionally, the INDC includes a subsector of LULUCF which is a large source (forest degradation), but excludes another subsector which is a large sink (carbon in forest biomass). Without evidence to corroborate Gabon's calculation of forest degradation emissions, and given its significant contribution to Gabon's INDC target, a rating of the whole INDC was not possible.

Emissions from the LULUCF sector

Emissions from the LULUCF sector are well above what is required to keep warming below 2°C. For all the INDCs except the EU the INDCs report forest degradation emissions as part of the LULUCF sector. However, as of August 2015, we were not able to find any publicly available information on the methodology Gabon used to calculate forest degradation emissions (and abatement) from all drivers, on both managed and unmanaged lands.

While other INDCs have addressed individual elements of forest degradation (by accounting for forest degradation), the first three INDCs did not establish forest degradation as a separate subsector. In 2001 and 2007 the IPCC did not recommend forest degradation and deforestation as separate subsectors. The most recent report, however, recommends forest degradation be treated as a separate subsector (e.g. In the Forest Sector and LULUCF subsector of the Fifth Assessment Report). Hence, while there is now an improved understanding of the importance of forest degradation, there are still uncertainties as to how to account for this in reporting. Since the INDC does not distinguish between forest degradation and other types of LULUCF emissions, it was not possible to remove the effect of forest degradation emissions from Gabon's INDC.

Gabon did not provide information in its INDC to support its calculation of emissions from forest degradation (such as choice of methodology, source of historical data, and/or a forest reference baseline). Forest degradation is still an emerging area of emissions abatement, and it is important that all INDCs provide much clearer and more comprehensive information on emissions from forest degradation, and how they account for these emissions, as well as how they account for the impact of any policy measures they have put in place to protect forest stocks.

Assessment

Forest and other carbon stocks

While it is expected that Gabon will make efforts to protect its forest carbon stock, it is not prescriptive. While other INDCs have addressed individual elements of forest degradation (by accounting for forest degradation) the INDC did not include any information on the methodology used to calculate historical carbon stocks.

Emissions from the LULUCF sector

Gabon reported forest degradation emissions (and abatement) from all drivers, on both managed and unmanaged lands. These emissions accounted for 87% of total LULUCF emissions in 2000. The Forest Stocks Assessment Report estimated that the reduction in forest carbon stocks in Gabon is equivalent to 3% above 2000 levels across all covered sectors, or a 72% increase if LULUCF emissions are excluded. We did not provide an overall assessment of Gabon's INDC as we did not have sufficient information to do so.