



## Co-Creating Change

### Communication on Progress 2021

INTERHOLCO is committed to and upholds the 10 Principles of the United Nations Global Compact focusing on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption as well as the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises. The economic success that puts the human being at the heart of the action is then transformed into a positive force for change.

With an annual turnover of EUR 53 million (2020 data) and more than 1'000 workers (2020 data), INTERHOLCO is a leading supplier of 'Sustainable Hardwood – Made in Africa', handling the entire supply chain, from forest to industrial processing and delivery to more than 45 countries worldwide. Through its subsidiary company, [Industrie Forestière de Ouesso](#) (IFO), INTERHOLCO responsibly manages a 1.16 million hectares (11'600 km<sup>2</sup>) FSC-certified forest concession in the Sangha department of the Republic of Congo (Ngombé), [with 0% forest loss](#) (2020 data, contribution to UN SDG 15).

INTERHOLCO currently transforms about 85% of the wood it harvests in the Republic of Congo. Products include logs, sawn timber, laminated timber scantlings as well as kiln-dried and planed goods in more than 20 wood species. The company continues its industrial expansion and investment towards further transformation processes and product diversity (contribution to **UN SDG 8**).

[In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#), woodworking continued as an essential activity. Occupational health and safety gained even greater importance. In March 2020, INTERHOLCO launched an international fundraising campaign to mobilise much-needed resources, which allowed the company to acquire life-saving medical equipment (contribution to **UN SDG 3** and **UN SDG 8**), mobilizing local and international know-how and joining forces with NGOs, in particular, to support local communities and indigenous peoples (contribution to **UN SDG 11** and **UN SDG 16**).

At the same time, INTERHOLCO invested in new infrastructure: a new garage, new premises for wood recuperation and also, new premises to increase the production of finger-jointed laminated scantlings (contribution to **UN SDG 9**), a high performing wood product that is in high demand on the European market. Using more and more of every tree, INTERHOLCO searches ways to minimize ecological waste (contribution to **UN SDG 12**). Coupled with reduced impact harvesting techniques and river-rail transport preferred over road transport, INTERHOLCO is able to reduce its carbon emissions (contribution to **UN SDG 13**). Its wood products are verified sustainable according to the principles and criteria of FSC certification (contribution to **UN SDG 15**). Also, they are renewable, recyclable, carbon positive and naturally durable (contribution to **UN SDG 11**). Based on the design or construction project, INTERHOLCO's wood products may be used without treatment even in exterior use, including in direct contact with ground or sea water (contribution to **UN SDG 14**). This helps to prolong their life: wood can be used safely, again and again, in many different forms, effectively catalyzing a circular economy (contribution to **UN SDG 11**).

Between June 2020 and June 2021, INTERHOLCO partnered with government representatives of the Republic of Congo to align environmental protection and forest management, resulting in a project on carbon credits (contribution to **UN SDG 13** and **UN SDG 15**); [with AFD on a landscape approach project in Northern Congo](#), aiming to involve the local communities and indigenous people in forest protection (contribution to **UN SDG 10** and **UN SDG 15**); with WWF, looking to make animal protection, traditional lifestyles and forest harvesting come together in the '[Forests Forward](#)' project (contribution to **UN SDG 11**, **UN SDG 15** and **UN SDG 17**).

In 2020, INTERHOLCO paid 6,3 Million EUR in taxes to the local administration. Tax amounts are transparently reported on, via the EITI initiative. Internal anti-corruption trainings ensure that all employees and suppliers have the same understanding of the company's Code of Conduct, pursuant to INTERHOLCO's anti-bribery and corruption policy. All legal documentation is accessible on the Open Timber Portal managed by the World Resources Institute (WRI), [where INTERHOLCO leads](#) in terms of transparency. A grievance mechanism is in place to improve the quality of the company's operations (contribution to **UN SDG 16**).

2021 marks the fifth year in a row that INTERHOLCO leads [SPOTT's 2021 transparency assessment of 100 timber companies worldwide](#), based on transparent data and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments that are publicly available.

To take an in-depth look at INTERHOLCO's stakeholder ('ALLIANCE') approach as well as at the forest of solutions that the ALLIANCE delivers, please see [our Sustainability Report 2020](#), in accordance-core with the GRI guidelines: <https://bit.ly/IHC-ALLIANCE>

To monitor INTERHOLCO's performance based on FSC principles and criteria in an environmental, social and economic landscape, please refer to [our FSC Monitoring Report 2020: FSC Monitoring Report 2020](#)

**To check our data and financials** [INTERHOLCO's Facts and Figures 2020-2014](#)

We can only succeed when we engage with a large alliance of partners, such as employees, local communities, indigenous peoples, government representatives, researchers, scientists, donors, trade federations, international organizations, NGOs, civil society, the construction sector and even journalists. We exchange with our stakeholders on a regular basis, inviting them to take an active role in reviewing our performance, setting goals and integrating remarks by critical voices in our decision-making. Their needs, expectations and concerns need to be listened to and their expertise, mobilized, to keep giving value to forests whilst protecting them. This includes, mobilizing suppliers, customers and end consumers, empowering them to co-create change in the Republic of Congo, where our production site is based.

Baar, 02/07/21

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