

Togo

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Location and area

Togo is a republic in west Africa, bordered on the north by Burkina Faso, on the east by Benin, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Ghana. Togo extends about 550 km in a northern-southern direction and ranges from about 40 to 130 km in width. The country has an area of 56,785 km². (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

A narrow, low-lying coastal belt in the south of Togo contains a series of inland lagoons. To the north lies a plateau region that increases in elevation from about 60 m in the south to about 425 m to the northeast. A central chain of hills, the Akwapim-Togo Ranges, extends across the country from southeast to northwest. They have an average elevation of about 700 m and reach a maximum height of 986 m at Mount Agou in the southwest. To the north of the hills lies a plateau drained by the River Oti; the terrain increases in elevation and becomes more rugged to the northwest. The River Mono and its tributaries drain much of the southern part of the country. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

The climate of Togo is tropical. Average annual temperatures range from 27° C on the coast to 30° C in the north. The south has two rainy seasons, from April to July and from October to November. The north has one rainy season (April to July) and receives nearly all of its annual precipitation (875 mm) during this period. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

Mangrove swamps are found in the coastal regions of Togo, and tropical forests occur in the southwest. Savannah vegetation predominates in the rest of the country. About 40 % of the land is arable. Livestock raising is important on the northern plateau. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

Markov et al. (1988) reports on the occurrence of peatlands at the Lagoon of Lomé with peat layers up to 1,5 meter. The presence of peat is also reported by Mobbs (1998), based on Ministry of Mines, Energy, and Water Resources (1995). Edohr (2001) recently analysed peat from Togo mangroves.

The EU has agreed to subsidise a diversification of Togo's mining sector and plans a study on the peat reserves of the coastal basin (African Business January 1998, www.africasia.com/icpubs/ab/jan98/abcf0102.htm).

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Togo and 815 km² of gley soils.

Mire and peatland losses

Benneh et al. (1996) reports open peat mining in littoral zones in Togo.

Still to be checked:

Dubois, G. & Dubois, C. 1939. Caractères micropaléobotaniques d'une tourbe de Togo. Comptes rendus des Sc. De l'Ac. des Sc. T. 208.