

Recovering (eco-) climatological data from Belgian colonial archives

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Agricultural Research in the Democratic Republic of Congo dates back to the beginning of the Belgian colonization. From 1885 to 1962, many generations of researchers worked in Central Africa. With a network of 26 research stations, the Institut National d'Etudes Agronomique du Congo Belge (INEAC), was **the largest tropical agricultural research institute in Africa until 1960.**

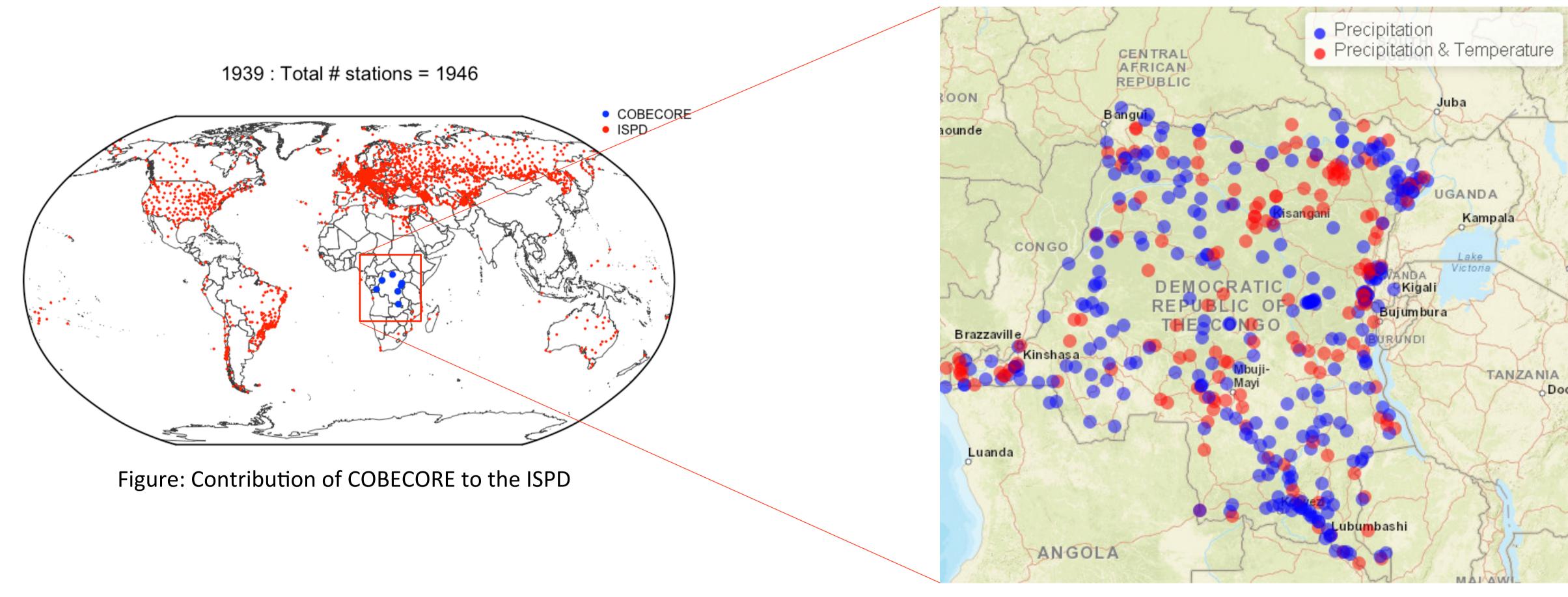


Figure: A map of the meteorological stations in the DRC in 1939

The COBECORE project (cobecore.org) aims to establish baseline measurements necessary for long-term (retrospective) ecological and climatological research by valorising three unexplored historical data collections: aerial photographs over the Congo Basin, climate data & leaf traits from herbarium specimens.

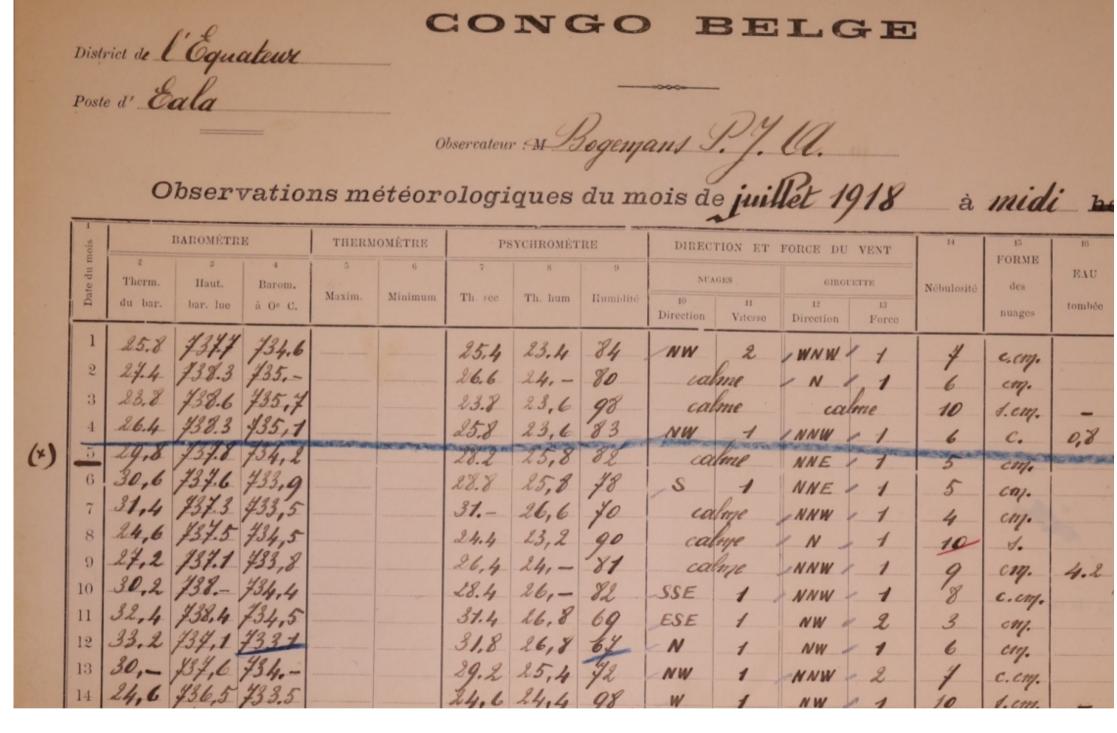
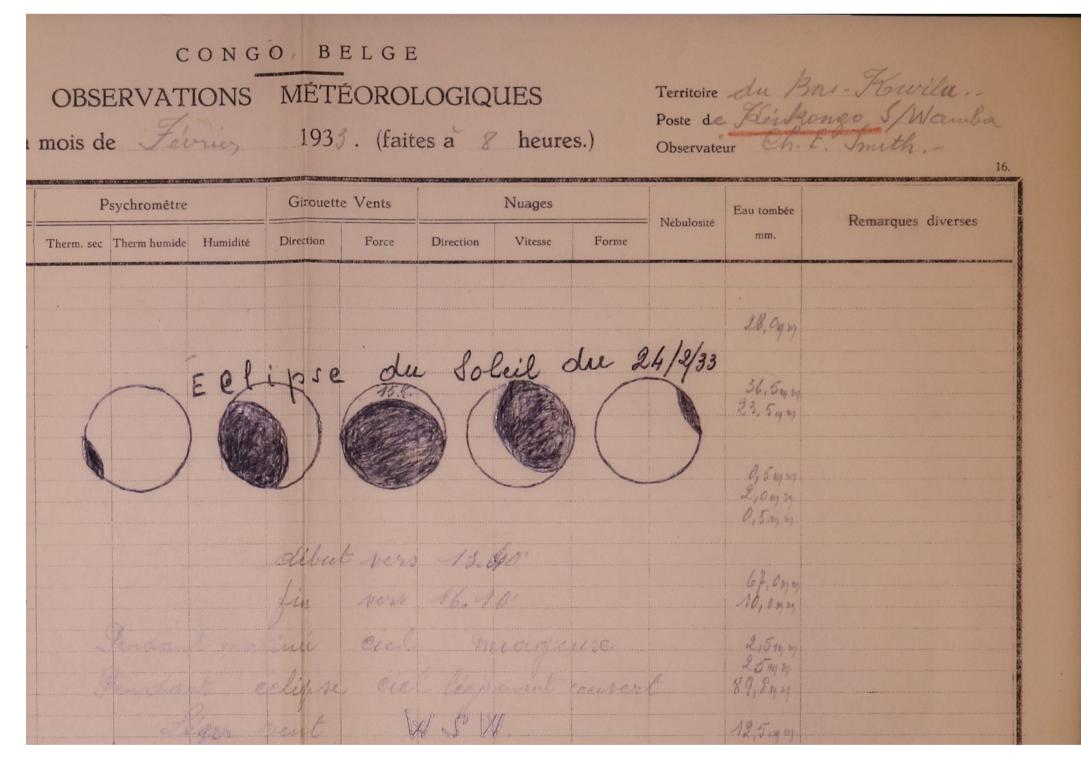
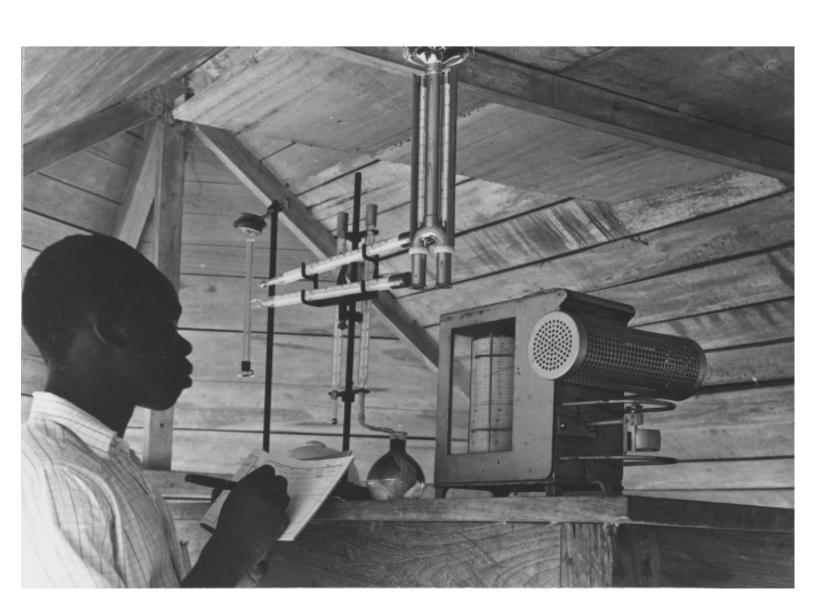


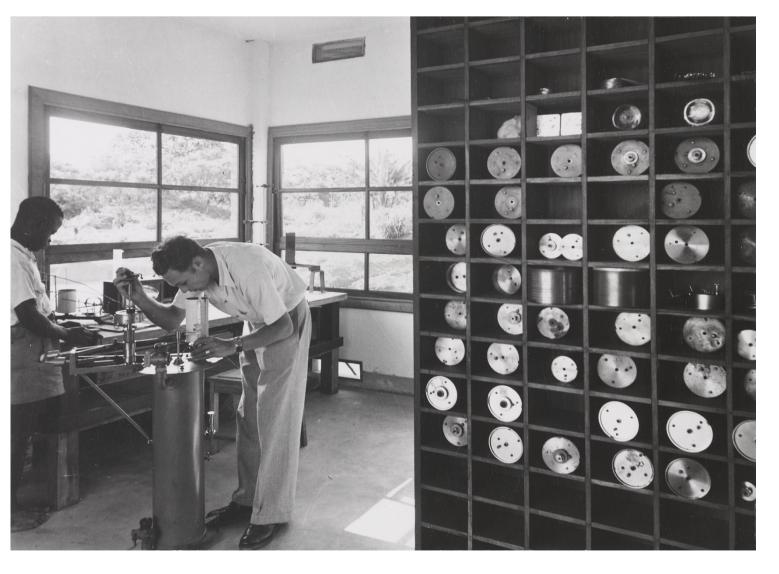
Image of climate records from Eala, 1918 © State Archives (COBECORE).



Solar eclipse 24 February 1933 © State Archives (COBECORE)



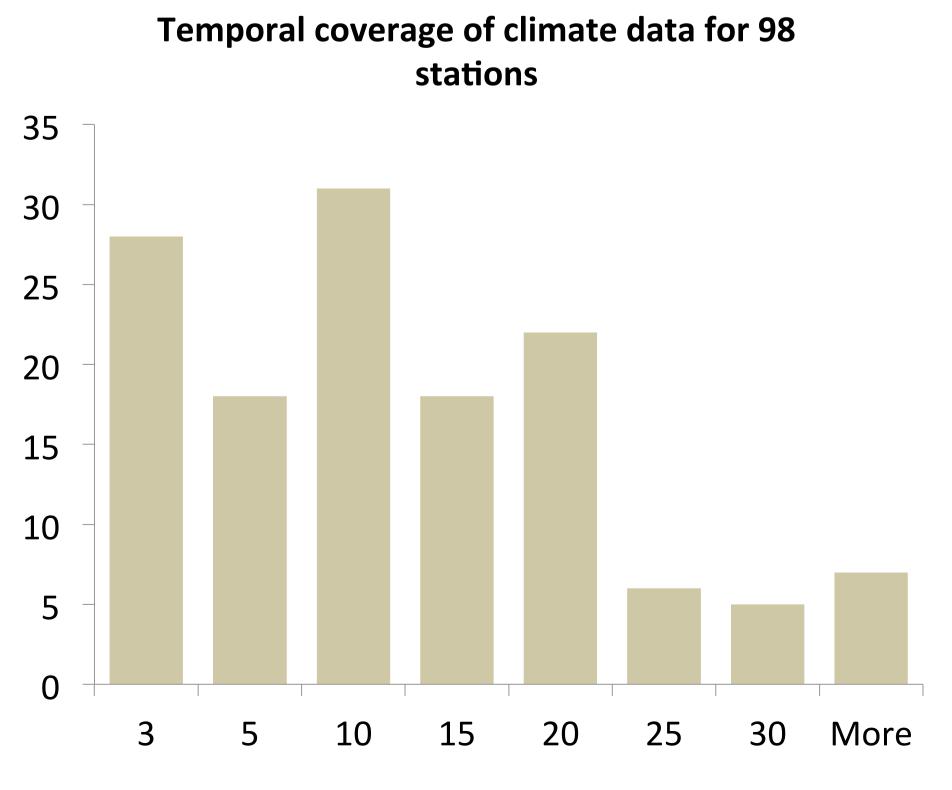
A climate observer records measurements from a thermohygrograph © RMCA



Yangambi, INEAC head quarters: in the lab, checking instruments for the climate stations © RMCA

So far, we have scanned 50% of the available climate records in the Congo Basin for the time period 1901-1962.

We select records that include at least rainfall and temperature data. In total: 98 stations or 12434 scans of climate data sheets. 20



Graph: (y) number of stations with (x) years of climate data scanned 16/10/2017









