

19th CAFI Executive Board Meeting - Public Report

19-20 OCTOBER (PART I) & 23-24 NOVEMBER (PART II) 2021



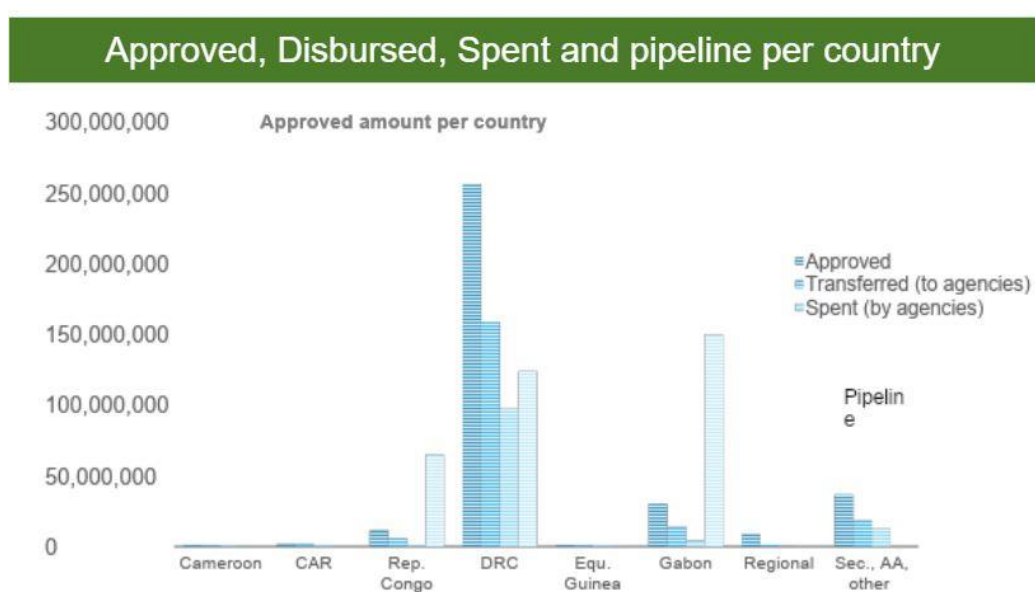
Agenda

Part I of the virtual 19th CAFI Executive Board (EB) meeting dedicated its discussions almost entirely to [the new partnership agreement with DRC](#) to prepare for the high-level negotiations with the Congolese government prior to COP26. Funding needs of the ongoing programs as part of the first partnership were also discussed. Part II focused on programming and policy dialogue in the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Gabon, the Republic of Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. A discussion on the Central African Republic will be organized separately. General issues such as the Secretariat's growing capacity needs, access to the Trust Fund for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), a project development facility to fast track program grants, and the CAFI presidency were also on the agenda. Lastly, external events and the next EB meeting were discussed.

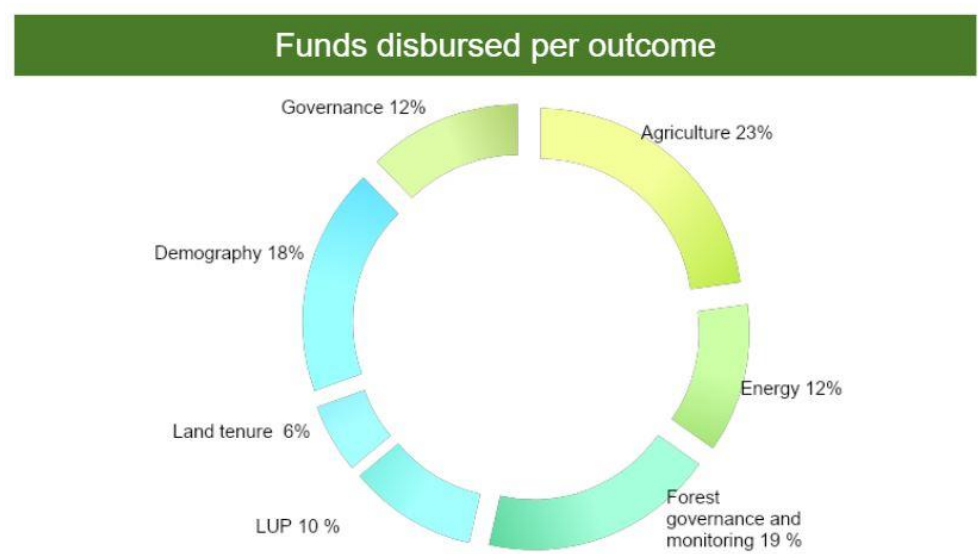
Results & general issues

CAFI Trust Fund status based on [CAFI's 2020 annual report](#)

- Country allocations: DRC (74%), Gabon (8.7%) the Republic of Congo (3.3%), Regional (2.5%), the Central African Republic (0.5%), Cameroon (0.3%), Equatorial Guinea (0.3%), the CAFI Secretariat and the Administrative Agent (10.5%).



- 🌳 Disbursement per outcome: agriculture (23%), forest governance (19%), demography (18%), energy (12%), governance (12%), land use planning (10%) and land tenure (6%).



Access to the CAFI Trust Fund for INGOs

The CAFI Secretariat is preparing an assessment framework to allow INGO's that meet financial, social, and environmental safeguards requirements to receive funding from CAFI. CAFI's Terms of Reference were updated to reflect this new funding modality.

Project development facility

To accelerate the programming process and ensure high quality programs a project development facility was set up to provide feasibility grants up to 500k US\$ per grant for expressions of interest approved by the EB.

CAFI Presidency

Germany offered to extend its Presidency of the CAFI Executive Board until the end of 2022, which was noted with great pleasure by the EB.

Regional updates

A Call for expressions of interest was launched in April 2021 to develop a portfolio of projects with operators that have demonstrated results in the area of innovative agriculture. The Board discussed 15 submissions and approved preparatory grants for Farm Africa (431 K) and One Acre Fund (up to 500 K). The Board also pre-selected submissions from Proforest, the Group for Research and Technology Exchanges (GRET) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and asked these to submit a technical and financial proposal by 31 January 2022 for further evaluation.

Country updates

1. The Democratic Republic of Congo – signing of a new partnership agreement

The discussion with the Congolese government were organized with the Cabinets of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Environment. Following discussions both prior to and during the Board meeting, the government and CAFI concluded a Letter of Intent (LOI) with commitments across 8 thematic pillars (agriculture, forests, energy, land use planning, land tenure, mining, demography, and governance). More precisely, DRC agreed to concrete commitments in two areas:

- a) *Stabilized forest cover/max reduction in forest cover change;*
 - 🌳 Stabilize annual forest cover loss and compensate forest cover loss through restoration/agroforestry by using data from [the National Forest Monitoring Program \(SNSF\)](#)
 - 🌳 Maximum annual average loss of 667 867 ha/year, an average to be revised by end of 2023
 - 🌳 Revise the Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) by the end of 2022
- b) *Political commitments to achieve forest cover commitments;*
 - 🌳 Define High Value Forest (HVF) and refrain from conducting industrial agriculture in these areas, but in priority towards savanna areas, and integrate HVF and peatlands into land use planning (LUP) processes and plans
 - 🌳 Publish land use concessions contracts annually (agriculture, forestry, mines, oil)
 - 🌳 Establish arbitration process for conflicting land-use
 - 🌳 Legal review of all concessions >5 ha in four pilot provinces by 2024 and three more by 2026
 - 🌳 Have 30% of national territory under some form of protection status
 - 🌳 Review logging concessions by mid-2022 and cancel illegal concessions by the end of 2022
 - 🌳 Obtain a 10% decrease of the share of unsustainable fuelwood in two main urban centers by 2025 and by 50% in six centers by 2031
 - 🌳 Publish all logging concession contracts by the end of 2022
 - 🌳 Establish 2.5 M ha local community forest concessions by 2025
 - 🌳 Adopt the population policy/strategy for 2030

A Joint Statement approving the Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between the DRC President Félix Tshisekedi and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson at COP26, [securing 500 million USD in commitments from 2021-2025](#). A partnership dialogue will be organized annually, and an independent evaluation carried out in 2026 to potentially renew the partnership for five years. Next steps include agreeing on the partnership's governance arrangements and programming framework (including geographical prioritization) to launch new programs by November 2022.

To ensure the continuity of ongoing programs that are part of the previous partnership agreement, it was decided to transfer nearly 12 M USD to [the National REDD+ Fund \(FONAREDD\)](#).

2. The Republic of Congo – annual partnership review and a growing program portfolio

The discussions centered around the programming portfolio and pipeline, as well as the annual partnership review. The Board welcomed Rosalie Matondo, Minister of Forest Economy, to a high-level dialogue where she presented the country's perspectives of the partnership with CAFI. The Minister recalled the Republic of Congo's commitments to preserve the environment, advance a low-carbon sustainable economy and improve social considerations for communities, in particular those living within or near logging concessions. The UN Resident Coordinator highlighted his role in aligning UN agency support with country-defined priorities, and thus with objectives of the partnership between the Republic of Congo and CAFI.

a) Annual partnership review (2019-2021)

Two of the 2019-2021 milestones of the Letter of Intent (LOI) have been achieved, three are partially achieved and another three are outstanding. Recommendations to accelerate implementation were addressed to relevant parties, in particular on management of logging concessions, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's (EITI) compliance process, implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and private sector engagement. Other key challenges identified were the need to increase the performance of the partnership's governance bodies, involve line ministries in program management, and reduce delays in the programming process. Several issues were discussed as opportunities for future programming.

b) Programming portfolio and pipeline

During the programming sessions, the Board approved a 1 M USD *program on Improved Cook Stoves* by the NGO Initiative-Développement (ID). AFD updated the Board on the status of the *two Land-use Planning (LUP) programs*, which will be launched during the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2022.

3. Gabon – progress and results-based program development

During a high-level dialogue with the Gabonese government, programming results were presented by the National Climate Council, while the Minister of Water, Forests, the Sea, and Environment, Lee White, updated the Board on programming developments implementing the government's vision under the results-based financing agreement.

[The National land use planning and monitoring \(CAFI 1\) program](#) was suspended in June 2021 but resumed its activities in October. Main upcoming activities include training teams for participatory mapping and methodological test missions for [the National Parks Agency \(ANPN\)](#), as well as methodology development and satellite mapping of villages for [the Gabonese Agency for Space Studies and Observation \(AGEOS\)](#).

[The Expansion of Protected Areas and Optimization of Land Use for Food Crops \(CAFI 2\) program](#) advances well. In the agricultural component, the laboratory construction is 70% completed and recruitment is 95% completed. As for the land use planning component, recruitment and preparation of field activities will be launched at the end of 2021 or the start of 2022. Due to the delay in signing [the Forest Certification \(CAFI 2\) program](#) document, the program was [transferred](#) to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in October 2021. The new program document was approved.

Programming under the results-based financing agreement (CAFI 3): Gabon plans to submit its NDC in December 2021 and the 2018-2021 results report is being prepared. Five CAFI 3 programs are being developed. A forestry program will be merged with [the CAFI 2 certification program](#). The second program covers forest monitoring of protected areas and a third will support botanical gardens and urban tree planting. The fourth is a long-term forest and ecological monitoring program based on a database of CO2 emissions and their impact on ecosystems. A fifth program covers institutional capacity building and climate governance support. The project documents have all been pre-validated at Ministry level and will be validated and shared by early 2022.

4. Cameroon – political dialogue towards a partnership agreement with CAFI

During a high-level dialogue, Alamine Ousmane Mey, Cameroon's Minister of Economy, Planning and Land-Use Planning (MINEPAT), iterated the country's intention to enter into a partnership with CAFI and willingness to transform its economy by 2030. Sustainable-land use is one of the government's key priorities. The Board and the government agreed that to successfully set up a new partnership, alignment with existing government structures and sectoral strategies, coordination between technical and financial partners, and enforcement of local land-use plans would need to be ensured with CAFI's support.

5. Equatorial Guinea – advances towards policy dialogue support

FAO is supporting *Land Use Planning program*, whose support has led to a draft decree now subject to legal consultation and high-level political approval. Under the FAO support to the *National Forestry Inventory program*, a tree-species database has been developed and 38 sampling units have been measured. CAFI's Call for expressions of interest on policy dialogue support and exploratory studies will be launched in early January 2022.

Events & next Executive Board meeting

Two CAFI events were organized at COP26 at the COMIFAC Pavilion dedicated to the Congo Basin; the launch of CAFI's partnership with IUCN on 2 November and a presentation of early results of the FAO regional drivers of deforestation study financed by CAFI.




The XV World Forestry Congress (WFC) will take place from 2-6 May 2022 in South Korea. Next EB sessions will be coordinated with the WFC and the next meeting of the CBFP.

Executive Board decisions

Adopted decisions:

-  [DRC: Letter of Intent](#)
-  [DRC: funding allocations for the 1st partnership](#)
-  [Capacity of the CAFI Secretariat](#)
-  [CAFI Presidency](#)
-  [IUCN Access to the CAFI Trust Fund](#)
-  [RoC: Innovative Agriculture - Farm Africa and One Acre Fund](#)
-  [RoC: Improved cookstove - Lituka program](#)
-  [DRC: Cost efficiency assessment of CAFI programs](#)
-  [Gabon: Approval of TNC's access to the CAFI Trust Fund](#)
-  [Gabon: Approval of TNC program](#)
-  [RoC: Innovative Agriculture - second appraisal](#)

Pending decisions (to be adopted intersessionally)

-  Project development facility
-  [Approval of safeguards assessment framework for INGOs](#)
-  [CAFI Secretariat project document](#)