

Central African Forest Initiative

MPTF TRUST FUND



MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

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Acronyms

AA	Administrative Agent
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBFP	Congo Basin Forest Partnership
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
EB	Executive Board
EoI	Expression of Interest
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTR	Fund Transfer Request
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
ICA	International Cooperation Agency
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LOI	Letter of Intent
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOP	Manual of Operations
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTF(-O)	Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Office)
NIF	National Investment Framework
NUNO	Non-UN Organisation
PES	Payment for environmental services
PRODOC	Project Document
PUNO	Participating UN Organisation
SAA	Standard Administrative Agreement
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
ToR	Terms of Reference

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WB AA	Administrative Agreement signed between MPTF and the World Bank

Introduction and purpose of the Manual of Operations (MOP)

The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) was created in 2015 during the United Nations General Assembly through the signature of the CAFI Declaration by the Ministers of partner and donor countries. A UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was also set up at the same time.

The purpose of this MOP is to summarise relevant operational rules and guidelines of the trust fund. The MOP complements the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the trust fund and is approved and modified by the EB. Updates to the MOP may concern the core text or appear in one or more of its Annexes. In case of contradictions between the provisions of the ToR and the MOP, the text of the ToR prevails.

1. Rules concerning trust fund governance

The ToR of the CAFI trust fund state that:

The management of the CAFI MPTF is carried out at three levels: partnership coordination & fund operations (Executive Board and Secretariat) serving the overall initiative, fund design and administration via the MPTF Office (MPTF-O), and fund implementation (Implementing Organisations, or IOs). In order to ensure flexibility, the governance arrangements combine nimble oversight by an Executive Board (EB) with country-specific arrangements, either through the existing relevant MPTF-administered national fund or directly national coordination structures. A small Secretariat ensures the operational support for the CAFI MPTF. The CAFI MPTF is administered by the MPTF-O. The fund's IOs are UN Organisations (UNOs); International Cooperation Agencies (ICAs) and Non-Governmental Organisations, also referred as NUNOs (Non-UN Organisations), the World Bank (WB) and national government entities.

1.1. Executive Board rules and procedures

The CAFI ToR describe the functions of the EB, the rights of its members and observers and other relevant issues. These Rules and Procedures below complement the provisions on the EB in the CAFI ToR.

Membership

On membership, the CAFI ToR state:

The contributors, signatories of the Joint Declaration, are eligible to be members of the Executive Board. In addition, the UNDP on behalf of Participating UN Organisations is a member of the EB. A rotational system will be in place if more than one Participating UN Organisation is willing to participate as a member. The MPTF Office is an ex-officio member.

Only board members that have directly contributed to the CAFI MPTF and the UN board member will be granted voting rights for decisions concerning the trust fund and in particular on its financial allocations. In case a contributor who is an EB member has earmarked its contribution to one or several specific partner countries of CAFI, this contributor would sit without voting rights when financial allocation decisions relating to other partner countries are made by the EB.

Observers

Observers can participate in the sessions of the EB but without voting rights.

The WB, FAO and the facilitator of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) are invited to participate as permanent observers.

When ICAs participate as advisors to EB members, they do not do so as observers. In these cases, the rules regarding the conflict of interest apply to ICAs.

Other ICAs implementing CAFI funds, other IOs, NUNOs or others, and partners can be invited on a case-by-case basis to each meeting or to selected sessions.

The EB may decide to invite, on a case-by-case basis, potential contributors who have expressed interest in signing the Joint Declaration to attend a meeting of the EB or some of its sessions as ad-hoc observers.

The EB may invite, on a case-by-case basis, partner countries, IOs or other entities to attend a meeting of the EB or some sessions as ad-hoc observers.

Nominations and attendance

Members, partner countries and observers communicate their representatives to the Secretariat by email. Members and observers may nominate alternate representatives by email at least five working days prior to the EB meeting.

Members, partner countries and observer representatives may attend EB meetings in person or remotely (by video/teleconference).

Convening of meetings

The meetings of the EB are convened by the Secretariat by sending the proposed agenda:

1. For the date decided during the preceding meeting, or
2. For a reasonable date if requested by any member of the EB and agreed by the Chair of the EB to discuss an urgent and/or outstanding matter.

The Secretariat makes the meeting agenda and documents available two weeks before the date of the EB meeting, or as soon as they are available in the case of an extraordinary meeting, as described in point 2 above.

Quorum

The minimum number of EB members required to be present (in person or remotely) to conduct the meeting and make decisions (quorum) is half of the EB members plus one EB member. The same rule applies *mutatis mutandis* for funding allocation decisions when not every EB member has a vote. The quorum is verified at the beginning of each meeting.

Decision-making

The EB may decide to make decisions by email. This can be decided during an EB meeting or requested by a member of the EB or the Secretariat between EB meetings. In either case, the Secretariat will send the document(s) requiring an EB decision by email two weeks before the deadline before which EB members can approve the decision or request a meeting to discuss the document(s). In case of non-objection, the decision is considered to be approved by the EB members.

EB decisions that allocate funds are signed by the UN Board member and the EB Chair after their adoption.

The Secretariat ensures that the decisions taken by the EB are duly recorded and promptly communicated to the members and observers of the EB.

Conflict of Interest

Prior to consideration by the board of a National Investment Framework (NIF) or a programme of a partner country, if an EB member, observer or its affiliate or employee is engaging in the following activities, the EB member or observer shall disclose such involvement to the Secretariat through an email or other written means and the Secretariat will accordingly inform other EB members and observers:

1. direct support to the preparation and/or implementation of the NIF or project/programme which is under consideration by the EB
2. direct support to the consultation process leading up to the endorsement of the NIF or national programme by the partner country.

If the EB member or observer fails to disclose the relevant involvement, the EB will determine the appropriate action to take.

The EB determines whether the involvement of the EB member and/or observer referred to above is such that the EB member and/or observer making the disclosure should recuse itself from the deliberation, discussion and/or decision by the EB with respect to the NIF or national programme concerned and will advise such EB member and/or observer accordingly.

Before each meeting of the EB, the Secretariat will circulate a form to all participating EB members to clarify their potential conflict of interest in relation to specific sessions.

1.2. Secretariat

As per the ToR of CAFI, a Secretariat supports the CAFI trust fund and is based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is composed of staff specifically recruited for this purpose by the UN MPTF-O and it draws on the expertise of the IOs (WB, FAO or other ICAs, etc.) on a case-by-case basis.

Roles and responsibilities

The Secretariat provides the following support functions:

1. Support the programming cycle.
 - 1.1. Support the development, revision and submission of NIFs including the facilitation of dialogue between the country, the EB members and observers.
 - 1.2. Organise independent reviews of NIFs.
 - 1.3. Support strategic dialogue between the country and the CAFI EB, including for example:
 - 1.1.1. support to the development of the Letter of Intent (LoI).
 - 1.1.2. support to other means of collaboration among the countries that are signatories to the Joint Declaration, as well as organisations relevant in the Central African region.
 - 1.2. Support the development and submission of project/programme documents and project/programme portfolio documents for countries for funding channelled directly from CAFI to the IOs, including:
 - 1.2.1. the facilitation of dialogue between partner countries and the CAFI EB.
 - 1.2.2. the completeness check of submitted documents.
 - 1.3. Support the assessment and approval of the project/programme documents funded through an MPTF-administered national fund by participating in the decision-making bodies as appropriate and decided by the EB.
 - 1.4. Organise independent evaluations of investment programmes for funding channelled directly from CAFI to the IOs.
 - 1.5. Organise the evaluation of the access of NUNOs to the fund, working with the MPTF-O.
 - 1.6. Prepare the investment strategy of the CAFI fund and update the EB regularly on items including co-financing by GCF, blended models or other co-financing, result based payments, etc.
 - 1.7. Develop a fundraising strategy and support its implementation.
 - 1.8. Prepare the annual cash management¹ plan.
 - 1.9. Approve Fund Transfer Requests (FTR) and sign approved project/programme documents on behalf of the CAFI EB after approval by the EB.

¹ Based on the trust fund balance, commitments signed and the pipeline.

- 1.10. Approve project preparation grants as per CAFI's ToR and the relevant EB decision approving the terms of reference of the call for Expressions of Interest (EoI) or call for ideas, and report back to the EB on approved grants.
2. Support Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).
 - 2.1. Support the EB in the MEL of the achievement of the milestones in the LoI.
 - 2.2. Participate in the monitoring of the portfolio for projects/programmes funded through an MPTF-administered national fund.
 - 2.3. Organise and implement the Quality Assurance Plan under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) framework for cash transfers to other IOs.
 - 2.4. Prepare progress reporting (annual, provisional and final) by consolidating IO reports through the M&E scorecards and other tasks specified in the MEL Policy.
 - 2.5. Review financial reporting (annual and final) by IO reports through the M&E scorecards.
 - 2.6. Monitoring project/programme delivery rate and report back to the EB performance.
 - 2.7. Review and approve project budgetary revisions requested by IOs according to Section 5.4.
 - 2.8. Submit to the EB any budgetary revisions above 25% for participating UN Organisations (PUNOs) and 20% for NUNOs over the allocated total budget or if there are substantial changes in the project/programme document as described in Section 5.4 below.
 - 2.9. Organise independent verification of project/programmes with a land-use component (reforestation, agroforestry, agriculture, regeneration, or even conservation and sustainable management of forests), including projects with a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) component with a view to inform the Executive Board decisions regarding the disbursement of instalment (tranches) of funding and the possible renewal of projects.
 - 2.10. Approve instalments² of payments based on IO performance, project/programme documents and annual workplans approved by the EB (see section 4 on Reporting).
 - 2.11. Coordinate programmatic closure of fund and any potential request for project/programme extensions with the MPTF-O, the EB and IOs.
 - 2.12. Monitoring and risk management through the risk management dashboard.
 - 2.13. Gender aspect monitoring.
 - 2.14. Coordinate with IOs on reporting related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) by consolidating information in the reports provided by the IOs and by preparing quarterly updates to the EB based on feedback received from the IOs³.
 - 2.15. Coordinate with the IOs allegation reporting on misuse of funds as per the legal framework of the trust fund⁴, and consolidate information at the fund level from the reports provided by

² Instalments are annual payments released from the trust fund to the IOs based on project/programme documents and annual workplans approved by the EB.

³ See details under section Reporting for points 2.13 – 2.16

⁴ Legal arrangements described in the SAA, MOU, AA and the Framework Agreement.

the IOs and by preparing quarterly updates to the EB based on feedback received from the IOs.

- 2.16. Consolidate Cancún Safeguards reporting at the fund level as per the CAFI ToR.
- 2.17. Oversee the complaints management mechanism of the fund.
- 2.18. Consolidate information on complaints management mechanisms and whistleblower protection mechanisms of the IOs.
- 2.19. Organise mid-term and end-term independent evaluations of the fund's performance.
- 2.20. Oversee the development of the IT infrastructure for payment for environmental services (PES).
3. Organise EB meetings including the annual meetings to be held in partner countries, specifically:
 - 3.1. Prepare documents.
 - 3.2. Organise logistics.
 - 3.3. Prepare EB meeting reports.
 - 3.4. Document EB decisions.
 - 3.5. Other support to EB as requested by the EB Chair (strategic advice, preparing notes and briefings for communication, fund-raising, board decision or other purposes).
4. Other support tasks.
 - 4.1. Support MPTF-O in the preparation and update of agreements between IOs and CAFI.
 - 4.2. When called upon by the EB, represent CAFI (attend meetings, side-events, regional fora).
 - 4.3. Support fund-raising efforts of the CAFI MPTF with the MPTF-O and the CAFI EB.
5. Share knowledge and information.
 - 5.1. Liaise with:
 - 5.1.1. EB members.
 - 5.1.2. Countries affiliated to the Joint Declaration.
 - 5.1.3. Potential partners.
 - 5.1.4. Civil society and non-governmental stakeholders in Congo Basin countries.
 - 5.1.5. IOs.
 - 5.1.6. Other relevant stakeholders and interested parties.
 - 5.2. Maintain website and other communication tools.
 - 5.3. Support knowledge management and South-South cooperation as set out in the Joint Declaration.
6. Contract service providers and vendors.

7. Adaptive management: continuously update any tools and processes based on internal and external evaluations and requests from the EB.

2. Access to the Trust Fund

2.1. General provisions

According to the Terms of Reference, the Fund is implemented through four types of modalities, namely:

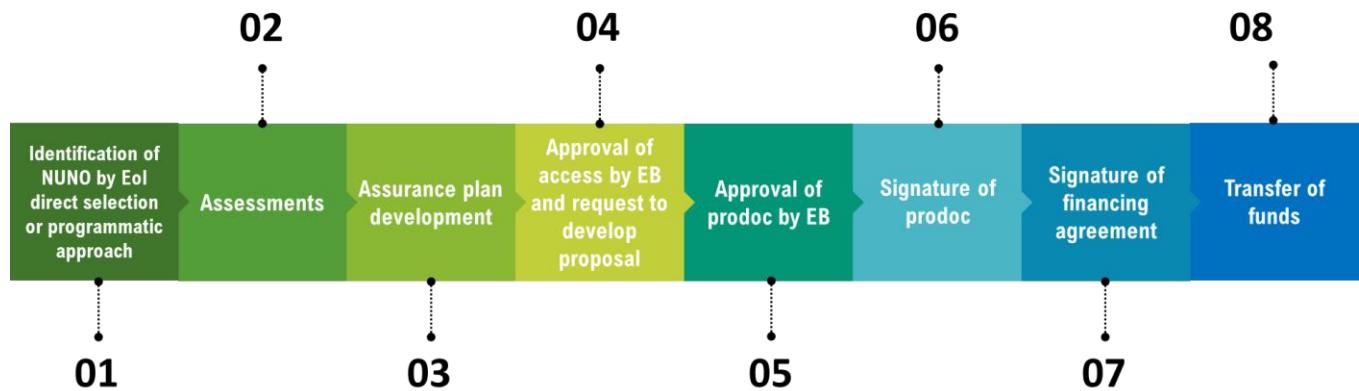
1. Participating UN Organisations (PUNOs),
2. The World Bank (WB),
3. Non-UN Organisations (or NUNOs). Non-UN organizations (NUNOs) can include international cooperation agencies, civil society organizations, including international and local non-governmental organizations.
4. National government entities, in the form of National Coordination Entities (NCEs) and Recipient National Entities (RNEs).

2.2. Access modalities for NUNOs

While UN agencies and WB have unconditional access, NUNOs can become direct implementing organisations only after having been granted access to the trust fund by the EB.

The process of granting access includes the following steps:

1. Identification of implementing organisation and assessment of its programmatic capacity,
2. Fiduciary and safeguards assessments (the allocation of feasibility grants requires only fiduciary assessments),
3. Quality Assurance Plan development,
4. Approval of access by the EB,
5. Approval of project/programme document,
6. Signature of project/programme document,
7. Signature of financing agreement by MPTF-O,
8. Transfer of funds.



2.2.1 Identification of the implementing organisation and assessment of its programmatic capacity assessment

According to the ToRs of the CAFI trust fund, implementing organisations can be identified through:

- a. direct selection if the programming framework does not recommend a call.
- b. a call for Expressions of Interest.
- c. a programmatic approach.

2.2.2. Assessments

Access to funds is conditional and granted based on the following assessments and criteria:

- (i) Completion of assessments on financial capacity (HACT); Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH); and Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES).
- (ii) Provision of at least one Attestation Letter issued from a Donor or UN Organisation attesting to the NUNO's satisfactory financial and programmatic management while implementing a grant in the last 3 years.
- (iii) Provision of legal proof of registration of the NUNO in the country of operation (host government).

A Summary guidance on access can be found in the attachments in both English and French (Annex 5).

Accelerated accreditation

Proof of accreditation and recommendations of the accreditation board of the following funds may result in an accelerated process of access to CAFI funds (i.e., a waiver of one or more assessments described below):

1. GCF

2. GEF
3. Adaptation Fund
4. Global Fund against Malaria, HIV and TB
5. EU Pillar assessments and other EB donor assessments

The results of any such evaluation must be shared with the CAFI Secretariat for conformity analysis.

Assessment on Financial Capacity (HACT)

CAFI applies the HACT Framework, more specifically the HACT micro assessment. This assesses the IO's financial management capacity (i.e. accounting, procurement, reporting, internal controls, etc.) to determine the overall risk rating and assurance activities.

The primary output of the HACT micro assessment is the overall risk rating related to cash transfers to IOs (low, moderate, significant or high). To have access to CAFI funds, NUNO IOs must obtain a 'low' rating from the micro assessment.

The HACT micro assessment is paid by CAFI and commissioned to a specialised third-party service provider to ensure independence and technical expertise, which in turn works with the IO to conduct the assessment.

If the NUNO being accredited already possesses a HACT micro assessment, and such assessment results are dated within past 24 months preceding the date of initiation of the access process, and where the NUNO risk rating is 'low,' CAFI may rely on the existing assessment and not undertake a new assessment.

Assessment on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)

NUNOs receiving CAFI funds must carry out the SEAH assessment during the access process following the established UN Protocol for SEAH requirements.

The [Protocol](#) outlines requirements for the UN and its implementing partners to ensure adequate safeguards and appropriate actions related to SEAH. This assessment evaluates organisational capacities regarding the prevention of SEAH, determines monitoring and support activities, and serves as a baseline for tracking progress, in line with the minimum standards of the UN.

The SEAH assessment is initiated by a self-assessment performed by the IO using the CAFI's SEAH Assessment Questionnaire (Annex 6). The answers and the respective supporting documents provided by the IO during the self-assessment are shared with a specialised third-party service provider to ensure independence and technical expertise, which reviews and compiles the results of the assessment.

To have access to CAFI funds, IOs must obtain, at a minimum, the total scoring of 6 out of 8 in the SEAH assessment.

If the NUNO being accredited already possess a SEAH Assessment, and such assessment results are dated within the 24 months preceding the date of the access process, and where the NUNO

risk scoring is between 6 to 8, the CAFI Secretariat may rely on the existing assessment and not undertake a new assessment.

Social and Environmental Safeguards Assessment

The list below provides an overview of the SES assessment process during the process of accessing CAFI funds. More detailed information can be found in Annex 7.

1. IO self-assessment: IOs compile evidence of their compliance and submit it to the CAFI Secretariat. The IOs complete the checklists in the self-assessment tool available in Annex 7.
2. Screening by CAFI Secretariat: The CAFI Secretariat screens the evidence provided by the potential IOs for clarity, completeness, and relevance. If necessary, the Secretariat requests prospective IOs amend or complement their submissions.
3. Expert assessment: CAFI relies on independent experts to assess whether prospective IOs meet the requirements set forth in the Assessment Tool. Should the expert assessment find that a prospective IO does not meet one or more of the requirements, the expert(s) may make recommendations on how it could achieve compliance.
4. Preparation of plans for addressing safeguard gaps as part of the Quality Assurance Plan: If the assessment finds that a prospective IO does not meet one or more of the assessment requirements, the IO develops and submits to the CAFI Secretariat a concrete, time-bound plan to achieve compliance, taking into account any expert recommendations. Should a prospective IO be required to present a time-bound plan, it should be reassessed against the relevant assessment requirements at a later date included in the plan. The Quality Assurance Framework template for the Social and Environmental Safeguards assessment can be found in the Annex 8.
5. Report to the EB: The CAFI Secretariat prepares a report on the findings of the assessment, including any potential IO plans for EB review and decision.

For selected IOs that do not have their own social and environmental policies and management systems/procedures, the EB can decide that the environmental and social safeguards conformity assessment will be undertaken, exceptionally, at the project level. In such cases, the IO shall commit to implementing the project in full compliance with the [UNDP's SES Policy](#), and put in place the procedures, tools and measures for social and environmental screening, assessment, and management, as required. As a first step, the organisation shall complete the UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) template and annex it to the project/programme document.

Compliance with the SES requirements is verified before approving access to CAFI funds. Furthermore, during implementation of the project or programme, the NUNO must implement the Quality Assurance Plan.

Persistent non-compliance with the SES requirements may lead to decision from the EB to discontinue the partnership with the NUNO.

2.2.3 Attestation Letter and Legal Registration

NUNOs must provide, at a minimum, one reference letter issued by a Donor or by a UN organisation, from which the NUNO has received funding, attesting to the organisation's satisfactory financial programme management over the three years preceding the date of the access process.

Additionally, all NUNOs must provide evidence on their valid legal registration with the relevant host national government. In case of regional programmes, the organisation must at minimum be registered in one of the CAFI partner countries. Exceptions to the requirement can be granted by the EB for preparatory grants for feasibility studies and project development.

2.2.4. Quality Assurance Plan

The Quality Assurance (QA) Plan is designed during the assessment process by the NUNO and the CAFI Secretariat. It is implemented by the NUNO, which is required to follow each recommendation in the Plan during the implementation of the project or programme, and report implementation to the EB.

The assurance activities will be listed in the QA plan originate from two sources, namely:

1. The recommendations from the MPTFO's risk review based on past Audits, the HACT micro assessment (financial controls) and the SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse) assessment. These recommendations are shared with the respective NUNOs during the accreditation process and the NUNOs update the CAFI Secretariat on the implementation of such recommendations.
2. The recommendations from the SES (Social and Environmental Safeguards) assessment, which are shared with the respective NUNOs, and a followed-up by CAFI Secretariat accordingly. NUNOs opting to use UNDP SESP (project-based approach) might be required to provide related-documents that condition the approval of the PRODOC.
3. Secondary micro assessments: As per MPTFO NUNO Framework all NUNOs must possess a valid micro assessment dated at a maximum 5 years prior to the access process and during the tranche payment processes. This means that HACT assessments will be repeated regularly, and any recommendations will feed into the QA Plan.
4. Complementary assurance activities for projects implemented by local/national non-governmental organizations.

More information about the QA process can be found in Annex 9.

The CAFI Secretariat reports on the compliance and performance of the Quality Assurance Plans from all NUNOs on an annual basis to the EB.

2.2.4. Access and Quality Assurance of National government entities

The aforementioned provisions regarding NUNO access, namely on HACT, SES and SEAH, apply equally to access of National government entities as per Annex 4 of the TORs. The CAFI Executive Board reserves the right to request additional due diligence assessment to compliment the HACT, SEAH and SES if deemed necessary.

2.2.5. Approval of access, project/programme development, agreements and transfer

In case of compliance with the access requirements, the EB confirms to the NUNO that it has been granted access to CAFI funds, via an access decision posted on CAFI's website for public access. Subsequently, the following steps are taken before any disbursement is made:

1. The EB invites the NUNO to develop a programme or project in the form of a 'Project/Programme Document' or 'PRODOC', using the established template in Chapter 4.1.2 of the present MOP.
2. Development, review and approval of a new PRODOC follow the procedures established in CAFI's ToR.
3. The PRODOC, as approved by the EB, is signed by the government representative, the IO and the Head of CAFI Secretariat (each with 15 working days after the approval of the programme). If the PRODOC is not signed within 15 days, the Secretariat can initiate the reallocation of the funding via the EB to another country (if the government has not signed the PRODOC) or to another IO (if the IO). In case of a PRODOC for a regional programme, it must be signed by the IO and the Head of CAFI Secretariat on behalf of the EB. Signature of government counterparts may apply if CAFI deems it necessary. The same timeline for signature applies.
4. Once an IO has been selected through an EB decision, the PRODOC is developed and jointly submitted to CAFI by the country and IO(s) taking into account following administrative requirements:
 5. The IO shall submit within 15 days after notification of selection by the EB a work plan detailing steps to develop the PRODOC. The duration for PRODOC elaboration shall not exceed 9 months unless there are exceptional circumstances to be justified by the IO. If PRODOC is not submitted within 9 months from the date of EB notification, the EB, in consultation with national counterparts, may re-allocate funding to another project.
 6. If a PRODOC is not approved by the CAFI EB after a second submission, the EB, in consultation with national counterparts, may re-allocate funding to another project. After the PRODOC is signed by all concerned parties, agreements are signed between MPTF-O and the IO.

7. When the agreements are signed, the CAFI Secretariat submits a transfer request to the MPTF-O, attaching the respective EB Decision approving the transfer of funds, the signed PRODOC and the agreements in order to process deposits to the IO's bank account.

3. Programming cycle

3.1. Investment phase project/programme cycle

3.1.1 Advances

As per MoU Section III para 4, UNOs can use their own funds to start implementation or prepare feasibility studies in advance of receipt of initial or subsequent transfers from the Fund Account. Such advances must be approved in an EB decision identifying the UNO to develop the project or programme (before the actual approval of the project or programme itself by the EB).

3.1.2 Project/programme approval

PRODOC templates can be found in Annex 10.

Before a CAFI PRODOC is assessed and submitted for approval, the IO must ensure that all sections of the PRODOC template are completed and that the following requirements are respected:

1. All requirements and orientations listed in EB decisions relevant to the project/programme have been addressed.
2. The breakdown of overall project/programme and CAFI only contributions – in USD – to the different Outcomes defined in CAFI's Results Framework has been included. The sum must be equal to the total project/programme Outputs costs calculated in the budget.
3. There is consistency between Outputs and activities presented in the narrative, results framework, work plan and budget.
4. There is consistency of the project/programme governance arrangements with institutional responsibilities and capacities, including CAFI and national entities responsible for coordinating the country/CAFI partnership.
5. Project/programme contributions to LoI milestones are described and time-bound.
6. An deployment schedule for project/programme operationalisation in the first year is provided and is consistent with project/programme work plan.
7. The budget by Outputs/activities and by UNDG categories are consistent and in compliance with rules provided in the budget template.
8. Disclosure of financial rules and regulations of the IO, including on audits and anti-corruption measures, as well as a procurement plan for services to be contracted for a value equal or above USD 100,000, including a description of the process that will be used to identify the provider.

9. Information on the expected destination of equipment and assets during implementation and at the end of the project/programme are provided.

10. The PRODOC has been reviewed with national counterparts. Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that a collaborative process has been undertaken to engage multiple stakeholders during the development phase and that comments received have been addressed.

3.1.3 Project/programme operationalisation

CAFI projects/programmes will become operational after following the steps below:

1. When the CAFI EB has approved a country/regional project/programme, the MPTF-O creates a project in the MPTF-O system (GATEWAY), recording EB approved allocations. A specific project webpage and factsheet are generated in the GATEWAY and populated using the project cover page.
2. A payment notification is sent to the IO by email once the transfer is processed by the MPTF-O. It includes transferred amount and the MPTF-O project identification number assigned to each specific project for the entire duration of the funding period.
3. To implement a CAFI-funded project, each IO must follow the approved PRODOC in accordance with its internal rules and procedures as per the agreements signed by the IO with MPTF-O.
4. The IOs establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent (AA) from the CAFI account. The MPTF-O project identification number must be referenced in the IO's system to ensure correct reporting of expenditure as per reporting guidelines. There must be a one-to-one mapping of expenditures between the MPTF-O project and the project on the IO's side to avoid co-mingling funds with other projects.
5. To ensure accurate mapping and future expenditure recording/reporting, the IOs follow the UNDG budget cost breakdown of the CAFI EB approved country/regional project/programme when establishing a project budget in their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
6. When the project is established in the ERP system of the IOs, they notify the Secretariat and share the UNDG budget cost breakdown to verify accurate mapping with approved PRODOC and MPTF data.

3.1.4 Project/programme implementation

CAFI is represented in the project or programme steering committees either through the Secretariat or by a donor representative. The representative reports back to the Secretariat after such meeting, and the secretariat consolidates the information received in a written update that is shared with the EB.

Each IO shall carry out its activities defined in the approved proposal in accordance with the regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to it, as described in section III and IV of the

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); and Sections III. 23.7, IVII. 4.1, IV. Of the Framework Agreement.

The CAFI Secretariat may interact with the IOs during the project/programme implementation phase for several purposes including but not limited to: to follow-up on decisions by the EB, to collect data, to organize the independent verification of project/programme results, to invite for capacity sessions or related meetings, etc.

4. Reporting

IOs of projects and programmes funded by CAFI have several reporting requirements which derive from the agreements signed between these organisations and the MPTF-O.

4.1. Financial Reports

Financial reporting requirements are determined by the MPTF-O and described in each agreement signed with the IOs. They may have different obligations depending on the type of IO.

IOs input their financial reports directly into the MPTF-O's platform UNEX, which is opened on a quarterly basis allowing respective submission of reports.

The expenses from the financial reports should be recorded as defined in the individual IO's financial rules and regulations.

4.1.1 Frequency of Reporting

4.1.1.1 For United Nations Organisations (UNOs)

Annual financial report: Covering the period of 01 January – 31 December, to be submitted by the IO directly to MPTF-O via the web-interface UNEX until 28 February of the following year.

In addition to the submission via UNEX, an electronic copy of the expenditure reports is to be submitted to the MPTF-O and the CAFI Secretariat, signed by the responsible IO representative in the country or region.

Final audited financial report: The final financial report is to be provided no later than five (5) months (31 May) after the end of the calendar year, when the financial closure of the activities in the PRODOC of each approved project or programme occurs.

4.1.1.2 For Non-UN Organisations (NUNOs)

Quarterly financial reports: These reports are to be submitted quarterly and cumulatively with reporting deadlines as set in Section V of the Framework Agreement signed with each NUNO. IOs submit the quarterly financial reports as described above: directly to MPTF-O via the web-interface UNEX, whilst sharing an electronic copy with the CAFI Secretariat.

4.1.2 Remarks on Financial Reporting

Regardless of the category of the recipient organisation, be it UNO or NUNO, certified final financial statements and final audited financial reports are requested to be submitted after the completion of the activities in the PRODOC of each approved project, including the final year of the activities in the PRODOC of each approved project.

4.2. Narrative Reports

Narrative reporting requirements are the same for all IOs.

Core to the reporting requirements for the narrative report to be submitted by the IOs is the application of Results-based Management (RBM) principles. Multi Partner Trust Funds such as CAFI apply the [United Nations Sustainable Development Group \(UNSDG\)'s Results-based management \(RBM\) methodology](#) to programming and reporting.

4.2.1 Frequency of Reporting

The following Narrative Reports must be submitted:

(4) **Annual Narrative Report**, to be submitted to the MPTF-O and the CAFI Secretariat no later than March 30, covering the period January 1 – December 31 of the previous year as well as the cumulative achievements of the previous years.

(ii) **A Semi-Annual Narrative Report**, to be submitted to the CAFI Secretariat no later than August 30, which focuses on the achievements of the first 6 months of the year as well as the cumulative achievements of the previous years.

(iii) **A Final Narrative Report** at the closure of the programme, after the completion of the activities in the PRODOC of each approved project, including the final year of the activities in the project document of each approved project, to be provided no later than four months (30 April) after the end of the calendar year in which the operational closure of the activities in the project document of each approved project occurs.

When relevant reporting shall include spatial data in line with the CAFI Spatial Reporting Guidelines. For payment for environmental services projects, narrative reports shall be streamlined and complemented by real-time, mobile-data and paper-less reporting through the CAFI PES

Impact	Outcome
Impact implies changes in people's lives. This might include changes in knowledge skills, behaviour, health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities. Such changes are positive or negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. Positive impacts should have some relationship to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), internationally agreed development goals, national development goals (as well as human rights as enshrined in constitutions), and national commitments to international conventions and treaties.	Outcomes represent changes in the institutional and behavioral capacities for development conditions that occur between the completion of output and the achievement of goals.
Outputs	Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a development intervention <i>within the control of the organization</i> . They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified.

Source: [United Nations Sustainable Development Group \(UNSDG\)'s Results-based management \(RBM\) methodology](#)

information management tool. This practice will be adapted to other types of projects/programmes and progressively scaled up as part of the CAFI [MEL Policy](#).

4.2.2 Content and template

Regardless of the category of the Implementing Organisation (UNO or NUNO), annual and final reports will be results-oriented and evidence-based [and] will compare results achieved with expected results at the outcome and output levels and will explain why these are exceeded or not fully achieved.

IOs are required to track the performance indicators defined in their respective PRODOCs, and thus include in their annual reports a clear picture of the achievement of targets and related disbursement levels (value for money).

The CAFI Secretariat develops narrative report templates for each type of project/programme. These are available here: [Repository of Reference Material for Users](#). The reporting templates of the National REDD+ Fund (FONAREDD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the CAFI Fund are harmonised. The narrative report requirements are determined by CAFI Secretariat based on the industry's practices, the MPTF template and input from the EB.

At the beginning of each reporting period, it is the responsibility of the IO to consult the most recent file to extract the most recent template clearly designated by its date.

As part of this template, in addition to reporting on results, and in the interest of financial integrity, transparency, and minimising abuse and socio-environmental risks, IOs are also asked to report on safeguards, complaints, as well as contracts and agreement values greater than or equal to 100,000 USD.

Other information, such as asset management and delivery chain mapping, are not part of the narrative report template, but are required through parallel exercises.

4.2.3 Financial information provided through the narrative report

The financial report described in 5.1 and submitted via UNEX currently requires disaggregation by UN Development Group (UNDG) budget category. In addition, agreements signed by IOs state that "financial reports will provide information on the use of financial resources at the Output and Outcome levels (as per Figure 1) of the agreed results frameworks." CAFI's ToR also recommend that expenditures be reported by Output.

Therefore, in addition to the dedicated financial reporting described in 4.1, IOs are requested to provide expenditure information in the narrative report for both semi-annual and annual exercises.

This requirement to disaggregate financial reports by Outcomes and Outputs is included in CAFI's narrative reporting template in a designated appendix.

For a given reporting period, the total expenditures reported per UNDG categories through the UNEX system and the total expenditures reported by Outcomes and Output (plus fees) through the narrative report must be the same.

4.3. Communications and information

Annual and semi-annual reports are made public through the CAFI knowledge management system (Drive) and MPTF Gateway.

At the beginning of each reporting period, it is the responsibility of the IO to consult the most recent template in the CAFI Drive⁵ to extract the most recent template, clearly designated by its date, and to address any question to the CAFI Secretariat.

In addition, information sessions on reporting requirements are organised by the Secretariat with IOs:

- In January of each year, to assist in the preparation of the annual reporting exercise,
- In June of each year, in order to review the annual reporting exercise and assist in the preparation of the semi-annual report,
- For new IOs, and
- On-demand.

4.4. Monitoring of reporting obligations

CAFI Board decisions on extensions and disbursements take into account the independently verified results of the projects/programmes, the quality of financial and narrative reports, as well as financial disbursement levels. CAFI's ToR specify that compliance with reporting obligations, as presented in a note to the CAFI Secretariat, is one of the conditions for requests for disbursement of future funding tranches.

To inform these decisions, CAFI will rely on two inputs:

- The verification report of the independent verification body (when relevant), and
- **a compliance matrix⁶ of financial and narrative reports**, by project/programme and by agency compiled by the CAFI Secretariat (and presented to the CAFI EB at the time of approval of CAFI's annual report (i.e., in June of each year) **as well as prior to any approval of project/programme extensions or additional funding**. Due diligence is made with IOs in case of non-compliance.

4.5. Summary table

Reporting requirements - CAFI funded programmes (including via FONAREDD)		
Type of report	Narrative Report (Word)	Financial Report
Format	Word document sent to CAFI Sec	Data sent to MPTFO via UNEX and copy to CAFI Sec
	For PES projects: additional reporting Online	

⁵ CAFI / [Repository of Reference Material for Users](#)

⁶ . This matrix is available in the CAFI Drive / [Repository of Reference Material for Users](#) for information.

	through CAFI's PES information management tool		by e-mail
Template to follow	CAFI / Repository of Reference Material for Users		MPTFO Template shared with IOs
Language	French or English		English
Timeline of Submission	UNOS	Annual (30 March) and semi-annual (30 August)	Annual (30 April)
	NUNOS	Annual (30 March) and semi-annual (30 August)	Quarterly as per Section V of Framework Agreements
Contact info	CAFI Secretariat		MPTFO Portfolio Manager
Conformity checklist	CAFI / Repository of Reference Material for Users		-
During Project Closure	Final Narrative Reports submitted by 30th April of following operational closure year.		Certified final financial statements and final financial reports submitted by 31st May of following financial closure year.

5. Other financial and project management processes

5.1. Disbursement of Tranches

When the cumulative expenditure reaches 70% of the disbursed CAFI funds per project/programme, the IO may request the next instalment by submitting the provisional narrative and financial reports as well as annual (or for the period for which the next disbursement is requested) work plans to the CAFI Secretariat and MPTF-O accompanied by a note by the Secretariat on meeting the conditions for disbursement:

- a) Respect of annual workplans
- b) Respect of reporting obligations
- c) Respect for disbursement conditions set out in the project/programme approval decision of the EB.

If the IO requests the next instalment, and according to the assessment of the CAFI Secretariat the criteria have not been met, the IO must resubmit a new request and report (30 days after reception of comments) and present it at the next EB meeting or call. The EB will subsequently make a decision on disbursement.

Projects with a land-use component including PES projects are subject to the additional requirement of completing the independent verification of project results prior requesting the next instalment. The independent verification report submitting by the independent verification body to CAFI will inform CAFI's decisions regarding the disbursement of instalment (tranches) of funding.

MPTF-O will disburse subsequent instalments to all EB approved projects and programmes in line with the CAFI Secretariat's instructions specified in the transfer request, subject to the cumulative reported expenditure and availability of funds in the CAFI account.

5.2. Unspent balances and interest

IOs must return all unspent funds and income (including interest) to the AA.

- For NUNOs, as per Section IV para 4.9 of the MoU: *The Recipient NUNO shall return all unspent funds and income (including interest) to the Administrative Agent within five (5) months after the end of the calendar year in which an approved project has been operationally completed or termination of this agreement or the relevant NUNO Financing Agreement for the approved project in question, whichever is earlier.*
- For PUNOs, as per Section X para 6 of the Framework Agreement: *Any balance remaining in the individual Participating UN Organisations' separate ledger accounts after operational completion of the activities for which they are responsible under the approved programmatic document will be returned to the Fund Account as soon as administratively feasible and before financial closure of those activities.*

The IO transfers the interest for prior and current year, if any, to the MPTF Bank Account and sends notification to the MPTF-O to identify the interest. If the IO has an agreement under which the transfer of interest is not required, this should be indicated by marking the box on the Certified Final Financial Statement and Report.

5.3. Recovery of funds

In line with Section IX. Paragraph 4 of the SAA, in case of proven improper use of funds, and after the information provided in the reports or whenever the event is reported (whichever is earlier) a draft decision will be presented to the Board on the use of recovered funds.

5.4. Project/programme and budget revisions

Scenario 1: Revisions below 25%⁷ and not significant changes

In this category, budget revisions are made between UNDG budget lines that cumulatively amount to 25%⁸ or less of the total approved budget per IO per project/programme or programmatic revisions that do not significantly change the scope, objectives, expected results, strategy or priorities, as determined by the project/programme steering committee.

⁷ As per Art 4.5 of the NUNO framework agreement this threshold for NUNOs is 20%.

⁸ 25% calculation: If an IO has a total country budget of \$1million, then the sum of the changes between UNDG budget lines should not exceed \$250,000. Only budget increases will count towards the 25% threshold calculation (not the off-setting reductions).

Revisions will be presented in a cumulative way to the project/programme steering committee described in the approved PRODOC for endorsement. The IO will subsequently submit the revisions to the CAFI Secretariat for non-objection and to the AA for information only.

When CAFI is a member of the project/programme steering committee (i.e. has a voting right) the non-objection is evidenced by the approval of the programme steering committee.

Scenario 2: Revisions above 25%⁹ or significant changes

In this scenario, revisions are made between UNDG budget lines that cumulatively exceed 25% of the total approved budget per IO per project/programme or programmatic revisions that significantly change the scope, objectives, expected results, strategy or priorities as determined by the project/programme steering committee.

As part of the Annual Work Plan process, the IO should submit the project/programme revision request to the CAFI Secretariat to be presented to the CAFI EB. When CAFI is a member of the project/programme steering committee (i.e., has a voting right), the CAFI representative ensures that approval of the EB is obtained before the project/programme steering committee approval.

Scenario 3: budget revision to increase overall project amount

In line with Section III paragraph 6 of the Standard Administrative Agreement (SAA), it is possible to increase the overall amount of a project or programme if additional funding is available in the CAFI trust fund or there are additional funds, and the EB so decides.

Carry-over of funds from one year to the next can be done through the regular Annual Work Plan (AWP) process at project/programme level. Adjustments to the annual split of funds in the AWP are not considered a project or programme revision.

5.5. No-Cost Extensions of Projects and Programmes

IOs can request an extension of the end date for programmes and projects by submitting a request to the EB through the Secretariat. In case of approval from the EB, the Secretariat will submit the no-cost extension request to MPTF-O to update the MPTF-O Gateway platform.

A request for no-cost extension must be presented no later than 45 days prior to the end of the funded project. Under no circumstance can a project continue its activities after the approved end-date as per the PRODOC and without a no-cost extension being approved the by the Executive Board.

A project that has reached its end-date without an approved no-cost extension shall be considered as expired automatically. In such situations, the project shall proceed with reimbursement of the non-approved implementation by the IO to the Trust Fund.

⁹ As per Art 4.5 of the NUNO framework agreement the threshold for NUNOs is 20%.

The minimum documentation required for an IO to request a no-cost extension include the request letter (where the IO presents information such as justification, results achieved, budget execution, etc) and the updated workplan. The Secretariat shall also inform the Executive Board if the IO/project is in compliance with the reporting exercises, and such information might be used by the EB in determining approval or not of a no-cost extension.

5.6. Closure requirements

Procedures for the closure of programmes and projects follow the IO's own internal rules and regulations, unless otherwise agreed in the PRODOC. As outlined in the legal agreements, each IO determines when it has completed all approved activities within the timeframe approved by the EB specified in the PRODOC cover page. The IO communicates the completion of all approved project or programme activities through a final narrative report to the CAFI Secretariat and the AA, along with the submission of the certified final financial statement and the final financial report to the AA.

The final narrative report must be submitted to the AA by 30 April of the year following financial closure of the project. The certified final financial statement and final financial report are to be provided to the AA by 30 June of the same year.

5.6.1 Operational Closure Steps

For projects and programmes to be accepted as 'Operationally Closed'¹⁰ the following steps are necessary:

1. The IO informs the CAFI Secretariat and the AA that project or programme has been operationally closed.
2. The IO submits the final narrative report to the CAFI Secretariat and the MPTF-O for records and disclosure on the GATEWAY platform.
3. If no project activity has been undertaken or funds spent, the EB makes a decision to confirm operational closure of the project and there is no need to submit a final narrative report.
4. Upon the CAFI Secretariat's confirmation, the MPTF-O proceeds with the project or programme operational closure in the MPTF-O's GATEWAY system.

5.6.2 Financial Closure Steps

For projects to be accepted as "Financially Closed" the following steps are necessary:

1. The IO submits a certified final financial statement and final financial report for each project or programme separately.

¹⁰ For FAO: the operational closure step happens after the submission of the end-of-project narrative report, step 2 above.

2. All expenditure reports must provide a breakdown by UNDG categories in accordance with the approved UNDG breakdown budget for the project or programme.
3. The IO refunds any unspent balance and sends notification to the MPTF-O to enable the Office to identify the refund.
4. The IO transfers the interest for the prior and current years, if any, to the MPTF bank account and sends notification to the MPTF-O to identify the interest. If the IO's regulations do not require the transfer of interest, this should be indicated by marking the box on the certified final Financial Statement and Report.
5. No expenditure in excess of funds transferred should be reported on certified final financial statement and report submitted to the MPTF-O.
6. The actual indirect cost should not exceed the approved percentage of the project's direct cost (7%).
7. Upon review, the MPTF-O proceeds with the programme financial closure in the MPTF-O system and notifies the IO accordingly that all financial procedures have been satisfied.

Notification for all transfer of interest earnings and refunds of unutilised funds, including reference to the nature of the refund, amount of refund and project number, should be sent to the portfolio manager at the MPTF-O.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

The Executive Board approved a MEL Policy and associated guidelines for IOs that:

- Set out CAFI's approach to assessing how its investments deliver climate and development results and how its results contribute to the overall objectives of CAFI to significantly contribute to low emission development in partner countries through interventions in the land use and forestry sectors.
- Bring together and clarify guiding principles and mandatory requirements related to monitoring and reporting performance and results, evaluations, verifications and learning.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for results management and reporting.
- Establish reporting requirements and processes for monitoring and verification at the project/programme level.

As part of this policy, the Secretariat develops and operates (or contracts a partner to develop and operate) spatially-explicit MEL.

Table of Annexes

#	Name of Annex	Where to find it
1	Information Disclosure Policy	Page 31 of this MOP
2	Complaint management mechanism	Page 36 of this MOP
3	Whistle-blower protection	Page 40 of this MOP
4	Zero tolerance for fraud and corruption	Link to UNDP's Corporate Webpage
5	One Pager for Access to Fund Process	Repository of Reference Material for Users
6	SEAH capacity assessment for participating NUNOs	Repository of Reference Material for Users
7	Self-Assessment/Check-List for Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES)	Repository of Reference Material for Users
8	Quality Assurance Framework for Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES)	Repository of Reference Material for Users
9	Quality Assurance Plan – policy	Repository of Reference Material for Users
10	Project/programme document templates	Repository of Reference Material for Users
11	Reporting templates	Repository of Reference Material for Users
12	MEL Policy	Repository of Reference Material for Users
13	Co-financing policy	Repository of Reference Material for Users
14	Project development and implementation guidelines	Repository of Reference Material for Users

Annex 1 - Information Disclosure Policy

I. Objective and scope

1. The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) recognises the importance of and reaffirms its commitment to transparency and accountability in all aspects of its operations in fulfilling its mandate. Through the implementation of this Information Disclosure Policy (the Policy), CAFI recognises the need to ensure public access and stakeholder participation in fulfilling its role. CAFI will ensure the highest standard of transparency in all its activities through the effective dissemination of information to stakeholders and the public at large.
2. CAFI's Terms of Reference (ToR) provide that the CAFI Trust Fund will operate in a transparent and accountable manner guided by the principles of efficiency and effectiveness.
3. This annex sets out CAFI's Policy regarding the information that it makes available to the public either as a routine matter or upon request.
4. This Policy applies to all information produced by or in the possession of CAFI.

II. Principles

5. This Policy is based on the following principles:
 - (a) **Principle 1: Maximise access to information.** CAFI reaffirms its commitment to transparency in all of its activities and therefore seeks to maximise access to any documents and information that it produces and to information in its possession that is not on the list of exceptions as set out in Chapter IV of this Policy.
 - (b) **Principle 2: Limited exceptions.** Any exceptions to disclosure will be predicated upon the possibility, narrowly and clearly defined, that the potential harm to interests, entities or parties arising from the disclosure of information would outweigh the benefits, that CAFI is legally obligated to non-disclosure or has received information from third parties clearly marked as confidential. CAFI may, in exceptional circumstances, decide not to disclose or delay dissemination of information that would normally be accessible if it determines that the harm that might occur by doing so will outweigh the benefits of access. CAFI may also, in exceptional circumstances, make available to the public information ordinarily excluded from disclosure when it determines that the benefit would outweigh the potential harm, except where CAFI is legally obligated to confidentiality.
 - (c) **Principle 3: Simple and broad access to information.** CAFI will employ all practical means to facilitate access to information, maximise access to such information, and use clear and cost-effective procedures and timelines for processing requests.

III. Standard of disclosure

6. CAFI seeks to maximise access to information that it produces and/or possesses and will therefore disclose any information not contained in the list of exceptions set out in Chapter IV of this Policy. This Policy is predicated not on a list of information that it chooses to disclose but rather on a clear definition of the information that it will not disclose. All documents in CAFI's possession subject to disclosure as per this Policy, will be released on the CAFI website or through other appropriate means, or will be provided upon

request, to provide the public with a clear picture of CAFI's work and the way it administers financial resources received from public, private and other sources.

7. The timing of disclosure of the different types of information may vary, based on the nature of the information as further set out in Section VIII of this Policy.

IV. Exceptions to presumed disclosure

8. While CAFI is committed to disclosing as much information as possible, its effective functioning requires protection of certain types of information by identifying the harm that disclosure of the relevant information could cause to the interests protected by the exceptions.

9. The exceptions to CAFI's presumption in favour of disclosure of information are set forth below. The following categories of information/documents will not be accessible because the potential harm caused by their disclosure outweighs the benefit to be derived from accessibility. Subject to paragraphs 10 and 11 below, the Secretariat will determine whether documents or portions thereof will be disclosed:

(a) **Personal information.**

CAFI will not disclose information relating to:

- (i) personal information of any person, including members of the Board, advisers, the CAFI Secretariat staff and consultants and other persons connected with CAFI; and
- (ii) Staff appointment and selection processes, the disclosure of which would affect the legitimate privacy interest of the person(s) concerned.

(b) Legal, disciplinary or investigative matters.

- (i) CAFI will not disclose information subject to legal professional privilege, matters in legal dispute or under negotiation, information relating to any investigation of alleged fraud, corruption or misconduct or disciplinary proceedings, except to the extent specifically permitted by and in accordance with CAFI's or the implementing organisations' rules on such investigations, or any information that, if disclosed, would or would be likely to materially prejudice an investigation or the administration of justice or violate applicable law;
- (ii) CAFI will not disclose information, documents, reports or communications in circumstances where disclosure would violate applicable law or contractual obligations, or could subject it to undue litigation risk; and
- (iii) CAFI will not provide access to or release information relating to proceedings of internal grievance and appeals mechanisms except to the extent expressly permitted under the rules of these mechanisms;

(c) **Communications involving members of the Board and advisers.** CAFI will not disclose communications between members of the Board, advisers and the Secretariat.

(d) **Safety and security.** CAFI will not disclose information that would or would be likely to compromise the security, safety or health of its staff and their families, consultants, experts and contractors, CAFI assets or any other individual;

(e) **Information provided in confidence.**

- (i) Information provided to the Board or the Secretariat in confidence or with restrictions on disclosure, will not be disclosed without the explicit authorisation of the provider of such information, such as information covered by a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement that CAFI had entered into with other parties.
- (ii) Financial, business or proprietary and non-public information in CAFI's possession and belonging to a party outside of CAFI will not be disclosed, without the explicit permission of such a party; and
- (iii) CAFI will not disclose information provided to it in confidence, alleging fraud, corruption, or violation of any of CAFI's policies, or misconduct, except to the extent specifically permitted by and in accordance with the applicable rules on investigations, as well as the identity of the party making the allegation, unless such a person consents to the disclosure of his or her identity;

(f) **Deliberative information.** Deliberative information exchanged, prepared for or derived from the exchanges between CAFI and its implementing organizations or third parties as well as information pertaining to CAFI's own internal deliberative processes, will not be disclosed if it would damage the free flow of information and ideas. Therefore; while it will, subject to the exceptions set out in Chapter V of this Policy, make public the agreements or decisions reached at the conclusion of such a deliberative process, it will not provide access to the following information:

- (i) Information (including inter-office or intra-office e-mails, notes, letters, memoranda, draft documents or reports) prepared for or exchanged during its deliberations with implementing organisations, countries, other entities or persons with whom CAFI is involved;
- (ii) Information (including e-mails, notes, letters, memoranda, reports or other documents) prepared for, or exchanged during its own internal deliberations, including those issued or prepared by CAFI's staff, consultants, experts, or agents; and
- (iii) Studies, audit reports, assessments, evaluations or analyses prepared by or on behalf of the Secretariat to inform CAFI's internal decision-making and assessment processes that include sensitive information;

(g) **Certain financial information.** CAFI will not provide access to any financial information that, if disclosed, would prejudice the financial or commercial interests of CAFI and any of its activities;

(h) **Board proceedings.** CAFI will not disclose Board documents including, pre-meeting documents, that are deemed confidential pursuant to this Policy of which distribution will be limited to members of the Board. CAFI will not webcast, or provide video recordings of Executive Board meetings;

(i) **Information relating to Committees, Panels and Groups.** Before disclosing any information, CAFI will redact any portion of reports, information, decisions, recommendations or proceedings of any of the Committees, Panels and Groups, which contains confidential information which, if disclosed, may cause prejudice to CAFI, any persons associated with it or other related parties;

(j) **Trust Fund reports.** CAFI will not disclose information contained in the Trustee reports to the extent that it contains confidential information which, if disclosed, may cause prejudice to CAFI or related parties; and

V. Overrides

10. As described in paragraph 6 above (Principle 2: Limited exceptions), CAFI may decide to provide access to certain specified types of information normally subject to one of this Policy's exceptions, in extraordinary circumstances, if it determines that the benefit to be derived from doing so would outweigh the potential harm that the application of this Policy might otherwise entail, and so long as CAFI is not legally or otherwise obligated to confidentiality. Any decision to provide access to information via the override would require the Board's concurrence for any Board document, the Head of the Secretariat's concurrence for any other document produced, commissioned or under the purview of the Secretariat, as well as the written consent of any third party that had provided information to CAFI in confidence for any such information that CAFI wishes to disclose.

11. CAFI also reserves the right not to disclose, by means of a 'negative' override, normally available information if it determines that the potential harm that the application of this Policy might otherwise entail would outweigh the potential benefit of disclosing such information. Any decision to not disclose information via this override would require the Board's concurrence for any Board document, the Head of the Secretariat's concurrence for any other documents produced, commissioned or under the purview of the Secretariat.

VI. Language of Disclosure

12. English and French are CAFI's working languages. Ordinarily, documents will be disclosed in the original language; however, any documents CAFI discloses that it considers to be of significant public interest will be published in the other language on the CAFI website.

VII. Implementation aspects of this Policy

8.1 Procedures for accessing information

13. **CAFI's website.** CAFI routinely discloses a wide range of information and documents through its website - www.cafi.org. These include, but are not limited to, Board decisions, policy papers, partnership agreements and investment plans, as well as project-related public information that provides details on all types of CAFI-funded projects and programs without duplicating what is to be published by accredited entities and/or executing entities on their websites. CAFI's website may also provide links to the websites of its accredited entities. In addition, CAFI will use other means of dissemination as may be required to reach its intended audiences, including social media.

14. **MPTF Gateway.** The Executive Board and the Administrative Agent will ensure that the Fund's operations are disseminated on the web site of the Administrative Agent (<http://mptf.undp.org>). Information posted on the web site includes contributions received and from whom, funds transferred, annual expenditures, summaries of proposed and approved programmes, the work plan and Fund progress reports, including relevant information on Fund operations.

15. **Board decisions.** Board documents will be available on CAFI's website as soon as these are adopted, unless such information is not subject to disclosure under paragraph 9.

16. **Public consultation.** An annual forum with all stakeholders will be organized to update progress, share experiences and obtain inputs. The annual forum will also be an opportunity to explore further collaboration with other Central Africa regional initiatives such as COMIFAC, ECCAS and CBFP.

17. Any information concerning CAFI-funded projects, programmes, policies, strategies and general operations held by CAFI for more than 20 years from the date such information was produced by, or provided to, CAFI, will be considered historical information. Historical information, other than Board documents, shall be disclosed upon request, except for information that falls with the exceptions listed in paragraph 9.

8.2 Information upon request

18. Anyone may contact the Secretariat to request any document or information which is not accessible on CAFI's website. The Secretariat will entertain external requests for information or documents that are made in writing.

Requests for information may be submitted in writing or via e-mail, as needed, addressed as follows:

- (a) In writing: CAFI Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme, International Environment House, 7th floor, 11-13 Chemin des Anémones, Châtelaine CH 1219, Switzerland; or
- (b) Via e-mail: <secretariatcafi@gmail.com>.

All requests for information are processed by the Secretariat. Requests should indicate with reasonable specificity the information that is being sought to enable the Secretariat, within a reasonable period, to locate the information.

19. Requests for information will be submitted in English or French, which are the working languages of CAFI, and the response will be provided in one of the two languages.

20. In responding to external queries, the Secretariat will either provide the requested information or document, referring the requester to the relevant link on the CAFI website whenever possible, or a legitimate reason as to why the information cannot be given, based on the exceptions to disclosure defined by CAFI or on the fact that such information does not exist or cannot be found.

VIII. Timelines for responding to requests

21. The Secretariat shall endeavour to respond to requests for information within 30 working days of receipt of a written request for information, unless additional time is required because of the scope or complexity of the information requested. In its response, CAFI shall either provide the requested information or the reasons why the request has been denied, indicating the particular provision(s) in this Policy that justifies the refusal.

22. The Secretariat may partially or wholly deny a request on the following grounds:

- (a) In accordance with the limitations set out or referred to in this Policy; and
- (b) If the request is deemed to be an excessive demand on the Secretariat's resources.

23. CAFI shall not be required to comply with, or respond to, repeated or unreasonable requests for information on the same subject from the same person, organisation, or group if the Secretariat has provided such information after a previous request or has given reasons why it cannot provide information. CAFI shall not be required to respond to anonymous or those submitted under pseudonyms.

IX. Miscellaneous

24. Information disclosed under this Policy is provided as is. CAFI will take all reasonable steps to conspicuously disclaim any loss or liability, either directly or indirectly because of using the disclosed information.

Annex 2 – Complaint management mechanism

Principles of the complaint management mechanism:

Subsidiarity

To empower and reinforce national processes and respect the rules and regulations of implementing agencies, action at CAFI level should not be taken except in cases where CAFI has exclusive competence (such as an EB decision).

When complainants exhausted procedures offered by the implementing organisations, they can address a complaint to the EB.

Legitimacy

The mechanism based on the Fund's governance structure and connected with national legal and administrative dispute resolution mechanisms.

It is independent of but connected to that of implementing agencies.

Accessibility

The mechanism offers diversity of communication channels for complaints.

It uses the means of communication chosen by the complainant.

Any person affected by the programme may lodge a complaint.

The contact details and communication channels for complaints shall feature on multiple documents.

Foreseeability

The MOP, including the annex on complaint management, shall be accessible on the Fund website.

The Secretariat shall inform the complainants of the anticipated procedure following receipt of the complaint, the reasons behind the decision made and of any modification to the expected time frames.

Transparency

The MOP, including the annex on complaint management, shall be accessible on the Fund website.

The Secretariat shall inform the complainants of the anticipated procedure following receipt of the complaint and the reasons behind the decision made.

The rules of implementing agencies on the management of complaints is summarised with contacts to agencies provided on the CAFI website.

A registry of complaints is maintained by the Secretariat.

Description of the mechanism:

1. Any person negatively affected or impacted by a project or programme financed by the Fund may lodge a complaint. Where a complaint is lodged in the name of another person or in the name of a community, the rules of the country of nationality of the complainant shall apply. However, even if the

eligibility criteria have not been met, the Executive Board (on the Secretariat's recommendation) may agree to process a complaint if it considers that the gravity of the complaint so requires.

2. Receipt and registration of complaints: The Secretariat receives complaints:
 - 2.1. By telephone, email or post: contact details for the Fund's complaint management system shall be made available on the Fund's website and
 - 2.2. During meetings: including those of the Executive Board, annual fora, annual reviews or CAFI country missions.
 - 2.3. Active outreach: During programme monitoring procedures, the Secretariat can contact the stakeholders contacted during the pre-feasibility and feasibility phases of the programs to sound their opinions. If any concerns are voiced, the Secretariat shall inform the stakeholders that they have the possibility to lodge a complaint. Actions taken shall be included in project/programme monitoring reports.
 - 2.4. Other: if the Secretariat learns that local populations or project/programme stakeholders have concerns, the Secretariat shall contact them and inform the EB on the discussions even if the parties concerned decide not to register an official complaint with the Fund.
3. Reception and evaluation
 - 3.1. Following receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt via the same means of communication as the complainant and write it up as a report. Oral communications shall be supplemented by written communications (in the same time frames as for written communications). Verbal notice of receipt shall be given immediately (via telephone or in person), within three working days of receipt of an electronic message, and two weeks for a letter.
 - 3.2. In the notice of receipt, the Secretariat shall explain briefly how the complaint will be processed.
 - 3.3. The Secretariat will inform the complainant that he/she can request confidentiality.
 - 3.4. Following receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat shall assess whether the complaint concerns a decision of the Fund or the Fund's project/programme(s). Other aspects, such as the complainant's capacity to lodge a complaint, shall be examined during preparation of the response. The Secretariat shall have two weeks from reception of the complaint to assess its eligibility. It may extend this time frame by two weeks by informing the complainant using the habitual communication channel (see point 2).
 - 3.5. Two weeks after receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat shall inform the EB of receipt of the complaint and its eligibility.
4. Response to the complaint:
 - 4.1. The Secretariat may propose various types of response measures to the EB within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. It may extend this time frame by one additional month once the complainant has been informed. It may also request additional information if that provided by the complainant was insufficient to establish the facts and propose a response.
 - 4.1.1. Direct response/action of the Fund: this might range from changing the dates or locations of consultations to making information available, notifying implementation bodies, or the frequency of monitoring measures (reports, visits, etc.), to suspending or ceasing financing.
 - 4.1.2. Dialogue with the complainant and the other stakeholders: during the complaint resolution, the secretariat shall engage in dialogue in order to reveal the main facts. This dialogue could prove sufficient if by this means a solution is found to the dispute. If during this process the secretariat finds that there is no need to take other actions in order to respond to the complaint or, where this is not possible, it may conclude the dialogue and inform the Steering Committee accordingly. The complainant may contest this decision as with the other responses.

4.1.3. Referral to another mechanism: if the complaint requires a response beyond that which the Fund is able to provide above (4.1.1 and 4.1.2), and especially if the request needs to be addressed to a judge, tribunal or other dispute resolution mechanism in the country or if it should be channelled through the implementing agencies procedures, the Secretariat shall propose that the EB refer the complaint.

4.1.4. Complaints are non-eligible if, after evaluation:

4.1.4.1. no negative impact is detected,

4.1.4.2. there is no causal link between the impact and the programme.

4.1.4.3. the complainant has not been directly impacted or the complainant cannot represent the injured parties under the law of complainant's nationality or registration.

4.1.4.4. The complaint has already been adequately addressed.

4.1.4.5. it is submitted anonymously or under a pseudonym.

4.1.4.6. or it is unfounded for other reasons.

4.2. The Secretariat shall inform the EB accordingly.

4.3. The EB shall examine the response proposal during its next ordinary meeting. If the Secretariat finds that the complaint necessitates immediate action, it shall convene an extraordinary meeting.

4.4. The EB shall decide whether it approves the proposed response, or another response is adopted, the Secretariat shall communicate the decision to the complainant within one week. If the EB needs more information before making its decision, it may refer back once to the Secretariat, which shall have two weeks to reformulate its response.

4.5. The Secretariat shall communicate the response to the complainant by the habitual means of communication and in writing, in English or French. The response must include the following elements:

4.5.1. The response

4.5.2. The reasoning

4.5.3. Rights of appeal

4.5.4. The time frames.

4.6. The response is considered accepted if the complainant expressly accepts it or if they do not contest it within 30 days of communication of the response.

5. Implementation of the response:

5.1. The response approved by the EB is implemented (monitoring measures, for example).

5.2. if the implementation of the response resolves the dispute and following verification, the Secretariat may close the complaint and inform the EB accordingly.

5.3. Despite implementation of the response, the problem may persist. If, following verification, the Secretariat realises that the response has not resolved the problem, it shall propose that the EB revise the response.

6. If the EB decides to revise the response following the recommendation of the Secretariat (if the response is not accepted or following the procedure described under point 5.3 [complaint unresolved]), it shall request that the Secretariat propose a new response. In this case, the Secretariat shall follow the procedure described in point 3.

7. The complaint may be closed if:

7.1. it is referred to another mechanism and the Secretariat shall inform the complainant (habitual means of communication).

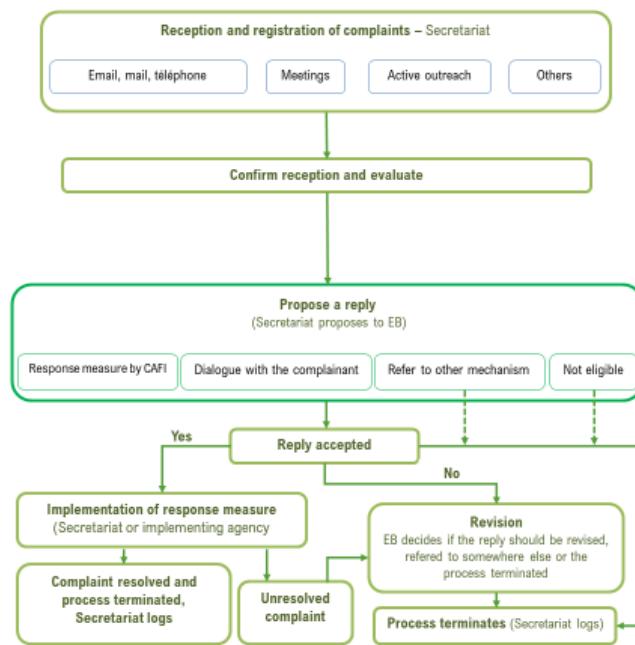
7.2. the complaint has been deemed non-eligible and the Secretariat shall inform the complainant accordingly (habitual means of communication).

8. Emergency procedure

8.1. Following receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat may accelerate the complaint management procedure if respecting the time frames may lead to serious and irreparable losses and damage.

8.2. The Secretariat shall inform the EB accordingly and present it with an emergency complaint management plan including time frames and potential mitigation measures.

9. If the complainant so requests, the complaint will be treated confidentially. In this case, the Secretariat informs the EB of the confidential nature of the request.





Annex 3 – Whistle-blower protection

It is CAFI's policy that retaliation against individuals who have, in good faith, properly reported allegations of misconduct, or who have cooperated with a duly authorised audit or investigation, is strictly prohibited. Such retaliation violates the fundamental obligation of CAFI partners to uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity as required under the Terms of Reference of the Trust Fund and legal agreements. In order to protect whistle-blowers, the Secretariat informs the complainant of the process described in annex 2 of this Manual of Operations at the beginning of the process that he/she can request confidentiality that cannot be refused.

The CAFI website summarises the whistle-blower protection mechanisms available at the implementing organisations and other members of the Executive Board.