



## Republic of Congo – Fast start wood energy plantations & MRV

### Programme documents review

**Adopted by email on 18 May 2021**

**EB.2021.05**

Considering:

- a) [Decision EB.2019.16](#) on the Letter of Intent with the Republic of Congo (RoC) and the allocation to the country;
- b) [Decision EB.2019.22](#) on the Republic of Congo and the subsequent joint endorsement by the CAFI Board and the Government of the Republic of Congo of the background documentation to a Call for Expression of Interest (Programming Framework, Call for EI and its terms of reference);
- c) [Decision EB.2020.15](#) on the selection of the implementing agencies for the development of the programs pipeline, decision jointly reviewed and agreed upon by the Government during the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Inter-ministerial Committee with the Ambassadors held on 24 September 2020 and headed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo;
- d) [Decision EB.2020.23](#) on programming and timelines for project documents' submission on selected implementing agencies respective work plan and timeline towards the submission of their project document for CAFI independent review;
- e) The two programs documents submitted in January 2021 by the FAO named (i) Sustainable Wood Energy potential reinforcement in the Republic of Congo project (PROREP) and (ii) Operationalization of the Republic of Congo MRV System (SYNA MRV);
- f) The Independent Reviews of the program documents conducted in February 2021

The CAFI Executive Board:

- 1) Recalls the recommendations and expectations made in its Decisions EB.2020.15 and EB.2020.23 to

inform the development of the project documents by the executing agencies

- 2) Shares the Government willingness to advance the programming process, move towards the implementation of activities as expressed by the Prime Minister during the first CAFI meeting with the Inter-ministerial Committee and have first programs approved by the first quarter 2021
- 3) Thanks the FAO, GRET and ID for their program document on Wood Energy and Improved Cook Stoves and the FAO for their program document on MRV operationalisation
- 4) Requests the FAO to review its program document on MRV and to submit a second version by 28 May 2021 to the CAFI Secretariat, to be examined by CAFI Executive Board and the RoC-CAFI Partnership Steering Committee, and underlines the need to:
  - a) Strengthen the situational analysis and better define the program's expected results and approach based on lessons learned from past efforts on developing the SYNA MRV and FREL, as well as national capacities and methodologies for national forest cover monitoring
  - b) Describe the institutional set up in RoC of the SYNA-MRV and the mechanisms for AFOLU GHG monitoring and reporting, including details about decision making responsibilities and risk management strategies linked to the approval of expected deliverables
  - c) Integrate in the program document the guidelines provided by CAFI in its decision EB.2020.23 on (i) monitoring of deforestation and forest degradation in HCS/HVC and non HCS/HVC forests (ii) specific attention that is to be given to REDD+ "conservation" activities, the maintenance of forest carbon stocks, particularly in intact forests, and to further estimate the carbon removals capacity of its forest (to be mainstreamed in the activities), (iii) integrating milestones 5.4 on the publication of annual forecast of areas to be deforested and those deforested
  - d) Considering the institutional set-up, the capacities of national partners and the planned capacity-building activities under FCPF ER program and UN REDD program, reinforce the theory of change to better explain how the large number of trainings and workshops planned is the best method and sufficient to achieve the planned outcomes and results while ensuring national ownership and sustainability over time
  - e) Put the emphasis on making RoC eligible to results-based finance according to the ART-TREES standard instead of broadly work on results-based requirements
  - f) Explain the relevance of developing an early warning system in RoC, including a description of how the early warning alerts are thought to be followed upon and used, while taking in account that at this stage, based on the experience in other countries in the region and given the limited impact on reducing deforestations, CAFI is not in favor of funding such activity
  - g) Clarify the approach and tasks to be undertaken to assess, monitor and report on data and emissions reduction estimations uncertainties. Activity 1.2.4 (field verifications) should be detailed to better understand which field measurements will be conducted and how it will improve GHG emissions estimations
  - h) Clarify and integrate in the program documents specific risk mitigation measures on reliance to the SEPAL platform of the FAO of the national MRV system. If using a platform not owned by the Congolese authorities, such as SEPAL, is identified as the best alternative for the national MRV, the FAO should provide specific information and/or include specific activities aiming at mitigating risks

of non-sustainability linked to the platform dependency.

- i) Commit on delivering results and taking full responsibility on their achievement with the inclusion of specific provisions through entire program document, especially in the “institutional arrangements” section by clearly defining the respective roles and responsibilities and clarify the program monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. All deliverables, whether they are produced by the FAO or programs partners, shall be under the direct responsibility of the FAO and relative arrangements shall be discussed and endorsed by the national counterpart before any future approval of the project document.
  - j) Identify concrete synergies (and risks) to be implemented with other relevant programs identified, especially the regional program on deforestation and forest degradation drivers, the Land Use Planning program and the fast start wood energy plantations programs.
  - k) Review and detail the outputs and activities linked to the geo-portal. Related activities should start at the very beginning of the program implementation and the FAO should ensure the availability of data and their accessibility to the public. This entails in establishing agreement with national institutions on data sharing and publication and making recent data (post 2019) accessible on deforestation and forest degradation to technical and financial partners and to the public.
  - l) Review and clarify the budget, including a detailed costs breakdown between (i) technical expertise (ii) national partner capacity reinforcement distinguishing type of reinforcement (training, material, etc.) (iii) management & orientation bodies functioning costs (iv) management costs.
- 5) Requests a revision of the Programme document on wood energy and improved cook stoves and submission of a second version by 31 May 2021 for review by the CAFI Executive Board and the RoC-CAFI Partnership Steering committee, and underlines the need to:
- a) Clearly identify responsibilities, task-sharing, human resources and budget execution modalities among partners (FAO/ID/GRET) as well as the different roles and expected needs of partners agencies identified (SNR, PRONAR and CRDPI) and ensure participation of the ministry in charge of agriculture and its services.
  - b) Review and/or justify the significant reduction of quantitative expected results of the program, initially expected to be 4 500 hectares of plantations and 20 000 Improved Coosktoves (ICS). Furthermore, provide reasons for promoting adoption of ICS in rural areas instead of urbans centers, as it was initially targeted per decision EB.2020.15
  - c) Review the strategy to ensure the deployment of fast-start plantations, with an initial expected result of at least 1 000 hectares by the second year of implementation as per decision EB.2020.15
  - d) Remove activities related to micro-credits and business plans, which do not seem to contribute to the theory of change of the program. Improve the situational analysis and theory of change to better capitalize on existing experiences and explain how the strategy identified will overcome existing barriers. The Theory of Change of the program should be articulated around two main program results: (i) the fast-start plantations and (ii) the dissemination of ICS.
  - e) Provide further details on plantations locations and technical itineraries in consistency with program objectives and orientations aiming at developing wood energy plantations in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire Supply Basins

- f) Identify concrete synergies and activities to be implemented with other relevant programs, including notably the CAFE Land Use Planning program and other programs supporting agricultural development and value chain development that are currently not identified in the program document.
  - g) Identify synergies, potential conflicts and possibilities for collaboration with the PREFOREST project, the activities of the Total Nature Based Solutions unit and other plantation programs in the Republic of Congo. The designated plantation areas are not to overlap, and investments and/or activities should be mutualized when feasible, such as the restoration or implementation of nurseries, the trainings of beneficiaries, the access to mechanization, etc.
  - h) Review/Explain the monitoring and evaluation mechanism including the role of the selection committee and examine the possibility to implement local orientation committees.
  - i) Review and detail the entire budget to (i) breakdown planned expenses (expertise, travel, management, etc.) of each contributing partner (FAO/ID/GRET) (ii) ensure national agencies contribution according to their responsibilities and needs (iii) ensure functioning of coordination and orientation bodies (iv) include costs related to M&E and communication plan implementation.
- 6) Requests to complete the feasibility study for the establishment of 4 500 hectares of fast-start wood energy plantations based on elements provided in the PROREP first draft, studies conducted in the framework of the PREFOREST and CAFE orientations, and in consultation with all stakeholders in charge of the program implementation. This completion of feasibility study will be realized, on an exceptional basis, by a team of experts recruited by CAFE Secretariat.
- 7) Requests the FAO, ID and GRET to integrate the results of the feasibility study in the revised program document.
- 8) Asks the FAO to review both programs' logical frameworks (i) to ensure monitoring of the corresponding CAFE outcome-level indicators (ii) georeferencing of fast-start tree plantations and (iii) add a specific activity on reporting to the AFR 100 initiative.
- 9) Asks the FAO and CAFE Secretariat, in the framework of the preparation of a second version of the program documents, to consider the (i) CAFE recommendations included in the present decision (ii) recommendations transmitted by the CAFE Secretariat in a synthesis note (iii) the comments and recommendations of the independent reviewer, and to submit the completed comments matrix provided by CAFE along with the revised documents.