

Central African Forest Initiative & INGOs Virtual Dialogue

17 June 2021

The questions below were submitted by writing in advance by international NGOs participating in a virtual dialogue organized with members of the CAFI Executive Board on 17 June 2021, prior to its 18th meeting.

At the INGOs request and as agreed during the call, the list of questions is made public on the CAFI web site. As the dialogue was under Chatham House rules, questions are not attributed. A summary of the dialogue, in respect of CAFI's Information Disclosure Policy¹, is available on the CAFI website.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	
<i>Indigenous rights and tenure</i>	
	To what extent will CAFI put more attention, including in the present negotiations of a new Lol with the DRC, on increased support to IPLC tenure and forest management to protect the integrity of the large remaining contiguous tropical rainforests in the DRC ?
<i>Land use planning</i>	
	Last 3 June, Greenpeace Africa published its position on the government's reform of land use planning, demanding the suspension of the reform until four preconditions are met. Does CAFI support this demand?
<i>Forest governance</i>	
	Last November FRM posted a job offer for a DRC "Chef de Projet Forêt / Filière Bois" to lead a program set to begin in 2021 that "vise à améliorer la gouvernance des ressources forestières sur les concessions forestières et autres forêts de production, contribuer au développement d'un secteur artisanal vertueux et de modes de gestion décentralisée des forêts, renforcer les capacités des institutions

¹ Available in Annex 1 of CAFI's Manual of Operations here : <http://www.cafi.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/2021%2001%2014%20-%20CAFI%20Manual%20of%20Operations%20-%20FINAL%20-%20EN.pdf>

<p>en charge des forêts." This is a copy/paste of the objectives of the Programme de gestion durable des forêts (PGDF). How does CAFI explain FRM's seeking to fill this post more than four months before the Environment Ministry launched tendering for it?</p>
<p>Both the PGDF and CAFI's \$15 million Programme d'appui à la mise en valeur durable des Savanes et des Forêts Dégradées (PSFD), also implemented by the AFD, are expected to directly benefit the French logging firm Compagnie forestière et de transformation (CFT). The Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM) recently financed the feasibility study of a CFT carbon offset project, a 2,000 ha Afrormosia plantation near Kisangani. CFT is owned by a renowned expert in Old Masters paintings and a leading figure in African safari hunting. Has CAFI examined the audited annual accounts of CFT?</p>
<p>Since 14 January 2020 the DRC has illegally awarded logging and conservation concession contracts covering some 4.2 million ha. How much DRC funding has CAFI released since then?</p>
<p>Why didn't the CAFI Executive Board reply to our 24 March 2020 mail seeking clarification of CAFI's position regarding the illegal transfer of 2 million ha the previous January?</p>
<p>Then Environment Minister Claude Nyamugabo was invited to participate in CAFI's 22-25 June 2020 Executive Board meeting. He reportedly told the Board that the January transfer of 2 million ha was "from one concessionaire to another." But in February he had told the media that it involved only a single concessionaire which, after changing its name, had requested new contracts be drawn up under the new name. This was flagged to CAFI on 26 June 2020. How did CAFI respond?</p>
<p>On 25 February 2021 CAFI announced it would adopt a wait-and-see approach to the illegal award of 800,000 ha of logging concessions to a company specializing in industrial cleaning. It said it "encourage[d] the efforts of civil society to establish facts." Did it take no further action?</p>
<p>What conditions and sanctions are in place to address several illegal concession allocations since CAFI was launched in DRC, including up to 4.2 million hectares since January 2020 alone, as well as the dozens of logging concessions that have passed their maximum allotted 5-year period for obtaining a government-approved management plan? Could you provide an update on the long-delayed EC-led legal review of logging titles as well as the ToRs for it?</p>
<p>Can CAFI confirm its commitment to maintaining the DRC national logging moratorium until such time as the existing industry has been brought under control, including through dealing with the issues mentioned above, and also that the third legal condition on geographical programming is brought into alignment with the CAFI-supported land use planning reforms?</p>
<p><i>New Letter of Intent</i></p>

<p>What is the process and timetable for agreeing the new Lol and for developing the theory of change underpinning it? How will this incorporate the learnings from the first Lol including from the independent verification of the 2018 milestones and other interventions?</p>
<p>Will the new Lol be based on the results of the ongoing FAO-led drivers of deforestation study and how will it address emerging threats from agribusiness, infrastructure development and extractive industries?</p>
<p>Which CAFI-funded programmes from the first Lol will be retained (and funded) and which will be discontinued? On which basis?</p>
<p>GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF CAFI</p>
<p>Could you please let us know what has been done to improve the governance performance of CAFI and what changes are still planned (and with which timeline)? What about FONAREDD ?</p> <p>In its October 2020 governance assessment of CAFI, Transparency International noted "As there is no explanation on how and why the Board took a decision, the absence of minutes of board meetings undermines the transparency and perceived impartiality of fund operations."</p> <p>Will CAFI publish minutes of the 21-5 June 2021 Board meeting?</p>
<p>REPUBLIC OF CONGO</p>
<p><i>ERPA</i></p>
<p>Congo: Views on recently signed ERPA and synergies with CAFI process.</p>
<p><i>Oil drilling</i></p>
<p>Which measures have been taken by the RoC government to demonstrate how the auctioning of oil blocks in the Cuvette Central Peatlands is consistent with the objectives of the CAFI/RoC agreement?</p>
<p><i>Forest governance</i></p>

One of the big winners of the Macron-Sassou Letter of Intent was Total's partner Forêt Ressources Management (FRM), France's premier tropical logging consultancy and a key service provider to many of the Congo Basin's most notorious European and Chinese loggers.

FRM has also long been active in the forest plantation sector, especially in Congo-Brazzaville, and has vigorously lobbied donors to expand it. The LoI calls, repeatedly, for the development of forest plantations in Congo-Brazzaville.

CAFI is currently seeking synergy between its wood fuel program and Total/FRM's Bateke Plateau offset.

What exchanges with FRM did CAFI have prior to or during the drafting of the LoI?

OTHER

Impact on existing LOIs of EU policy developments including proposal to repeal FLEGT

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

What are synergies with the VPA process and timeline for signing the LOI