



Roadmap of the French-Gabonese Facilitation

2023-2025

Since the Joint Declaration of the COMIFAC countries in 2019, global recognition of the role of the Congo Basin forests in fighting climate change and preserving biodiversity has continued to grow. This role has been confirmed by the Congo Basin Statement, adopted at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, and more recently by the launch of new initiatives at COP27.

The French-Gabonese facilitation is part of this unprecedented framework. Firstly, because this is the first time since the creation of the Partnership that this work has been carried out jointly by a donor country, France, and a Congo Basin forest country, Gabon. In addition, the One Forest Summit, held in Libreville in March 2023, reiterated the importance of Central Africa's forests, promoting greater scientific cooperation, sustainable value chains and the development of innovative financing mechanisms.

Wishing to capitalise on this momentum and following the work of the German facilitation, the co-facilitation is proposing 5 priority areas for the 2023-2025 roadmap:

1. Promote dialogue and scientific cooperation relating to the Congo Basin forests

Scientific knowledge about the state of the forests is crucial for implementing and monitoring social, environmental and economic policies. To develop this knowledge, existing scientific networks have to be supported in order to strengthen their cooperation on the themes relating to vital carbon reserves, biodiversity and other ecosystem services. This cooperation will be based on the development of collaborative platforms.

2. Consolidate spatial and land-use planning and sustainable value chains

In order to promote rural development that is compatible with the sustainable management of forest resources, integrated and concerted spatial planning is one of the conditions for the development of sustainable agricultural value chains, be it for local consumption or for export. In line with the European regulation on deforestation, the co-facilitation will promote the development of zero-deforestation regional supply chains, particularly in the timber sector. This area will also include the issue of land rights, the link between the concerted management of transborder protected areas and transhumance, as well as issues relating to the illegal trade in natural resources, including timber and animal species.

3. Accelerate the development of innovative financing mechanisms



Based on the outcomes of the One Forest Summit and the recommendations of the Global Environment Facility, the co-facilitation will work to promote innovative financing mechanisms, by continuing work on the implementation of high environmental intensity credits and biodiversity certification. In particular, it will build on the work undertaken by the “Fair Deal Task Force on payments for ecosystem services”, and could be part of new partnerships, such as the Country packages for Forests, nature and climate.

4. Continue to highlight the importance of the Congo Basin Forests

a. Strengthen the Partnership's institutional governance

The specific nature of the multi-stakeholder model of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership makes it a particularly rich forum for coordination and the sharing of knowledge and experience, which is necessary to achieve its objectives. The co-facilitation will continue to improve the partnership’s governance, its structuring and its stabilisation over time, in particular by reinforcing and developing the role of the various colleges in the governance of the CBFP.

b. Assert its role in regional and multilateral forums

The CBFP must continue to assert itself as a major player in the protection of the region's forests and natural resources. To this end, synergies with the numerous thematic and international bodies must be developed and encouraged, in particular those dedicated to climate and biodiversity, in order to better convey the voice of the Congo Basin Forests, through the promotion of the "Fair Deal". Finally, the development of relations between the main players involved in the management of other forest regions, in particular Latin America and Asia, will also be an issue.

5. Continue to strengthen dialogue and synergies with CBFP partners, in particular China and the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)

Mindful of the work of the previous facilitation and COMIFAC/CEEAC, the CBFP will continue to strengthen its links with the CAFI multi-donor fund, which increased opportunities for high-level dialogue by defining common priorities. Finally, the facilitation will continue to promote dialogue with China, a key trading partner for the sub-region, which will include a greater involvement of its private sector.

