

**CENTRAL AFRICAN FOREST INITIATIVE
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC COMPLETION REPORT
REPUBLIC OF CONGO
REPORTING PERIOD: 23 SEPTEMBER – 31 DECEMBER 2019**

Programme Title & Project Number	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central African Forest Initiative Implementation Single-Donor Trust Fund (TF072553) MPTF Office Project Reference Numbers: 102120 (RoC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country: Republic of Congo Priority Area: REDD+ National Investment Framework (NIF) 			
Participating Organization(s)	Implementing Partners			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank Group (WBG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republic of Congo: Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development, with coordination from the National REDD+ Committee (CONA-REDD) 			
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)	Programme Duration			
Total approved budget as per project document: \$28,240,000	Duration (months)	Start Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Original End Date	Current End Date
RoC Investment Plan Preparation \$ 698,000	RoC	23/09/2016	23/05/2017	31/3/2019
Programme Assessment/Mid-Term Eval.	Report Submitted By			
Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> No: Mid-Term Evaluation Report No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Juha Seppala Title: Environmental Specialist Participating Organization (Lead): World Bank Email address: jseppala@worldbank.org 			

ACRONYMS

CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CONA-REDD	National REDD+ Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EB	Executive Board
ERPA	Emission Reductions Payment Agreement
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Program
IP	Indigenous Peoples
LOI	Letter of Intent
MPTF-O	Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
NIF	National Investment Framework
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Forest Degradation and Deforestation
RoC	Republic of Congo
TF	Trust Fund
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBG	World Bank Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) Trust Fund was launched during the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York on September 29, 2015 through the official signing of the Joint Declaration¹. It is hosted by the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O) of UNDP and offers a coordination mechanism to donors who are part of CAFI by harmonized approval, disbursement, and monitoring and reporting processes.

The objective of the CAFI program is to assist the development of sound land and forest management policies, programs and projects in African countries as part of their low-emission development strategies. Its aim is to support African countries to define their REDD+ investment strategies, and financing policy development, investment programs and projects related to REDD+ in Africa. The main expected outcome of the program is the development of a single, comprehensive, broadly supported, multi-sector REDD+ NIF² in each of the recipient countries.

On September 13, 2016, an Administration Agreement was signed between the World Bank and the MPTF-O, making the World Bank as an implementing organization, and on October 6, 2016, the World Bank Group received a Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) grant package of US\$ 2,240,000 for programming in Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR) and the Republic of Congo (RoC), with a view to help these countries develop and implement a single, comprehensive and broadly supported multi-sector REDD+ National Investment Framework (NIF) to achieve significant results at a large scale.

For the RoC, the CAFI grant complemented funding from the Forest Investment Program (FIP), and the resulting document served to satisfy both CAFI and FIP objectives.

In October 2018, the CAFI Secretariat endorsed the final version of the RoC NIF document, paving the way for a Letter of Intent between CAFI and ROC to finance concrete activities supporting the NIF with up to \$65 million in funding. With the LoI and the first project under the FIP already signed, the NIF is set to fulfill its promise as a key convening and guiding document on REDD+ in the country.

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CAFI Joint Declaration between Donor Countries and Organizations, Central African Partner Countries and South-South Partners, September 29, 2015

² This is also referred to as the REDD+ Investment Plan (FIP terminology).

I. Purpose

The Republic of Congo (RoC) has been engaged with REDD+ since 2008. As part of the REDD+ Readiness Activities under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and UN-REDD, a National REDD+ Strategy was prepared. To complement this National REDD+ Strategy, the Government of the Republic of Congo had identified the need for a comprehensive REDD+ National Investment Framework (NIF) to achieve significant results at large scale and accommodate existing and future funding sources on REDD+ including from both CAFI and the Forest Investment Program (FIP). Hence, the expected outcome of this project, which essentially provided preparation funds, was this single, comprehensive, broadly supported multi-sector NIF that supports and encourages stakeholder efforts to reduce forest loss and degradation.

II. Assessment of Programme Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

In RoC, the investment planning process for CAFI and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) was jointly prepared in accordance with the investment plan design. Thus, both FIP and CAFI funds were used to produce the NIF.

With CAFI preparation funds, the activities covered were as follows:

- Producing and consolidating a single NIF;
- Facilitating cross-sectoral coordination and building a broad multi-sectorial consensus to support the NIF;
- Consolidating and complementing analytical studies on key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- Designing the institutional arrangements to support the execution, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the NIF;
- Supporting the creation of a sustainable consultation framework to ensure an inclusive dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders;
- Ensuring communication, visibility and broad support of the National REDD+ Strategy and NIF;
- Management, administration and supervision.

Following the transfer of funds in October 2016, the Bank team was able to officially initiate preparations for signing of a Grant Agreement with the government. However, the signature of the grant agreement and the implementation of the grant-financed activities were delayed due to multiple factors combined, namely the Presidential elections, political unrest, and a change in government that produced substantial inactivity in most of 2016. Because of those initial delays, the CAFI Preparation Fund Grant Agreement was only signed on March 23, 2017.

As part of the overall work, diagnoses of agroforestry value chains, fuel wood production, legal and political context, and co-benefits were launched in October 2016 and completed in early 2017. These diagnostics served as the basis for designing the consultations on the NIF. On the basis of its national REDD+ strategy, the drafting of the investment plan was given to an international consulting firm. The Government organized extensive consultations during the preparation period, including two sets of consultation events spanning the entire country (33 events in total), gathering approximately 1,036 stakeholders, and a national validation workshop, which was held between September 18-19, 2017.

The Government presented a first draft of the NIF to the CAFI Executive Board (EB) on October 10, 2017, and the CAFI EB provided written comments on November 22, 2017. The Government submitted another version (version 7) of the Investment Plan on 28 August 2018, for a second independent review. The

recommendations of the second independent review of the Investment Framework were submitted on 4 September 2018; the final version of the investment plan³ was conditionally adopted, subject to a final review of the Investment Plan, on October 29, 2018 by the CAFI EB.

In a parallel procedure, the FIP Sub-Committee endorsed the investment plan on December 13, 2017.

The grant executed by the Government closed on December 31, 2018, and the Bank supervision ended on March 31, 2019. Overall, the CAFI allocation for this work was fully disbursed.

³ Plan d'Investissement de la Stratégie Nationale REDD+ de la République du Congo 2018-2025(version 7 finale)

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance	Source of Verification
<p>Outcome 1 Republic of Congo has developed and implemented a single, comprehensive, broadly supported, multi-sector REDD+ NIF to achieve significant results at a large scale.</p> <p>Indicator: REDD+ NIF</p> <p>Baseline: REDD+ NIF not yet prepared, consulted on or endorsed.</p> <p>Planned Target: Single REDD+ NIF that has been consulted and endorsed by development partners, relevant government departments, CSOs and IPs.</p>	<p>Final version conditionally approved on October 2018.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission of version 7a of the NIF. • Decision EB.2018.13.
<p>Output 1.1 Consultancy to take stock of the existing REDD+ documentation, draft, consolidate and produce the NIF</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.1 – Final report delivered Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Submission of version 6.a of the NIF to the CAFI Secretariat on 7 May 2018.</p> <p>Two independent reviews of the NIF version 6.a sent by the CAFI Secretariat to the Government 22 May 2018.</p> <p>Submission of version 6B of the National Investment Plan for a second independent review. Recommendations of the second independent review of the Investment Framework transmitted on 4 September 2018</p>		NIF
<p>Output 1.2 Consultancy to incorporate the final set of strategic options that address key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the National REDD+ Strategy, and extend the sectoral economic analyses as needed (i.e. industrial agriculture sector, mining sector, others)</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1 – Final report delivered Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Submission of version 6.a of the NIF to the CAFI Secretariat on 7 May 2018.</p> <p>Two independent reviews of the NIF version 6.a sent by the CAFI Secretariat to the Government 22 May 2018.</p> <p>Submission of version 6B of the National Investment Plan for a second independent review. Recommendations of the second independent review of the Investment Framework transmitted on 4 September 2018</p>		NIF
<p>Output 1.3 Facilitation of cross-sectoral coordination and broad multi-sectoral consensus-building workshops to support the NIF in alignment with the National REDD+ Strategy, with involvement of CONA-REDD and relevant key ministries</p> <p>Indicator 1.3.1 – Workshops held Baseline: No</p>	<p>Multiple rounds of broad-based consultations and coordination workshops were held.</p> <p>Creation of a Task Force under Prime minister to help facilitate cross sectoral coordination</p>		<p>Activity reports.</p> <p>Nomination Order</p>

Planned Target: yes			
<p>Output 1.4 Consultation workshops on the NIF, with involvement of private sector, CSOs, local communities and IPs, at both the national level (in Brazzaville) and at the departmental level</p> <p>Indicator 1.4.1 – Workshops held Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>33 consultation workshops held. Specific platforms have also been created: - Private Sector Platform - Government/Donors Platform</p>		<p>Workshop minutes.</p>
<p>Output 1.5 Consultancy to design the institutional arrangements in support of the execution, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the NIF, including a manual for implementation and necessary trainings for the concerned institutions</p> <p>Indicator 1.5.1 – Final report delivered Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Creation of a Task Force so that NIF’s implementation is supervised by Prime Minister</p>		
<p>Output 1.6 Communications and knowledge activities, such as consultancies, dissemination events, production of printed materials, and the production of a communications plan for the implementation phase</p> <p>Indicator 1.6.1 – Communications plan delivered Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Outreach workshops have been organized on both NIF and LOI.</p>		

iii) Evaluation & Lessons learned

The project was successful in achieving its objectives. The NIF was prepared and the final version was officially approved by the CAFI secretariat in October 2018, incorporating studies on drivers of deforestation as well as results of extensive consultations (33 consultation workshops held).

The NIF paved the way for a Letter of Intent with the CAFI Executive Board and the Republic of Congo on grant funding of up to US\$65 million, which was signed in September 2019. The NIF was also a key document for the FIP, with the first FIP project⁴ for RoC with the African Development Bank (ADB) of US\$ 8 million already signed in January 2020 and another⁵ with the World Bank for \$16 million under preparation.

In addition, RoC was accepted into the portfolio of the FCPF Carbon Fund in March 2019 and is currently finalizing the Benefit Sharing Plan, which is a key part of the package leading to negotiations of an Emission Reductions Payment Agreement (ERPA) for delivery of approximately 10 million Emission Reductions and up to \$50 million in results-based emission crediting payments.

Given the late start of the grant-financed activities due to political unrest and elections, a request for an extension of the program closing date from December 31, 2017 to June 30, 2018 was requested. However, the majority of the grant-funded activities were completed in October 2017 with the submission of the first draft of the NIF to the CAFI Secretariat. The review and revision process of the NIF took further than expected, and accordingly the Bank requested a second extension of the closing date of the grant to March 31, 2019.

Throughout the preparation of the NIF the importance of broad-based consultations and government buy-in has been critical.

With the LoI and the first project under the FIP already signed, the NIF is set to fulfill its promise as a key convening and guiding document on REDD+ in the country.

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Community Agroforestry and Wood Energy Project (PACBE)

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Northern Congo Agroforestry Project.