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CENTRAL AFRICAN FOREST INITIATIVE

MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2023

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: CAFI Direct Cost Technical Secretariat • Programme Number (if applicable) • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 127868 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>(if applicable)</p> <p>Country/Region: Central Africa</p>
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: UNDP 	<p>Priority area/ strategic results: Sustainable Development (UNDP Strategic plan), Climate and Environment</p>
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: 38,056,041.80</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by Agency (if applicable) <p>Agency Contribution</p>	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP, UNCDF, World Bank, AFD, UNOPS, FAO, GIZ, UNFPA, Enabel, TNC, UN-Habitat, IUCN, JICA, OAF, Farm Africa, UNESCO, ID
	<p>Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (months) 60 months (5 years)</p> <p>Start Date⁵ (dd.mm.yyyy) 07.15.2021</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i>
<p>Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i></p>
<p>TOTAL: 38,056,041.80</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p>
<p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>

Original End Date ⁶ (<i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>)	31.12.2025
Current End date ⁷ (<i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>)	31.12.2025
Report Submitted By	
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⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

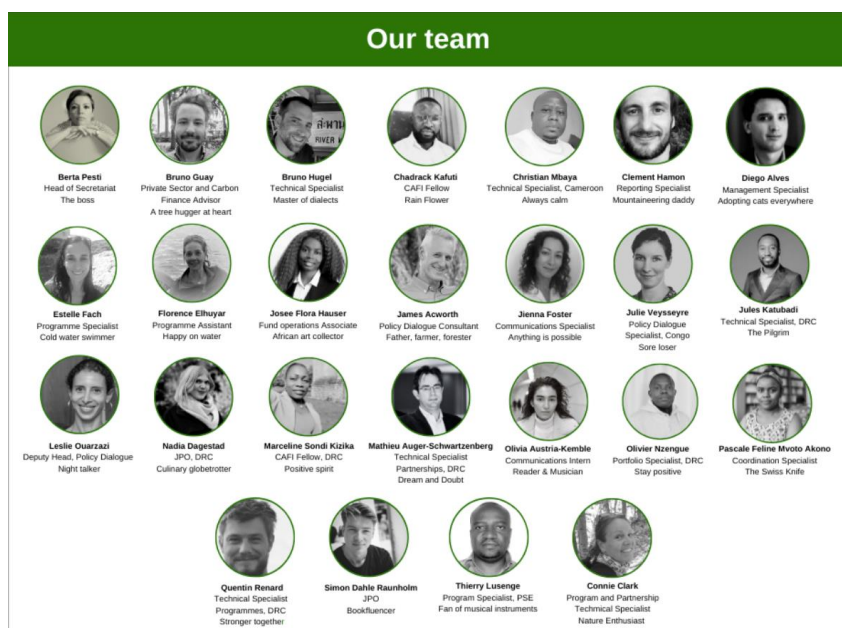
⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

This report on the activities of the CAFI Secretariat provides an update on progress made by the CAFI Secretariat in 2023 under the project “MPTF Secretariat - Direct Cost” project, that started in 2021 and will run until 2025. This project picks up from the previous CAFI Secretariat project that had started in 2015 and ended in 2021.

This report outlines the Secretariat’s progress towards the overarching goals set out in its Terms of Reference, i.e. to:

- support the programming cycle through a proactive and strategic approach to accelerate implementation
- support monitoring and evaluation
- support the Executive Board (EB) in taking informed decisions, organize EB meetings and other meetings
- represent CAFI at meetings, side-events and regional fora
- support fund-raising efforts with the MPTF-Office and the EB, and support the MPTF-Office in the preparation and update of agreements between implementing agencies and CAFI
- ensure communications and knowledge management
- deliver efficient and effective operational processes (contract service providers and vendors)

The report you have in your hands is structured around these main goals.



CAFI SECRETARIAT CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS

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Acronyms

AFD = French Development Agency

CAFI = Central African Forest Initiative

CBFP = Congo Basin Forest Partnership

COP 27 = 27th Conference of the Parties (to the UNFCCC)

CBFP = Congo Basin Forest Partnership

COMIFAC = Central African Forests Commission

CPIC = The Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation

CIFOR = Center for International Forestry Research

DRC = Democratic Republic of Congo

EB = Executive Board

EFI = European Forest Institute

ENABEL = Belgian Development Agency

EUR = euros

EoI = Expression of Interest

FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FONAREDD = National REDD+ Fund (of the DRC)

GEF = Global Environment Facility

GIBADER = Groupe Inter-Bailleurs pour l'Agriculture et le Développement Rural

GIBEC = Groupe Inter-Bailleurs pour l'Environnement et le Changement Climatique

GIZ = German Corporation for International Cooperation

GRET = Group for Research and Technology Exchanges

HACT = Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer

ID = Initiative Développement (NGO)

(I)NGO = (International) Non-Governmental Organisation

IIED = International Institute for Environment and Development

IUCN = International Union for the Conservation of Nature

JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency

KFW = Germany's Investment and Development Bank

LOI = Letter of Intent

MPTF-O = Multi Partner Trust Fund Office

MRV = Monitoring, Reporting and Verification

M USD = million United States dollars

NICFI = Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative

REDD+ = Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation

TNC = The Nature Conservancy

IUCN = International Union for the Conservation of Nature

UNCDF = United Nations Capital Development Fund

UNDP = United Nations Development Programme

UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UK = United Kingdom

WCS = Wildlife Conservation Society

WWF = World Wildlife Fund

1. Maintaining high-level engagement with policy dialogue

To support the strategic dialogue between CAFI's partner countries and the Executive Board, the CAFI Secretariat provided support to representatives of the Executive Board and embassies in the region, held regular exchanges with partners countries and contributed to mobilizing political actors at a high level.

1.1 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

To increase the CAFI Secretariat capacity to support high level policy dialogue, a partnership expert was recruited in 2023 and took post in Kinshasa in December 2023.

In line with the monitoring commitments made by partners within the 2nd Letter of Intent (LoI), the CAFI Secretariat **coordinated policy dialogue efforts, supported donors and contributed to the successful organization of several high-level meetings throughout 2023**. These included Ambassadors' meetings in March and September 2023 and the Annual Review of the CAFI-DRC Partnership in February 2023.

These high-level meetings held in Kinshasa had several objectives: i) to monitor progress made on political engagements ii) review progress on the milestones of the 2nd Letter of Intent iii) take stock of the programming progress to secure CAFI funding commitments and iv) discuss specific topics such as accountability of executing agencies or implementation challenges. These meetings also contributed to maintaining the regular and trustful dialogue with the Congolese authorities and to enabling coordination of partners on key policy issues to better integrate climate in the DRC development pathway.

The 2022 Annual review of the CAFI-DRC Partnership was held in February 2023 in Kinshasa (DRC) with representatives of the signatory parties to the Letter of Intent at the invitation of H.E.M the Minister of Finance and in partnership with the Minister of State in charge of the Environment and Sustainable Development. It involved a wide range of stakeholders of the partnership such as Ambassadors representing the CAFI EB, the UN Resident Coordinator, Authorities from sectoral ministries. The report of the annual review was approved during the Political segment of the Annual review on 23 February 2023 and published on [the CAFI website](#). Specifically, the Annual review focused on:

1) An analysis of progress and gaps relating to the achievement of all the intermediate milestones of the Letter of Intent for 2021-2023, with particular attention paid to the status of the 2022 milestones, following the publication of the [Report of the monitoring of 2021-2022 milestones](#)

2) The status of the portfolio of the National REDD+ Fund (FONAREDD), the programming carried out in 2022, and the 2023 programmatic priorities to ensure an increase in the mobilization of resources from the FONAREDD to the CAFI Fund, so that the DRC can mobilize funding for CAFI for the implementation of its priorities

3) The status of the restructuring of the FONAREDD.

The CAFI Secretariat organized the Annual Review in two segments: **A technical segment**, where the cabinets of the Ministries and members of the CAFI Executive Board reviewed [this report, drafted by the CAFI Secretariat](#) and made recommendations for validation by the authorities; and a **political segment** conducted with the authorities in charge of key sectors, and ambassadors representing CAFI Executive Board donors, with participation of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and several representatives of the civil society and the private sector. Major advances driven by the CAFI DRC Partnership will be summarized in the 2023 CAFI Fund report⁸.



2022 POLITICAL ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CAFI-DRC PARTNERSHIP IN KINSHASA, FEBRUARY 2023

In 2023, the CAFI secretariat also continued to raise high-level ownership and monitoring of those commitments notably through:

- ensuring that **milestones at risk were put on the agenda of the Donor group on environment and climate (GIBEC** in French) monthly meetings, as well as at the agenda of GIBEC meetings with the authorities (such as two meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Environment, one meeting with the Head of Office of the Head of State, one meeting with the Minister Petroleum etc.) and providing subsequent briefings to GIBEC and CAFI Chair as well as partners in the DRC to support coordination in the policy dialogue with the authorities on the climate / forest agenda.
- **support to the alignment of policy dialogue and measures on the climate/forest agenda**, notably with the integration of triggers aligned with milestones of the Letter of Intent for the first Development Policy Operation of the World Bank in the DRC and with the organization of consultations between the

⁸ To be published on the CAFI web site after approval by the CAFI Executive Board

GIBEC and the IMF on measures to be integrated on a future access from DRC to the IMF Resilient Sustainability Trust.

- closely **monitoring of progress towards the development and finalization of policies in major land use sectors**, especially on the governance of the forest sector together with the World Bank (independent legal review of the forestry contracts and cancellation of illegal contracts), land use planning, land tenure and for the promotion of sustainable agriculture, and briefing partners in DRC and in the CAFI Board accordingly.

1.2 Republic of Congo

In 2023, the CAFI Secretariat continued to actively support the policy dialogue in RoC.

The year 2023 was marked by the organization of the Annual review of the partnership, led by the Permanent Secretariat with the support of the CAFI Secretariat. The annual review assessed the progress achieved against the implementation of the Letter of Intent (LoI) by the end of 2023 and identified recommendations aimed at accelerating progress. It was developed as part of a consultation process with all stakeholders of the partnership.

Initial work was carried out with the technical support of multi-sector groups to **frame a common understanding of the 34 milestones of the 2019-2023 LoI** and assess their progress. The Permanent Secretariat and the CAFI Secretariat organized an unprecedented inclusive and multi-sector approach to achieve this. A national 2-week consultation phase with 13 line ministries, 3 implementing agencies and 3 organizations of civil society and the private sector made it possible to identify the actions to be implemented to reduce risks and accelerate the achievement of milestones.

The CAFI Secretariat prepared and organized the meeting of the Partnership Steering Committee chaired by the Prime Minister on October 30, 2023. The latter took place in the presence of members of the CAFI Executive Board and led to adoption of the conclusions of the Annual review.

The results of the Annual review highlighted the progress of the partnership with **6 milestones achieved and 23 milestones in progress**, out of a total of 34 milestones assessed. The Annual review summary report is available [here](#).

1.3 Gabon

The CAFI Secretariat supported meetings between national implementing partners and the implementing organisations for projects funded under the Gabon - CAFI partnership (AFD, UNDP, TNC and UNESCO), as well as with civil society and private sector organisations involved in the governance of the projects. Partners considered ways in which CAFI Governance structures could be strengthened and streamlined, given the growth and diversification of CAFI Programs in 2022. These meetings resulted in a unified CAFI Gabon Governance Framework which was validated by the CAFI Gabon Steering Committee in June 2023.

Formal engagement slowed down after June 2023 considering the country's political situation.

1.4 Cameroon

The CAFI Secretariat actively supported its Board and the Government of Cameroon to develop, agree and launch a call for Expression of Interest for a 60 million dollars of pilot projects which were jointly agreed upon. The CAFI secretariat worked closely with the designated focal point by the office of Head of State for the CAFI-Cameroon partnership, the Minister in charge of Economy, Planning and Land Use Planning (MINEPAT) to secure a non-objection from the Government on the four identified pilot projects and the launch of the call after extensive consultations with the different sectoral ministries (Letter of NO from the Minister to the Head of the CAFI secretariat). The CAFI secretariat worked closely with the Board to help prepare the EB decision EB.2023.08 launch the call for EOI.

After the technical review of the submissions, the CAFI secretariat provided support to the Government of Cameroon to exchange with the pre-selected agencies to inform the non-objection from the Minister in charge Economy, Planning and Land Use Planning on the selected entities to develop project documents. The CAFI secretariat accompanied a delegation from the MINEPAT at the HQ of the different agencies beginning of September 2023, mission which helped secured a prompt non-objection from the Minister.

To allow for high-level and multi-sector dialogue to take place in accordance with CAFI's theory of change, the CAFI Secretariat supported the government and the selected implementing organization in the design of the coordination project (the backbone of the partnership) and helped secure a preparatory grant to accompany the consultation processes necessary for the success of the programming and policy dialogue in 2024.

1.5 Equatorial Guinea

No significant progress was made in 2023 while the Executive Board and the Ministries of Finance, Economy and Planification and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forests and Environment awaited proposals following the 2022 [Call for Expression of Interest](#) (see section 2.5). Dialogue is expected to resume in 2024 with enhanced CAFI Secretariat capacity and possible interest from the Executive Board.

1.6 Central African Republic

The CAFI Secretariat organized and facilitated a new country group for the Central African Republic (CAR). In addition, the Secretariat supported the preparation and conduct of a mission in CAR to engage political dialogue and launch the implementation of the preparatory grant to support policy dialogue and the elaboration of three prefeasibility studies piloted by the AFD. During the mission, the CAFI Secretariat, with the support of the European Union and France Ambassadors, met with different Ministers and the Prime Minister to discuss next steps of the partnership starting with the studies financed through the preparatory grant finalized in 2023.

The CAFI secretariat met with the Minister of Environment at the margins of the Three Basin Summit in Libreville on October 2023 and with the Prime Minister in Geneva on December

2023 to exchange on the opportunities to consolidate the partnership with CAR. Following these meetings, the Prime Minister asked CAFI in a letter from December 2023 to provide support for the integration of climate concerns in the development of the National Development Plan 2024-2029 and explore the possibility to pilot investments in the country.



MEETING BETWEEN CAFI SECRETARIAT AND H.E. THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC IN GENEVA

2. Project development and oversight

The CAFI Secretariat supports the EB in the development and approval processes of projects, as well as their oversight. The results of the project are described in the project reports and in the consolidated Trust Fund report, the paragraphs below only present the CAFI Secretariat's role in project development and monitoring.

2.1 Democratic Republic of Congo

Programming under the Second Letter of Intent (2021-2030)

Following a [Call for Expressions of Interest](#) published in May 2022, the Government of the DRC and the Executive Board of CAFI had established a list of 14 priority projects (known as "Fast track") in August 2022. Throughout 2023, the CAFI Secretariat, together with the

FONAREDD Secretariat, assessed several versions of 14 project documents developed and submitted by implementing organisations.

The programming pace culminated in December 2023 with the approval of USD 136 million for Fast Track projects for nine projects to eight implementing organizations. **To inform the participation of the CAFI Executive Board in this decision-making process (agenda [here](#)), the CAFI Secretariat prepared documentation, organized and facilitated 23 calls (twice monthly) of the CAFI working group.**

Project Id	Project title	Organizations	Approved budget
116875A	Scaling up Family planning	UNFPA	1,998,366
116875B	Scaling up Family planning	UNOPS	8,001,634
113547	PIREDD Kwilu (Addendum)	JICA	5,000,000
TBD	PIREDD Plateau	UNOPS	10,993,775
117600	PIREDD Equateur (Addendum)	FAO	6,000,000
TBD	Mining and Hydrocarbons Standards	GIZ	6,000,000
TBD	Carbon market and CDN coordination	PNUD	3,000,000
TBD	PDL-145 territories	UNDP	45,000,000
140631	Land tenure reform (PARF 2)	UN-Habitat	15,000,000
TBD	PIREDD KO-Lomami (decision not signed)	Enabel	35,000,000
117080	PIREDD Mongala (Addendum)	Enabel	0
TBD	PIREDD Sud-Ubangi	Enabel	0
TBD	Support reaching milestones 22-23	PNUD	0
TBD	Energy	TBC	0
Total Fast track 2023			135,993,775

Monitoring the portfolio of ongoing projects

With a view to strengthening its monitoring capacities necessary for the execution of the 2nd letter of intent, the CAFI Secretariat recruited new staff in 2023, namely a program analyst (JPO) in April and a programming expert in August, based in Kinshasa.

In close collaboration with the representatives of Norway and the United Kingdom (CAFI Chair) in the DRC, the CAFI Secretariat contributed substantially to the analysis and quality control during the Fast Track project development process by providing technical advice to FONAREDD.

Most importantly, the CAFI Secretariat kept the members of its Executive Board informed, participated in discussions and actively contributed to the monitoring of the 19 projects active in 2023, through the FONAREDD and project governance bodies including:

- 7 meetings of the Technical Committee (now Project Review Committee (PRC) with the FONAREDD restructuring); agendas and summaries are available [here](#)⁹
- A Steering Committee to approve new projects was held in October; calendar is [here](#)
- 7 meetings of project steering committees; calendars are available [here](#)

With the contribution of the CAFI Secretariat in the various programmatic monitoring work, the FONAREDD Secretariat transferred US\$33.4 million in 2023 to implementing organizations.

Period	# Id	Project title	Agencies	Transfers in 2023
Mar-23	105282	Land use planning reform	UNDP	850,000
	113547	PIREDD Kwilu	JICA	831,566
	117600	PIREDD Equateur	FAO	1,500,000
	126783	PIREDD Maniema	GIZ	3,000,000
	116875	Scaling up Family planning	UNFPA	1,998,366
	116875	Scaling up Family planning	UNOPS	8,001,634
Jul-23	105042	DRC National Fund: Direct Cost	UNDP	2,653,752
	117920	Secretariat Programme	UNDP	2,219,033
Nov-23	126783	PIREDD Maniema	GIZ	5,000,000
	117080	PIREDD Mongala	Enabel	3,000,000
	113546	Sustainable wood energy	UNCDF	3,083,632
	113546	Sustainable wood energy	UNDP	1,278,361
TOTAL				33,416,343

With the aim of centralizing information and making it easily accessible to the CAFI Working groups, Executive Board and the general public, the CAFI Secretariat continued its massive effort of making all related documentation available, with varying levels of access, per meeting and per project. While waiting for the arrival of a new portfolio management system, the CAFI Secretariat developed an internal monitoring tool to follow various dashboard parameters and send alerts when necessary.

2.2 Republic of Congo

The CAFI Secretariat supported the finalisation of two project documents, that were signed in 2023, allowing the transfer of funds and the start of the implementation phase. These two new projects are KOPEKOBA (Investment Program of the Sustainable Land Use Program)

⁹ In line with CAFI Manual of Operations, not all links are entirely public.

and LITUKA (project for the distribution of improved stoves in the Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire basins).

The portfolio now includes 6 active projects, totalling a funding of 46.5 MUSD from the CAFI Fund to which another 30 MEUR has been added from the European Union and the French Development Agency (AFD).

In addition to starting these two projects, the CAFI Secretariat:

- Monitored the execution of current projects.
- Supported a restructuring of the governance arrangements of the Coordination Support Project (PAC) to accelerate project implementation.
- Supported the Permanent Secretariat for coordinating the partnership with CAFI for monitoring the implementation of the Letter of Intent, in particular for the development of the annual review of the partnership.
- Developed terms of reference for the launch of a temporary project to support the engagement of civil society in monitoring the Letter of Intent and supported the launch of this temporary project via the PAC.
- Supported the dialogue between the government and GIZ for the finalization of the project document for strengthening environmental governance and organized independent evaluations of the project.

2.3 Gabon

Early in 2023, the CAFI Secretariat participated in two project steering committee meetings that resulted in stronger implementation of CAFI 1 (Land use planning and forest monitoring) and 2 (Agriculture research and expansion of national parks) projects. The Secretariat prepared and released the second tranche of the CAFI 1 project to AFD in late December 2022 after meeting the disbursement conditions set by the Executive Board.

The CAFI Secretariat also participated in a joint Steering Committee meeting where workplans and budgets for four of the five results-based payment projects (CAFI 3) were approved (Botanical Gardens, Community Forestry, Research and Monitoring, and National Parks). The Steering Committee requested that the 5th Project (Coordination) budgets and workplans be revised to reflect the new approved CAFI Governance structure.

To ensure the flow of further results-based payments (RBPs), the CAFI Secretariat provided support to finalize and update the results reports and several UNFCCC documents (Forest Reference Level, Biennial Update and Technical annex) required by the convention to qualify for RBPs as well as supported completion of documents required to submit results to ART TREES.

2.4 Cameroon

Embedded within the existing National Development Strategy (SND30) monitoring structures, the partnership with Cameroon was kicked into high gear in 2023 with the

agreement to launch a Call for Expressions of Interest for an amount totalling 60 M USD (which includes the existing Coordination project implemented by the UNDP).

Four key projects were identified, and the call was successfully concluded, and implementing organizations selected, over the summer:

Support for Intersectoral and Multi-Level Coordination (Implementing Organization: GIZ), to provide technical and financial resources to MINEPAT and other sectoral ministries, strengthen structures and capacities, finalise key national strategies and plans, prepare a roadmap of reforms, and accelerate a pipeline of future projects.

Capacity-building in Land Use Planning (Implementing Organization: GIZ), focusing on participatory land use planning, mapping and monitoring of land use and land use change.

Integrated Management of the Grand Mbam Landscape (Implementing Organization: KFW), to build decentralised capacity for land use planning, natural resource governance, cross-sectoral coordination in municipal and regional councils, and test standardised approaches that will enable the Grand Mbam to become a jurisdictional emission reduction project.

Support to the existing Cocoa and Coffee Sector Development Fund (FODECC) (Implementing Organization: IFAD), in particular to operationalise a future agroecological transition platform.

2.5 Equatorial Guinea

The CAFI Secretariat launched a call for Expressions of Interest in January 2022, examined the expressions of interest received and provided its analysis to the Executive Board, that selected the French Development Agency in June 2022. The French Development Agency (AFD) was asked to develop a full proposal to support the policy dialogue and conduct studies to identify preliminary data and the most suitable relevant opportunities in the land-use and forestry sector for a potential future collaboration.

2.6 Central African Republic

The CAFI Secretariat monitored progress made under the preparatory grant, which was approved in 2020 and closed in 2023, through one mission in April in Bangui and videoconference. The grant enabled the continued efforts of the partnership between the former and the Government and CAFI for the implementation of the measures identified in the [National Investment Framework](#), through the conduct of three pre-feasibility studies for programs in three pilot areas.

2.7 Regional

The CAFI Secretariat participated in nine meetings and provided guidance in the Steering and Technical Committees of the FAO-led "Trends and Driver's study" and organized its at-cost extension.

With regards to IUCN's Regional Nature+ Accelerator programme, although the project remained in its start-up phase, the CAFI Secretariat provided input to a regional market barrier study for CAFI that had been launched in December 2022.

In 2022, the CAFI Secretariat had facilitated the approval by the Executive Board of a **capitalization of the "&Green" Fund**, to provide 51.1 million USD as donor capital to &Green, who will catalyse more than double that amount in additional capital the Congo Basin. In 2023, the proposal was revised towards direct access of &Green to the CAFI Fund. The CAFI Secretariat supported the accreditation process, which conditions this access and approval of the revised project. This process was not concluded by end 2023.

In September 2023 CAFI launched a [Call for expressions of interest](#) to all relevant **implementing organisations interested in investing in private sector companies in CAFI partner countries to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation** in the following sectors:

- Charcoal value chains and clean cooking solutions
- Agriculture (including palm oil, maize, rubber, cocoa, coffee, and timber)
- Forestry
- Ecotourism and other innovative approaches to Forest Conservation

The CAFI private sector facility intends to make 100 million USD available to implementing organisations in the form of project development grants to i) support early development of projects including to pilot new technology and approaches, and to remove the risks and information gaps to investment; Investment grants to deploy a blended finance approach ii) share risks or provide below market interest rate loans and/or other concessional terms such as longer tenors and grace period : iii) Performance-based grants to price-in the externality by providing an explicit value on forest carbon and biodiversity and ex post verification of the environmental services provided by investments: all payments will be made only after the independent verification of results.

3. Recruitment and improved operations for smoother processes

Since the latest revisions to the CAFI Terms of Reference and the CAFI Manual of Operations, approved by the Executive Board on 10 March 2023, the Secretariat has continued its work on fund management optimization, which led to approval of adoption of the [Project Budgeting Policy](#), defining thresholds for Project Management cost (PMC) budgets - in line with the practice from other Trust Funds; approved process-improvements pertaining to the Safeguards performance assessment; and continuous improvements of programming templates to reflect the evolving industry practices and the different programme specificities.

3.1 Secretariat recruitments: increasing Secretariat capacity

In 2023, the CAFI Secretariat significantly increased its human resources capacities to strengthen its ability to deliver funding and results as well as to manage the expanding

workload. Ten recruitment processes were concluded, and staff have been onboarded, as described below:

- Reporting Specialist, Geneva
- Technical Advisor, Partnerships, Kinshasa
- Technical Specialist, Programs, Kinshasa
- Chief Policy and Country Dialogue, Geneva
- Fund and Operations Associate, Geneva
- Programme Analyst, Kinshasa
- Programme Analyst, Geneva
- Programme Specialist (Payment for Environmental Services), Kinshasa
- CAFI Fellow, Kinshasa
- CAFI Fellow, Geneva

3.2 Access to the CAFI Fund: diversifying our pool of expertise

In 2023, CAFI supported several prospective implementing partners in line with CAFI's Terms of Reference, to allow access to funding to international non-governmental organizations (including but not limited to INGOs, international cooperation agencies - ICA, international organizations).

The list below presents all the implementing organizations with direct access to the Trust Fund¹⁰. The Secretariat continues its work for both accreditation and re-accreditation in compliance with MPTFO's NUNO Policy and in application of CAFI's Procedure on Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

Implementing Organizations	NUNO/PUNO ¹¹	Type of NUNO	Implementing Projects Currently?
AFD	NUNO	ICA	Yes
ENABEL	NUNO	ICA	Yes
GIZ	NUNO	ICA	Yes
JICA	NUNO	ICA	Yes
Farm Africa	NUNO	INGO	Yes
IUCN	NUNO	INGO	Yes
One Acre Fund	NUNO	INGO	Yes

¹⁰ The list does not include the Implementing Organizations engaged via the FONAREDD Trust Fund.

¹¹ PUNO: Participant UN Organizations. NUNO: Non-UN Organizations.

The Nature Conservancy	NUNO	INGO	Yes
Initiative Développement	NUNO	INGO	Yes
GRET	NUNO	INGO	No
CIFOR	NUNO	INGO	No
WCS	NUNO	INGO	No
IFAD	PUNO	-	Yes
WB	PUNO	-	Yes
UNFPA	PUNO	-	Yes
UN-Habitat	PUNO	-	Yes
UNOPS	PUNO	-	Yes
FAO	PUNO	-	Yes
UNCDF	PUNO	-	Yes
UNDP	PUNO	-	Yes
UNESCO	PUNO	-	Yes

The list below displays the volume of funding approved across these several implementing organizations. Top 3 Organizations mobilizing resources with the Trust Fund are UNDP¹², AFD and UNOPS.

IO	CAFI TF	FONAREDD TF	TOTAL	%
UNDP	90,321,289	125,952,967.00	216,274,256.00	43%
World Bank	2,240,000	32,000,000.00	34,240,000.00	7%
UNHABITAT		6,999,490.00	6,999,490.00	1%
UNCDF	1,893,656	8,042,950.00	9,936,606.00	2%
JICA		8,999,607.00	8,999,607.00	2%
UNFPA		10,727,486.00	10,727,486.00	2%
UNOPS	10,000,000	32,272,514.00	42,272,514.00	8%
Enabel		12,000,000.00	12,000,000.00	2%
FAO	12,843,673	10,000,000.00	22,843,673.00	5%

¹² UNDP received funds both as project Implementing Agency as well as funds for the administration of CAFI and FONAREDD Secretariats.

AFD	54,602,699	26,999,378.00	81,602,077.00	16%
GIZ		30,000,000.00	30,000,000.00	6%
IFAD	499,316		499,316.00	0%
UNESCO	261,080		261,080.00	0%
ID	1,000,000		1,000,000.00	0%
Farm Africa	431,001		431,001.00	0%
One Acre Fund	1,491,461		1,491,461.00	0%
IUCN	7,500,000		7,500,000.00	2%
TNC	12,427,239		12,427,239.00	2%

3.3 Funding transfers

The CAFI Secretariat supported the MPTF-Office in the preparation and updating of CAFI's agreements with implementing organizations.

In total, USD 19,915,399 in fund transfers were disbursed in 2023 as per geographical and organizational details below.

Country	Implementing organization ¹³ and funds transferred (USD)
Cameroon	IFAD (USD 499,316) UNDP (USD 295,005)
Republic of Congo	AFD (USD 2,000,000) FAO (USD 1,500,000) ID (USD 1,000,000)
Regional	UNOPS (USD 4,000,000) FAO (USD 1,242,000) One Acre Fund (USD 991,461) UNDP (USD 8,387,617) ¹⁴

¹³ See list of acronyms at the start of report

¹⁴ CAFI Secretariat

3.4 Building Central African talent: the CAFI Fellowship programme

Building expertise among young central African professionals in human development and climate change mitigation is essential for long-term forest protection in the region. That is why CAFI launched a fellowship program at its Secretariat in Geneva, to invite young talents from the region to join its team for one year and grow skillsets that can in turn benefit future actions for Central African forests and people. The second cohort of the Programme (2023-2024) is composed of two young talents from the Democratic Republic of Congo.



2023 CAFI FELLOWS WITH THE HEAD OF SECRETARIAT (LEFT) AND THE PROGRAMMING SPECIALIST (DRC) (RIGHT)

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: improved reporting and clearer guidance

4.1 Country level evaluations

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the CAFI Secretariat, through its participation in seven DRC FONAREDD Technical Committee held in 2023, contributed to monitoring progress of ongoing projects and provided inputs into 10 project evaluations.

As per the Letter of Intent with the **Republic of Congo**, the CAFI Secretariat, in support to the Permanent Secretariat, continued to strategically monitor milestones that has supported the annual review of the partnership conducted in 2023.

4.2 Streamlined guidance and its operationalization

2023 marked the first year of operationalization of the CAFI [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning \(MEL\) Policy](#), that had been adopted by the Executive Board in December 2022.

In 2023, CAFI complemented the MEL Policy with the [CAFI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidelines](#), adopted on 13 November 2023 and aligned with the CAFI Manual of Operations the legal agreements signed between the MPTF Office and implementing agencies, and the CAFI Policy on management costs. The Guidelines were developed with inputs from the **MEL Working group, whose meetings were prepared and facilitated by the CAFI Secretariat, and that includes donors, implementing organizations and country representatives**. Most importantly, the CAFI Secretariat drove the process so it would be concluded before the approval of new projects in the DRC and Cameroon, and thus start applying to these.

The CAFI MEL Guidelines are aimed at CAFI implementing organizations, and clarify and provide general guidance on monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning. They include distinct tables of harmonized CAFI/FONAREDD indicators for i) projects with a territorial approach and ii) enabling projects, which make it possible to better compile overall results obtained by CAFI-funded projects (directly or through the FONAREDD).

Three distinct reporting templates for implementing organizations were also created and/or improved by the CAFI Secretariat in 2023:

- a. a reporting [template for projects in start-up phase](#), (i.e. projects with less than a year since receipt of the first funds from the MPTFO and the half-yearly reporting deadline (August 31) or annual (December 31))
- b. a reporting [template for preparatory grants](#)
- c. a reporting [template for all other projects](#)

The CAFI Secretariat held two large scale information sessions to ensure dissemination and comprehension of the MEL Guidelines and reporting requirements amongst implementing

organizations, including with the FONAREDD Secretariat, as well as multiple bilateral meetings on a per-request basis.

The CAFI Secretariat increased its coordination with the FONAREDD Secretariat, through monthly meetings dedicated to monitoring, evaluation and reporting, to ensure **co-development, buy-in of the final products and consistent information delivered to implementing organizations** receiving CAFI funding.

4.3 Quality reporting

For the 2023 reporting exercise, the CAFI Secretariat reviewed and assessed the results of more than 30 projects reported by implementing organizations, and on this basis monitored delivery rate and reported back to the Executive Board on programme financial delivery. The CAFI Secretariat prepared and finalized the [CAFI Fund 2022 Consolidated report](#). The report included the results of the fourth Gender assessment, undertaken by the CAFI Secretariat in coordination with the DRC's FONAREDD Secretariat, that allowed **the Executive Board to set its gender ambitions for 2023**.

5. Informed Executive Board and working groups

5.1 Two Executive Board meetings

In 2023, the CAFI Secretariat prepared, organized, facilitated and documented (internally and externally) two meetings of the CAFI Executive Board. Both meetings were organized in a hybrid format.

The 22nd meeting of CAFI's Executive Board (EB22) was hosted by CAFI's current Chair, the United Kingdom. It was held from June 26th to 28th, 2023 and took place at the BEIS Conference Centre in London, UK, under the moderation of the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office. Discussions focused mainly on : (i) updates on the trust fund, (ii) ministerial exchanges, (iii) sessions with country partners. It included both sessions open to invited members of representative countries (including from the DRC, Gabon and Cameroon) and agencies, and closed sessions for EB members only.



CAFI EB 22 MEETING IN LONDON

The 23rd CAFI Executive Board meeting (EB23) was held in both Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) on October 30, and Kinshasa (DRC) from October 31 to November 02, 2023. Announced during the One Forest Summit in March during President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Gabon, the Three Basins Summit was also held in Brazzaville at the end of October



CAFI EB 23 MEETING IN KINSHASA

2023. As such, CAFI took this opportunity to leverage high-level attendees and other meetings held on this occasion to inform key decisions being made during the CAFI EB meeting. This 23rd edition was moderated by the United Kingdom, which currently holds the CAFI EB presidency. Discussions focused mainly on: (i) In-depth discussions on mechanisms currently being developed by CAFI; and (ii) Meetings between the EB, the partner governments present (RoC, DRC, Cameroon) and implementing agencies. In addition, the Steering Committee of the Congo-CAFI partnership was held and presided by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo.

In total, adding intersessional decisions, the CAFI Executive Board adopted 36 decisions in 2023, listed in the table below, a new record since the establishment of the Fund¹⁵. As per its rules, decisions are shared with a two-week notice with the Board, adopted, translated and published online on CAFI’s website as soon as agreed by the Board and, for country-specific decisions, as soon as they are communicated to the authorities. Most importantly, the CAFI Secretariat acted based on the Executive Board’s requests and updates a tracking table that is shared with the EB during each monthly call. All decisions are also available here: <https://www.cafi.org/cafi-board>

List of CAFI’s EB decisions in 2023
EB.2023.01 Decision Access to CAFI Fund to PROFOREST
EB.2023.02 - DRC - No-cost extension of the One Acre Fund Prepgrant
EB.2023.03 Operational issues - TORS and MOP
EB.2023.04 - Postponement of the CAFI Fund “Mid-Term” Evaluation
EB.2023.05 - Regional Technical Assistance facility
EB.2023.06 - Review of CAFI Secretariat Organigram
EB.2023.07 Decision Access to CAFI Fund for GRET
EB.2023.08 Decision Cameroon LAUNCH AMI
EB.2023.09 Approval of additional prep grant to OAF
EB.2023.10 - Decision Access to CAFI Fund for ID
EB.2023.11 - Risk Dashboard Decision
EB.2023.12 - Decision Regional Private Sector Facility
EB.2023.13 - DRC Project to support the implementation of the NDC
EB.2023.14 - DRC - Programming

¹⁵ 31 decisions had been adopted in 2021

List of CAFI's EB decisions in 2023
EB.2023.15 - Gabon CFI 2 Extension
EB.2023.16 - Decision CMR SELECTION IO FODECC
EB.2023.17 - Decision CMR SELECTION IO Coordination
EB.2023.18 - Decision CMR SELECTION IO GrandMbam
EB.2023.19 - Decision CMR SELECTION IO LUP
EB.2023.20 - RoC No cost extension National MRV System
EB.2023.21 - Update of the Frequency of Safeguards Performance Assessment
EB.2023.22 - Adoption of CFI's Policy on Project Budgeting
EB.2023.23 - No Cost Extension for AFD Gabon - Project 00111269 PNAT-SNORNF
EB.2023.24 - LAUNCH Private Sector EOI
EB.2023.25 - Access to CFI Fund to WCS
EB.2023.26 - Adoption of 2022 annual report
EB.2023.27 - PRIVATE Sector - SELECTION CFC
EB.2023.28 - No cost extension of FAO regional drivers study
EB.2023.30 RoC - No cost Extension PAC
EB.2023.31 MEL Guidelines
EB.2023.32 - Private Sector Selection CAP
EB.2023.33 - RoC - FAO Request for advanced payments
EB.2023.34 - Private Sector Selection UNEP-UNCDF
EB.2023.35 - &Green PRODOC approval
EB.2023.36 FONAREDD TORs

5.2 Country working groups

The CAFI Secretariat prepared and managed background documentation and minutes, presented and facilitated discussions **in 39 meetings of country working groups in 2023**.

These working groups, established by the CAFI TOR and EB decisions, have a recurring agenda of programming and policy dialogue, to which are added matters of particular concern to participants.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF WORKING GROUP MEETINGS IN 2023	TOTAL SINCE CREATION OF WORKING GROUP
DRC	23	75
ROC	6	29
GABON	3	6
CAMEROON	6	12
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	1	3
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	0	2
TOTAL	39	127

6. New member joins and fund mobilisation remains strong

In 2023, the CAFI Secretariat welcomed the United States as a new member of its Executive Board. The CAFI Secretariat continued to facilitate commitments and deposits into the CAFI Trust Fund. The following addendums were processed:

- 5th Addendum from France in the amount of 3 MEUR.
- 1st Addendum from Belgium in the amount of 1.5 MEUR.
- 1st Addendum from Sweden in the amount of 40 MSEK.
- 4th Addendum from Norway in the amount of 400 MNOK.

And **donors deposited over 95 million USD to the Fund**, as such:

CONTRIBUTOR	DEPOSITS IN 2023 ALONE (USD)	CUMULATIVE DEPOSITS BY 31 DECEMBER 2023 (USD)
GERMANY	28,860,834	265,644,146
NORWAY	37,911,098	374,376,592
THE NETHERLANDS	12,000,000	34,000,000
FRANCE	3,151,056	19,637,184
BELGIUM	4,970,474	11,523,305
SWEDEN	734,081	4,397,109
EUROPEAN UNION		15,096,179
SOUTH KOREA	387,991	1,652,182

UNITED KINGDOM	7,785,906	22,483,546
TOTAL	95,801,440	748,810,241

7. Communications and Knowledge Management

7.1 Web site

The CAFI Secretariat prepared to launch a new website in 2024. In the meantime, the CAFI website was maintained (www.cafi.org), enabling continued **transparency and access to country and project information**, as well as the CAFI portfolio.

The web site includes:

- Over 40 pages with background and regularly updated results for each CAFI-funded project in English and French, providing easy access to CAFI's investments and results for stakeholders.
- Eight thematic pages, corresponding to CAFI's outcomes, developed and updated with results.
- Graphs updated to showcase commitments per countries and sector.

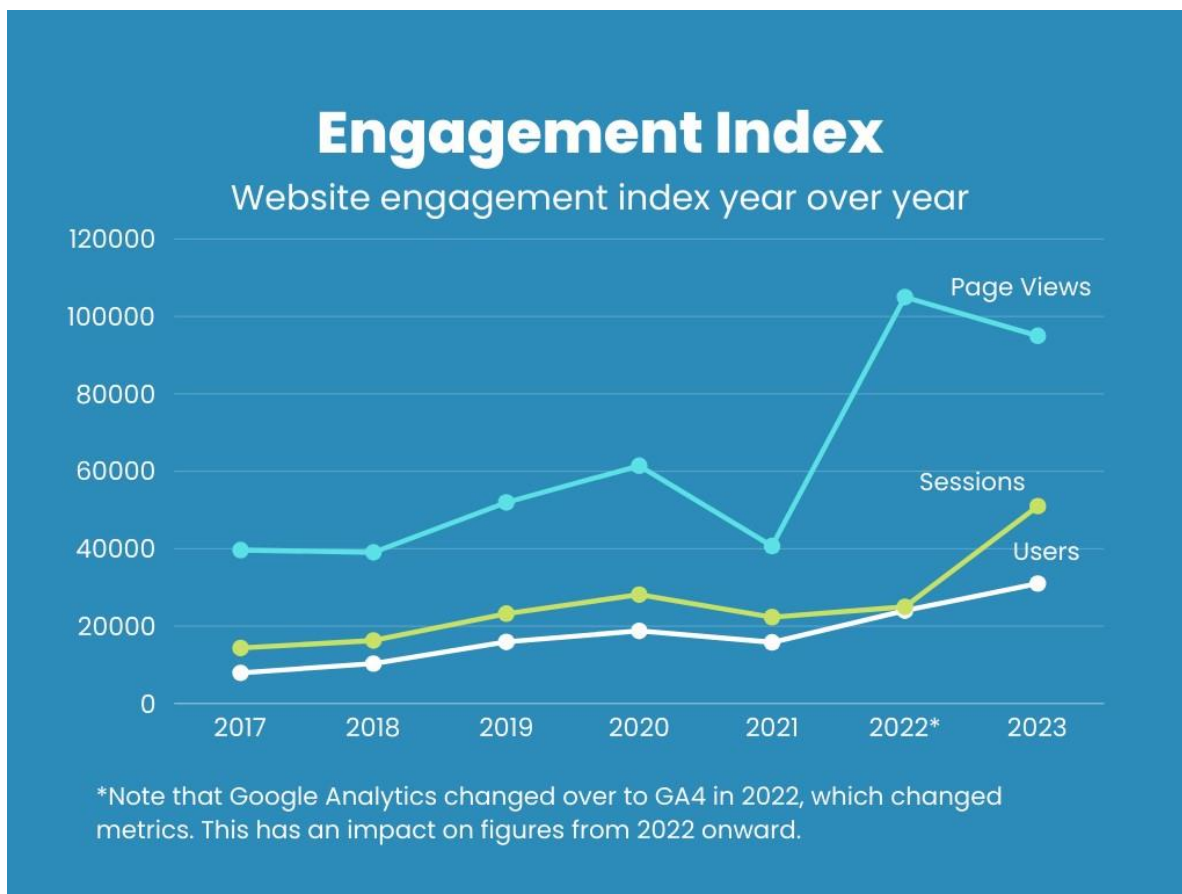
[Nine news articles](#) were published in 2023 on the web site in two languages.

Metrics (see table below) are comparable to previous years, however, it can be noted that the numbers above indicate that the website was visited by Google bots. This would explain why the number of sessions doubled and the average session duration decreased dramatically while the number of page views remained relatively stable. There was an increase from October to November 2023, which coincides with the publication of the [Call for Expressions of Interest for the Private Sector](#), as well as information on the Regional Facilities launched.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022¹⁶	2023
Users	7934	10,322	15,917	18,778	15,822	24,000	31,000
Sessions	14,344	16,286	23,223	28,132	22,329	25,000	51,000
Page views	39,647	39,056	51,955	61,447	40,678	105,000	95,000
Average session duration	3.24 minutes	2.40 minutes	2.25 minutes	2.17 minutes	1.38 minutes	2.21 minutes	1.40 minutes
Pages visited / viewer	2.76	1.58	2.24	1.50	1.87	4.4	3.09

¹⁶ Due to an update in the metrics in Google Analytics, which is used to obtain this data, from this point on, data may not be entirely comparable to previous years.

User per month	661	860	Low:1000 ; High: 2800	Low: 1212 (April); High: 2213 (October)	Low: 221 (June); High: 2947	Low: 1700 (September); High: 3300 (June)	Low: 2.1k (Jan, Jul); High: 4.3k (November)
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WEBSITE ENGAGEMENT INDEX YEAR OVER YEAR

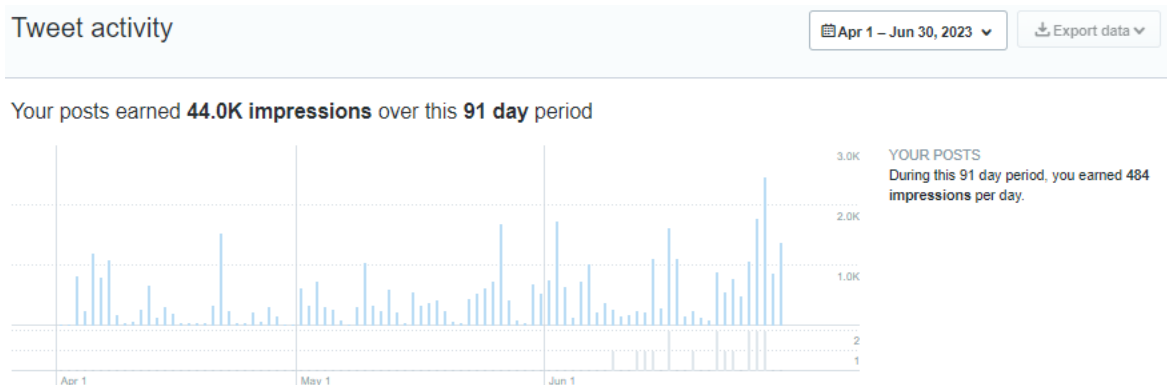
Statistics from the CAFI web site were used by media during high level events (see below).

7.2 Social media

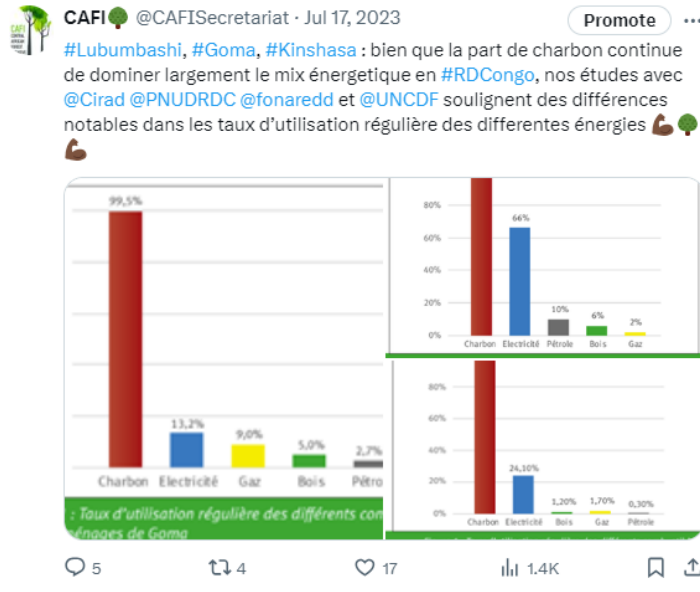
The CAFI Secretariat continued to focus its social media presence on Twitter (now X) in 2023, in order to assess the CAFI social media strategy with a view to make any necessary adjustments in 2024.

Data	2017 (April to Dec)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of followers ¹⁷	285	588	1022	1373	2004	2474	2928 (15 March)
Total tweet impressions	147,122	205,800	187,000	121,000	204,600	66,088	90.8k

The number of followers continued to increase throughout 2023, and the number of impressions over a 3-month period reached as high as 44k, as CAFI was very active on social media during this period (launch of Call for Expressions of Interest for Cameroon, EB22...).



A temporary decrease in capacity in the CAFI Secretariat led to fewer tweets in August-September, causing a slight drop in Tweet impressions, but the numbers improved at the launch of the Call for Expressions of Interest for the Private Sector Facility in September, through the [Three Basins Summit](#) and EB23 in October and November, and COP28 in December.



EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL POST ON X, GARNERING 1.4K VIEWS

7.3 Media coverage

While CAFI was less cited in the press in 2023 than in 2022, the CAFI Secretariat continued throughout 2023 to engage with the press on an ad hoc basis via “off the record” interviews with top-level international journalists. Most of the time, these journalists reach out to CAFI for background information on issues related to deforestation in Central Africa. In this way, CAFI continues to serve as a reliable resource to reputable international press outlets.

As several governmental shifts occurred in CAFI partner countries in 2023, CAFI remained a source of reliable information on deforestation and related issues in the region. Press toward the end of the year focused on the Three Basins Summit and elections in the DRC, and CAFI was more often than not simply cited for past contributions or commitments, while statistics from the CAFI website were used.

7.4 Events

One Forest Summit, Libreville, Gabon - March 2023

The CAFI Secretariat participated in two events during the One Forest Summit held in Libreville, Gabon. The Head of CAFI Secretariat participated as a panellist in an event on innovations and investments in nature-positive development in forest basins, focusing on indigenous peoples and local communities. She served as moderator for an event on sustainable use of forest resources.



CAFI SECRETARIAT, PARTICIPATING IN AN EVENT ON INNOVATIONS AND INVESTMENTS IN NATURE-POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Summit, hosted by Gabon with the support of the French Government, was well attended and created opportunities for high-level discussions and commitments. The events reached hundreds of in-person attendees, not to mention those who followed along online. It also served as a platform to announce the Three Basins Summit, held in October of 2023. More on the One Forest Summit can be found [here](#).

Three Basins Summit, Brazzaville, Congo - October 2023

The Three Basins Summit at the end of October 2023, a high-profile international event focusing on the three forest basins of the world, was a key opportunity to bring together actors, not just from the forest and related sectors, but from all three of the main forest basins in the world. Early in the organization of this summit, CAFI was invited to participate in events organized by other entities and to hold a side event to make a number of important announcements.

The CAFI Secretariat took this opportunity to organize a side event focusing on two major announcements. The first was the [launch of four new regional facilities](#): for the private sector, for family planning, a technical assistance facility and one focusing on South-South cooperation. The second announcement celebrated the [United States' decision to join the CAFI Executive Board](#) as a non-voting member. The event featured the participation of the Republic of Congo's Prime Minister Anatole Collinet Makosso and Minister of the Environment Arlette Soudan-Nonault. As a result, it was very well attended both to a standing room only audience in person, and to the hundreds joining the event online.



REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S PRIME MINISTER ANATOLE COLLINET MAKOSSO AND MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARLETTE SOUDAN-NONAUT AT THE THREE BASINS SUMMIT, BRAZZAVILLE, CONGO, OCTOBER 2023

In addition, CAFI participated in the following events hosted by others:

The Ministerial Plenary event during the panel focusing on strategy, programmes and integrated investment plans.

A World Conservation Society event focusing on countries with high forest cover (HIFOR) and highlighting the connection between the regional assessment and how it is linked (feed and be fed from) the work on HCV-HCS and land use planning in each of these countries.

A World Bank Event to bring policymakers, development partners and other interest groups together to explore the opportunities for enhancing climate finance for the forest conservation and sustainable forest economies in Congo Basin countries.

The CAFI Secretariat also capitalised on this moment to organize two important CAFI-specific events: (i) the Annual Review of the Congo-CAFI partnership (see above), and (ii) the 2nd CAFI EB meeting of the year, EB23, both of which are discussed in other sections of this report.

7.5 Communication tools

In addition to the website, social media outreach and heightened event communications and visibility, CAFI Secretariat developed and disseminated several communication tools in 2023 that serve to help stakeholders and partners, current and future, to better understand CAFI, results of the fund and funded projects, as well as some of the key programmes initiated by the initiative. These include the following:

Printable PDF documents

- The general 2-pager about CAFI was updated in [French](#) and in [English](#).
- A "Results" 2-pager was also updated in [French](#) and [English](#).
- A ["highlights" version \(10 pages\) of the 2022 Annual Report](#) was produced in English.

Videos

- A [short video in French](#) highlighting the partnership between CAFI and the DRC, was used for the DRC Annual Review in March 2023.
- A video on Payment for Environmental Services, in [French](#) and [English](#), used each time PES are referenced in meetings and online.

8. Safeguards and risk management

8.1 Addressing risks and challenges

The CAFI Secretariat revised the [Risk Management Strategy](#), that was adopted by the CAFI Executive Board in December 2023.

Risks identified for the CAFI Secretariat project are of operational and implementation nature, notably:

1. Operational challenges making it impossible/difficult for the CAFI Secretariat to deliver its mission: while mitigation measures such as definition of standard operating procedures, training of staff, and operational improvement reviews have improved operations, the three planned digital solutions could not be deployed in 2023 due to operational delays.
2. With a bigger and more decentralized team, the risk of lack of internal coordination increased slightly. However, this risk was managed by
 - a. development of internal standard operating procedures
 - b. an in-person staff retreat and planning meeting
 - c. and a coordination function created in the CAFI Secretariat.
 - d. standardization of templates
 - e. development of a strategic CAFI communications plan that includes internal communications
3. The risks of unmanageable volume of donor requests for information remained high but stable in 2023, with a large donor pool and CAFI portfolio.

Mitigation actions continue to be implemented and the Executive Board was provided with a comprehensive Risk Dashboard, as per the Risk Management Strategy.

8.2 Gender

The CAFI Secretariat continues its efforts to

- ensure gender balance in the public events it organized, to the extent possible when certain levels of participation are required such as ministers.
- incorporate gender-responsiveness in its guidance, such as templates for project documents and reporting
- monitor gender in the implementation of CAFI-funded projects, with a detailed annual assessment appearing in the 2022 Annual consolidated report.
- maintain a gender balance in the staffing CAFI Secretariat, with now a balance of 50% female and 50% male.

8.3 Transparency and integrity

All members of the CAFI Secretariat have taken UNDP's mandatory trainings on prevention of, and response to, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) as well as on fraud and corruption within the past two years. Consultants on long-term contracts are also required to take (and pass) these trainings.

The Secretariat circulates a conflict of interest form before EB meetings and shares the results with the EB for it to decide on how to handle identified conflicts of interest.

8.4 Complaints management

As per annex 2 of the [Manual of Operations](#) adopted in 2021, CAFI has a complaints management system that complements implementing organizations' systems. Designed to "empower and reinforce national processes and respect the rules and regulations of implementing agencies", the system specifies that 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 organizations, they can address a complaint to the EB using the contact information provided on the CAFI web site. No complaint was received in 2023 regarding projects funded directly by CAFI - including the CAFI Secretariat project. Complaints concerning projects funded via the FONAREDD will appear in the FONAREDD report when available, and will be summarized in the CAFI Fund annual report.

9. Strategic partnerships and exchanges

After two years of holding CAFI presidency, Germany stepped aside for the UK as new President. One of the key (renewed) goals in terms of partnerships to foster the collaboration with the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). This endeavour continued in 2023 with CAFI Secretariat participation in meetings of the different colleges of the CBFP. The CAFI Secretariat also supported the development of the "country packages" under the FCLP.

10. Conclusion

The CAFI Fund and Initiative have expanded, with enhanced dialogue with all partner countries, more programmes in new countries, and additional donors. The staffing of the CAFI Secretariat significantly increased in 2023 and is not yet finalized.

With increased human resources capacities and streamlined processes, the CAFI Secretariat demonstrated its increasing ability to deliver funding and results and learned to strategically manage the expanding workload that came with the expansion of funding, projects volume donor pool.