

2025

CAFI ANNUAL

REPORT



United Nations
MPTF Office

This is a pre-publication version of the CAFI Annual Report 2025. The final version will be available after the approval by the CAFI Executive Board.

CAFI Annual Report 2025

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CAFI at a glance

CAFI's mission and approach

The forests of the Congo Basin comprise the second largest continuous tropical forest in the world after the Amazon, and one of the planet's most important carbon sinks. They regulate climate, sustain biodiversity, and shape rainfall patterns across the African continent and beyond. But above all, they are home to people. For over 60 million people living in and around them, these forests are a source of food, energy, income, culture and identity.

“The forests, including those of the Congo Basin, are real lungs of the planet”.
Jean-Luc Crucke, Minister of Climate and Environmental Transition, Belgium, Belém, 18
November 2025

This unique ecosystem is under increasing pressure. Between 2016 and 2023, over 9.6 million hectares of forest were lost and a further 6.9 million hectares were degraded¹. These trends reflect persistent structural drivers of deforestation, including agricultural expansion, unsustainable energy use, and land use practices that do not adequately balance development and conservation. Comment two

Addressing deforestation in the Congo Basin therefore requires more than protecting trees. It requires addressing the underlying drivers that shape how land is used, how energy is produced, and how economies develop. It means supporting countries to pursue development pathways that meet people's needs while preserving the forests on which they depend.

Established in 2015, the Central African Forest Initiative was created to support this transition. It brings together partner countries, donors and implementing organisations around a shared objective to reduce deforestation and forest degradation while promoting sustainable and inclusive development. CAFI supports country led strategies that combine policy reforms, investments and coordinated action across sectors, with a clear focus on tackling the structural drivers of forest loss.

Over the past ten years, CAFI has built long term partnerships with six countries of the Congo Basin, mobilising over USD 1 billion in support of these efforts. This experience has shown that lasting change depends on combining political commitment, sustained financing and practical solutions on the ground. It has also highlighted the importance of learning and adapting, refining approaches, strengthening coordination and focusing investments where they can have the greatest impact.

¹ FAO regional forest-cover analysis for the Congo Basin (2016–2023)

CAFI's successful track record demonstrates that when people's needs are addressed through improved livelihoods, more secure land use, and access to sustainable energy, pressure on forests can be reduced. Protecting forests is not an obstacle to development, but a condition for it. By supporting countries to address the drivers of deforestation while improving living conditions, CAFI contributes to a future where forests and people can thrive together.

“CAFI is a partnership that delivers, thanks to the blend of global commitment, measurable impact, and local empowerment”

Niels Annen, State Secretary, Germany, New York, 24 September 2025

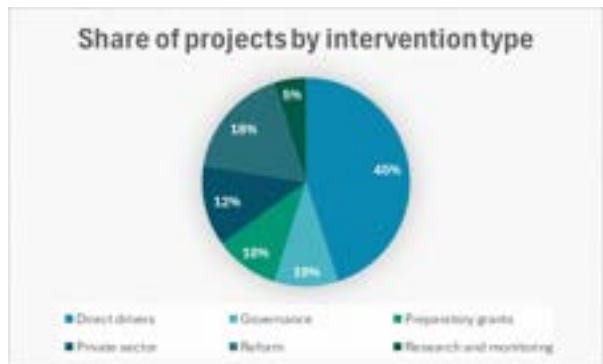
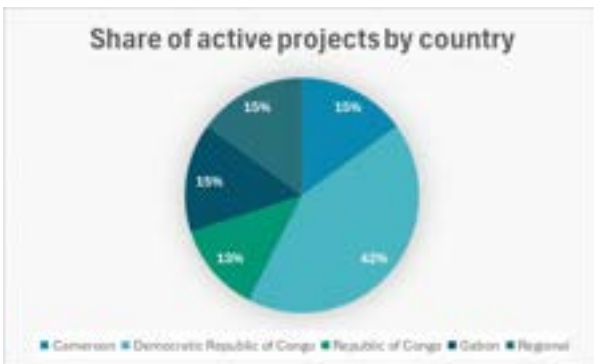
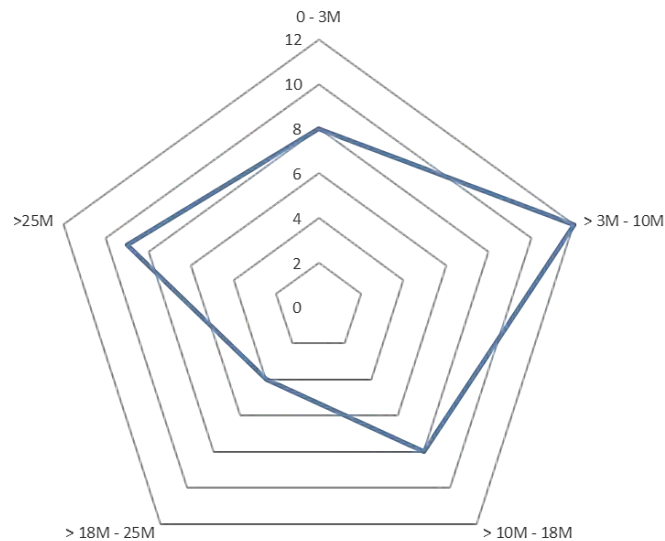
A growing and diversified portfolio

As of 2025, the CAFI portfolio comprises 80 projects and preparatory grants, of which 41 are active, reflecting a diversified set of investments across the Congo Basin.

The charts below show how this portfolio is structured, by size, by country and by type of intervention. They illustrate both the scale of CAFI’s engagement and the breadth of approaches deployed to address the drivers of deforestation, from large integrated programmes to more targeted interventions across governance, research and preparatory activities.

A table with all CAFI projects, organised by countries, is also available in Annex 1 of this report.

Share of active projects by budget size



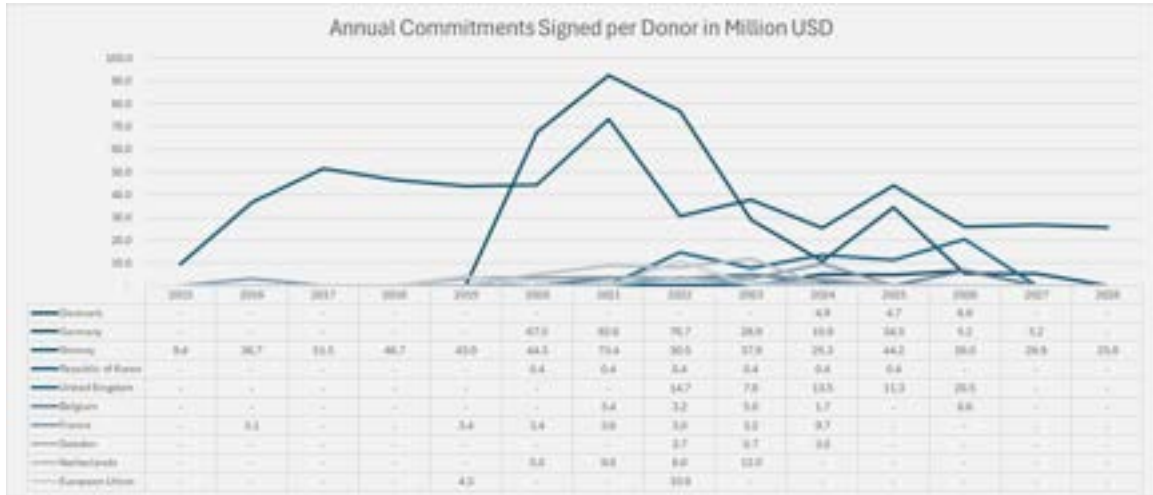
Financial outlook

Donor contributions

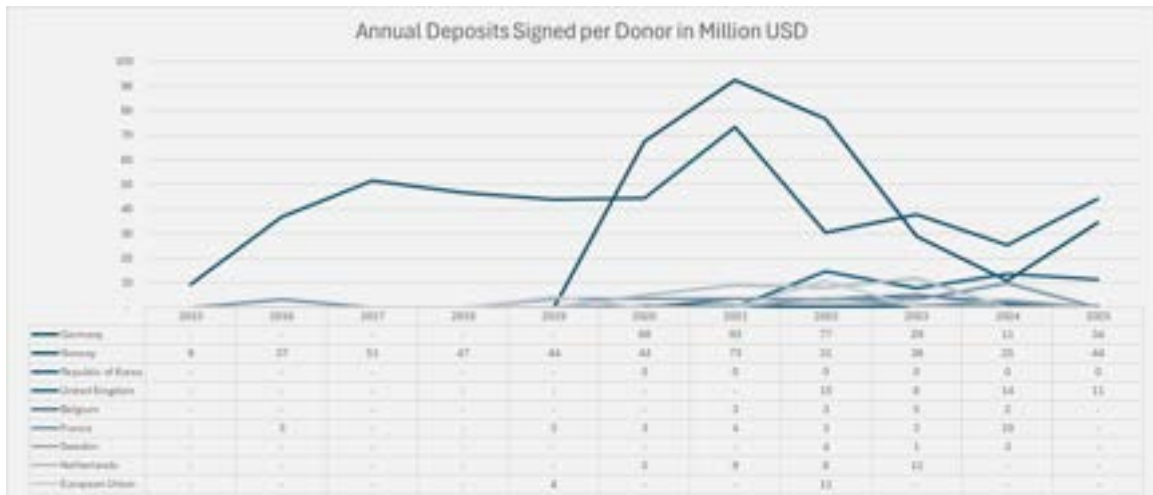
Donor support to CAFI remained strong in 2025, reflecting sustained commitment to the Congo Basin.



With new contribution agreements signed during the year, total commitments reached USD 1.04 billion, with a deposit rate of 88%, ensuring continued availability of funds for implementation.



Annual contributions show expected variability linked to replenishment cycles, while deposits continue to closely follow commitments, maintaining the Fund’s capacity to deliver at scale.

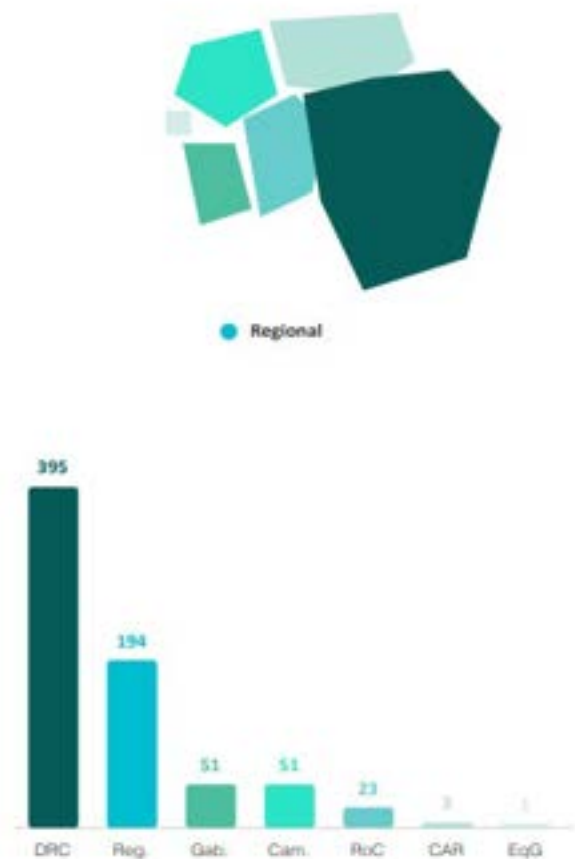


Financing that reaches countries at scale



CUMULATIVE TRANSFERS TO COUNTRIES

2015–2025 · USD 716.6 million total



CAFI financing continues to translate into substantial transfers to partner countries and regional programmes.

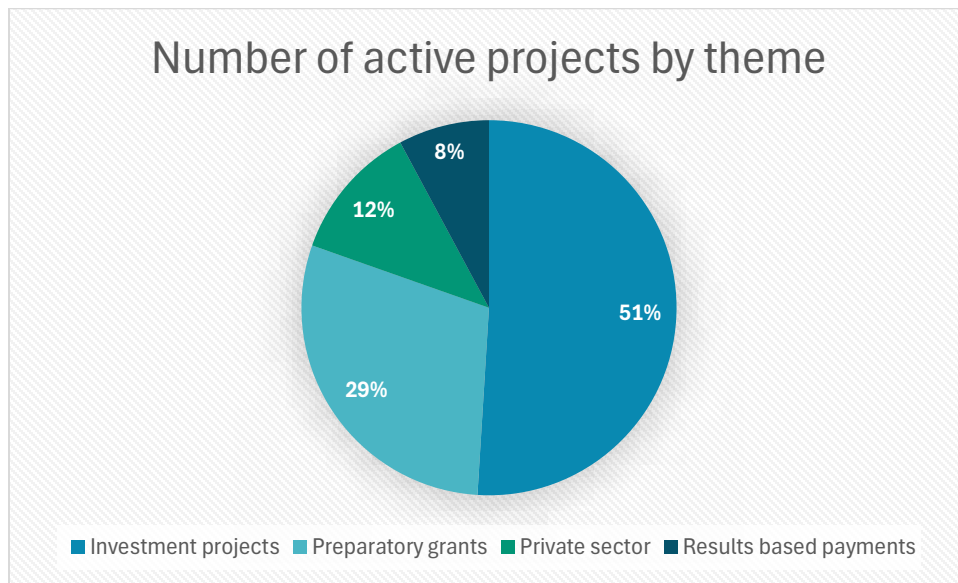
In 2025 alone, USD 169.1 million was transferred across the portfolio, reflecting the continued scale-up of implementation and the progressive conversion of commitments into on-the-ground investments.

Annual transfer levels remain influenced by project cycles and approval timelines but overall confirm a sustained trajectory towards delivery at scale.



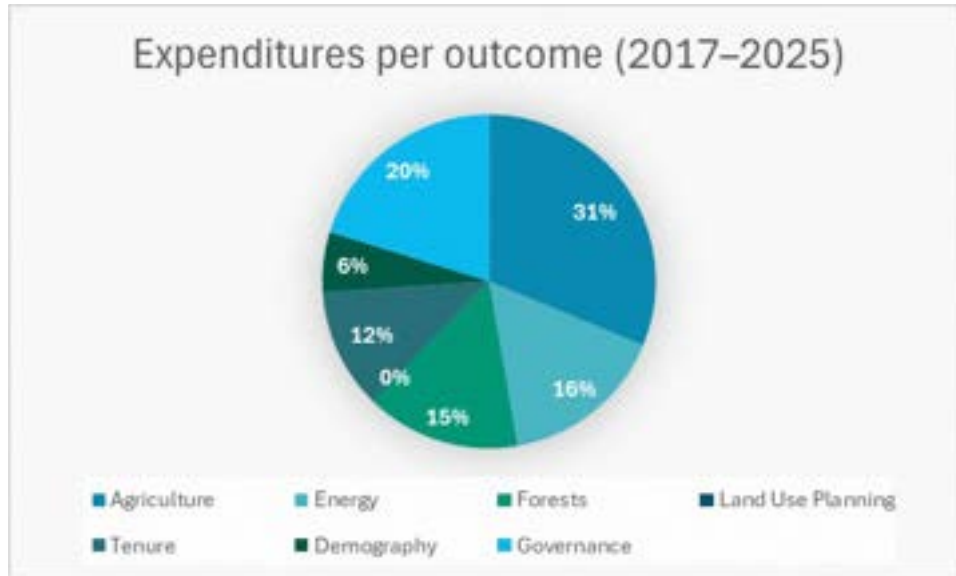
Investments across key drivers of deforestation

CAFI's financial framework now allows donors to earmark contributions to specific thematic priorities, such as results-based payments or private sector engagement.



This represents an important evolution in the Fund's governance, enabling more targeted allocation of resources aligned with both donor priorities and country needs.

These thematic allocations can now be tracked and analysed, providing enhanced transparency on how funding is distributed across key drivers of deforestation. This information is publicly accessible through the [MPTF Gateway](#).



CAFI tracks how project expenditures are distributed across outcomes, based on data reported by implementing partners. This provides an indicative view of how resources are allocated across sectors such as governance, agriculture, energy and forest management.

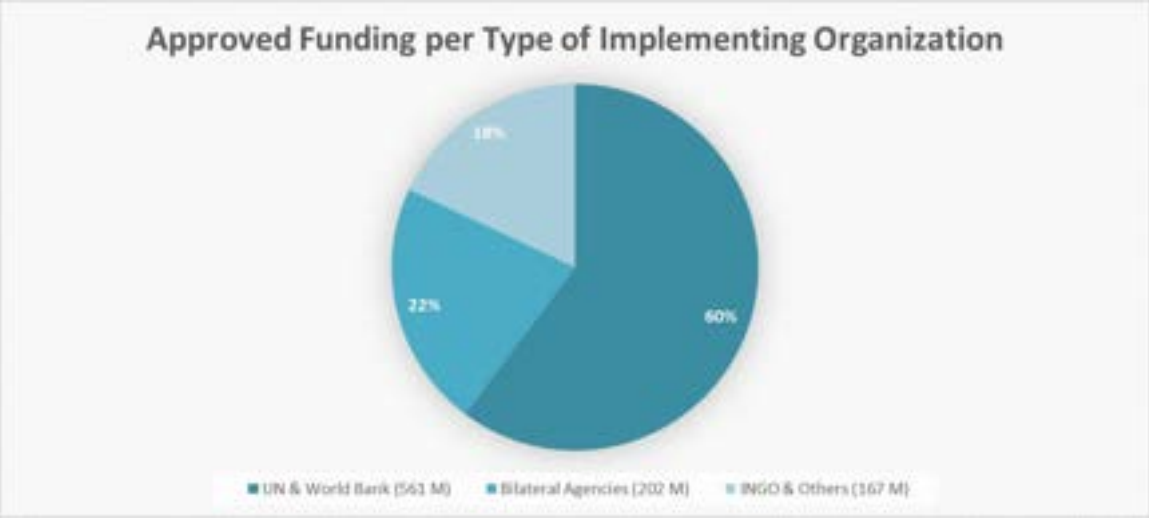
While these figures should be interpreted in the context of ongoing implementation and reporting practices, they offer useful insights into how investments are being deployed on the ground and help inform portfolio analysis over time.

Progress and results addressing the different indicators of CAFI’s M&E framework are available [here](#).

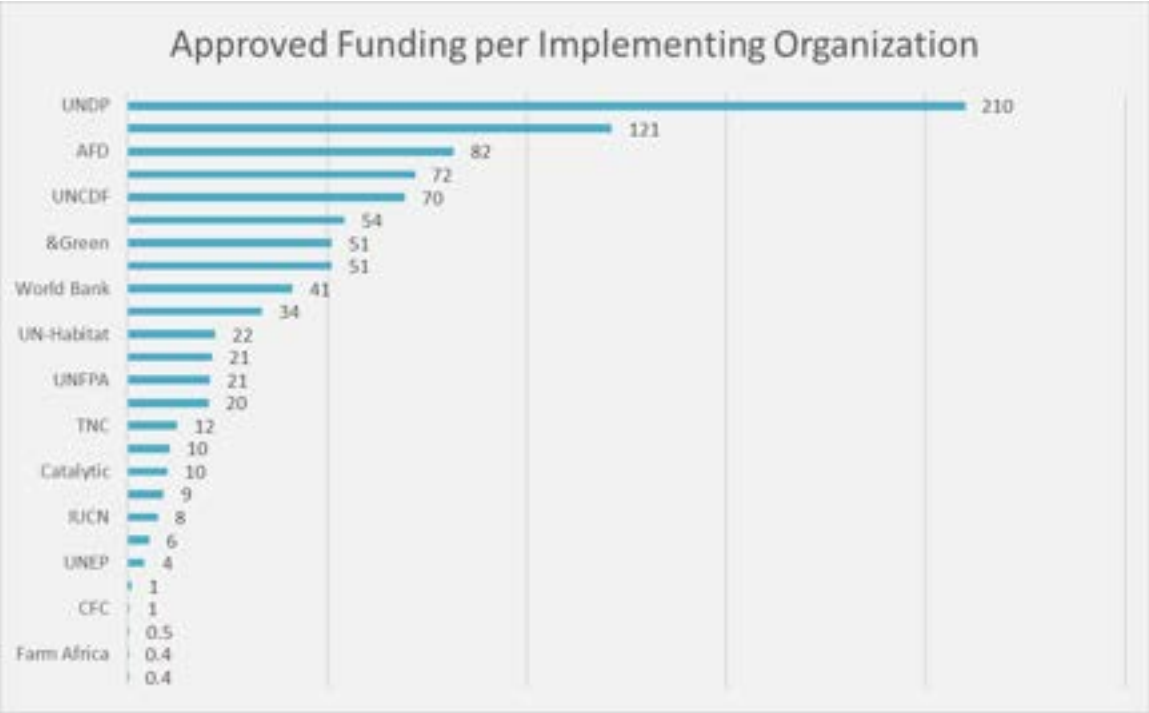
An expanding network of implementing partners

CAFI works through a broad and growing network of implementing partners across the Congo Basin, spanning UN agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral cooperation agencies, non-governmental organisations and investment funds.

By the end of 2025, this network continued to expand, reflecting both the diversification of delivery channels and CAFI’s effort to mobilise a wider range of expertise and financing instruments. In 2025, the Catalytic Foundation and KfW joined CAFI’s pool of implementing partners with projects approved in the same year.



Approved funding reflects a mix of implementation channels. While UN organisations and multilateral partners continue to play an important role in delivering large-scale programmes, the share of bilateral agencies and non-governmental organisations and funds have expanded over time, contributing to a more diversified implementation landscape.



Funding is distributed across a range of partners, with several organisations delivering large programmes alongside a broader group of specialised actors.

As of end-2025, UNDP, UNOPS and AFD remain among the largest recipients of approved funding, while a growing number of organisations contribute to the portfolio across countries and thematic areas.



In 2025, transfers were spread across multiple implementing organisations, reflecting ongoing delivery across the portfolio.

Financial flows continue to support both established partners and newer actors, depending on programme scale, country context and thematic focus.

Scaling long-term solutions

“A new paradigm must be adopted, integrating conservation with natural capital accounting, carbon credits and payments for environmental services” Rosalie Matondo, Minister of Forest Economy, Republic of Congo, New York, 24 September 2025



Enhancing transparency & impact monitoring to drive performance-based management

CAFI is strengthening how performance is monitored and managed across its portfolio, moving from primarily reporting-based oversight to a more structured, evidence-driven approach.

This shift is anchored in three key Executive Board decisions:

- → [EB.2024.33 – Independent verification of results](#)
- → [EB.2024.42 – Performance-based assessment for private sector projects](#)
- → [EB.2025.26 – Performance-based programming policy for AFOLU investments](#)

Together, they establish a clear principle: linking funding more directly to verified delivery.

Strengthening monitoring and data quality

Performance is now framed upfront in project design, with standardised indicators and clearer evidence requirements.

Operationally:

Initial disbursements are typically capped at around 40%	60% of funding is conditional on verified results
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This provides a more consistent basis to track delivery across projects and countries, while improving comparability and data quality.

Scaling independent verification

Independent verification is now applied across projects with land-use components under EB.2024.33.

It is conducted by ISO-certified third parties, currently SCS Global Services, and combines field visits, document review and spatial analysis.

Verification results directly inform disbursement decisions, corrective actions or project restructuring.

The first full independent verification was carried out in 2025, marking an important step in operationalising this approach across the portfolio. Key findings and lessons are highlighted in the spotlight below.

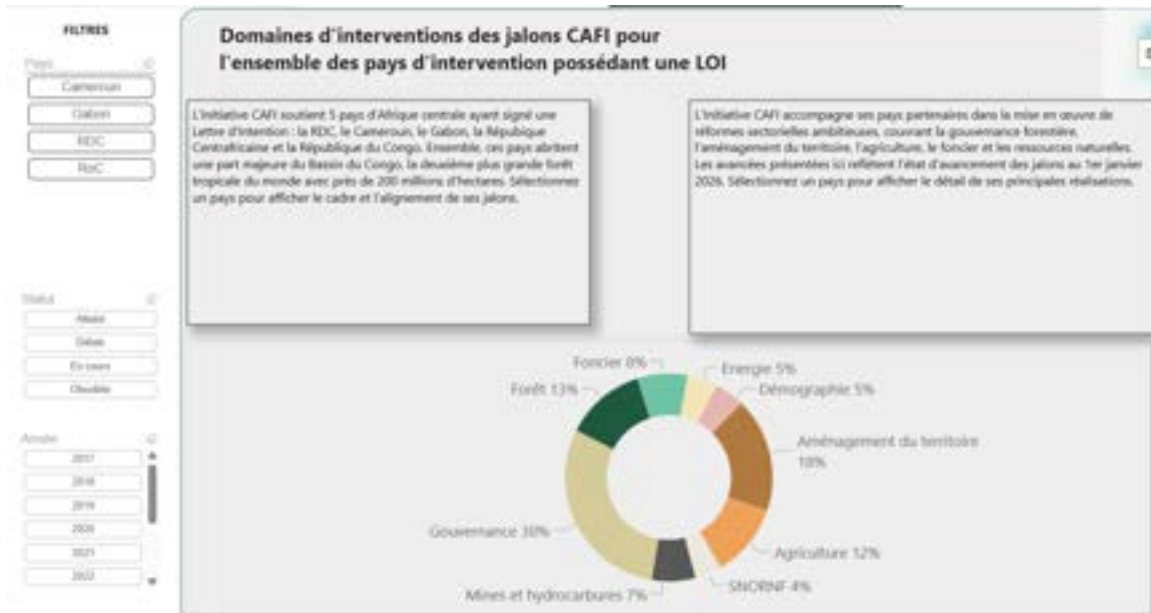
Performance tracking and accountability

Performance is tracked through a combination of portfolio tools and governance processes.



Screenshot of Metrics Hub

The Metrics Hub, which was expanded in 2025 to integrate more projects and indicators, consolidates performance data across countries and sectors. It provides a clearer portfolio-level view, strengthens data validation, and supports trend analysis and early risk identification.



Screenshot of Milestone tracking tool

A new Milestone tracking tool introduced in 2025 supports monitoring of reform progress under Letters of Intent. It enables a structured view of milestone achievement at country level and feeds directly into annual reviews and Executive Board discussions.

These tools complement reporting quality control, accountability processes and graduated responses to underperformance, including dialogue, proportional disbursement and, where needed, rescaling or closure.

From monitoring to decision-making

CAFI's performance management cycle operates across four linked steps: monitoring, verification, analysis and decision-making.

This ensures that performance information is systematically translated into funding and management decisions.

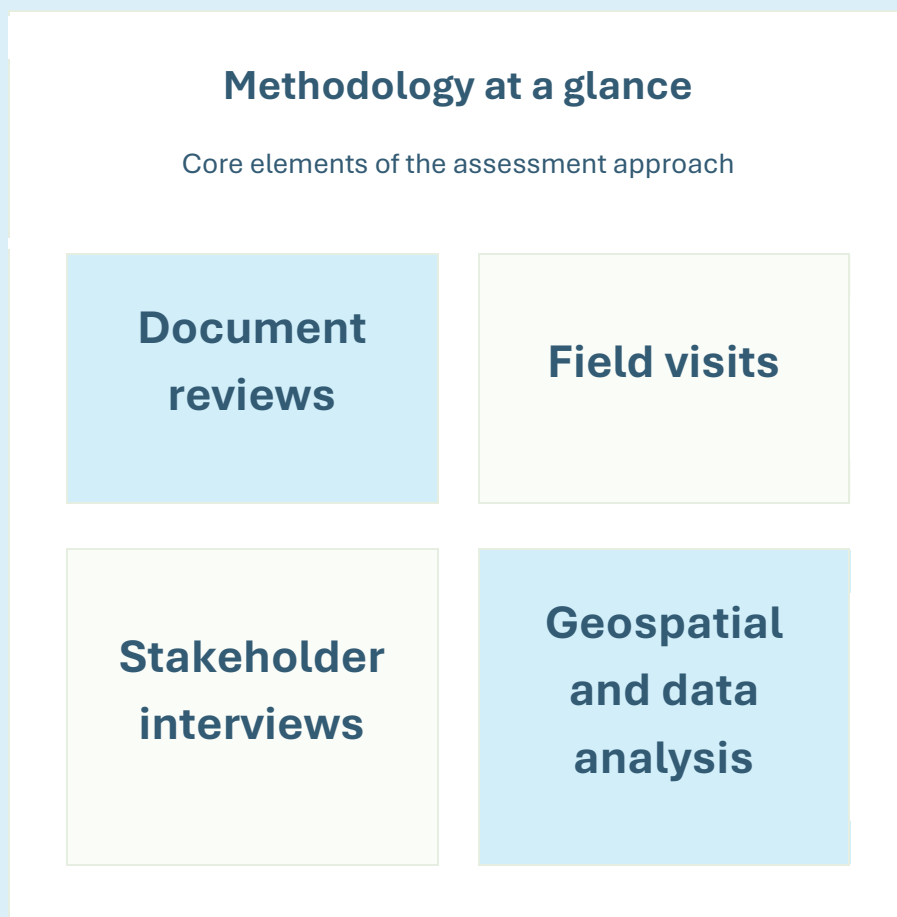
This system provides the foundation for scaling performance-based programming across the portfolio. Payments for Environmental Services (PES) build directly on these principles, linking verified field-level results to payments through integrated digital systems.

Spotlight: From data to decisions: strengthening evidence-based programming

Strengthening evidence-based decision-making is a key component of CAFI's evolution in 2025. This year marked the transition from methodological development to the first concrete applications of independent verification in the portfolio.

From methodology to application in 2025

In 2025, CAFI, together with independent ISO-accredited verifiers, established a standardised methodology to assess both project results and the robustness of monitoring systems.



This provides a consistent framework to verify reported results, while strengthening expectations on data quality, traceability and evidence.

First verification in practice

This methodology was applied in 2025 to the PROREP project in the Republic of Congo, covering implementation from 2022 to 2024.

The verification assessed reported results against agreed indicators and reviewed the underlying monitoring system. It highlighted areas where results could be further substantiated and identified concrete improvements needed in:

- data collection practices
- documentation and traceability
- internal monitoring processes

This first exercise provided a practical test of the methodology and helped clarify how verification can be applied consistently across projects.

From evidence to action

In 2025, verification findings were directly used to inform project follow-up. This has led to:

- targeted corrective actions to strengthen monitoring and reporting
- clarification of indicators and evidence requirements
- reinforced dialogue between implementing partners, national authorities and the Executive Board
- adjustments in implementation approaches where relevant
- Disbursement decisions informed by verified performance

This ensures that verification is not only a control mechanism, but also a tool to support implementation and improve delivery.

Payments for environmental services: scaling a performance-based model for the Congo Basin

A. Political mobilisation and positioning

“We welcome the leadership role of CAFI in deploying payments for environmental services in Central Africa”

Andreas Bjelland Eriksen, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway, New York, 24 September 2025

2025 marked a major step forward for CAFI’s Payments for Environmental Services workstream, its central performance-based pillar.

Momentum started with the regional PES conference held in Kinshasa from 27 to 29 January 2025, where CAFI partner countries agreed on a joint position note and a shared roadmap for large-scale deployment. Ministers and technical experts identified priority activities, financing needs and implementation pathways, positioning PES as a central instrument for deforestation-free development in the region.

This momentum carried through to COP30 in Belém in November 2025. CAFI convened a dedicated high-level session, complemented by targeted side events structured around the PES cycle. These engagements helped position PES not as a concept, but as an operational model grounded in concrete delivery systems.



Flyer of PES side event RoC Gabon at COP30 Belém

This political mobilisation culminated in a USD 100 million pledge dedicated to CAFI’s PES programme. In a context of tightening ODA budgets, this represents a significant signal of confidence in CAFI’s approach and reinforces its positioning as a leading actor in performance-based climate finance in the Congo Basin.

“This additional funding is a signal that we believe in the approach, and we hope that it will strengthen the partnership between CAFI and the countries of the sub-region”

Dyveke Rogan, Director, Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative, Belém, November 2025

A key element underpinning this positioning is Ground Impact, CAFI’s PES planning tool, which supports countries in identifying where PES investments can deliver the highest impact across all six CAFI countries in the Congo Basin. Further detail is provided below.

CAFI also supported countries through targeted technical assistance delivered through the UNOPS Technical Assistance Facility. This support is demand-driven, flexible, and provided directly to national authorities, helping translate political commitments into operational roadmaps, project pipelines and implementation readiness.

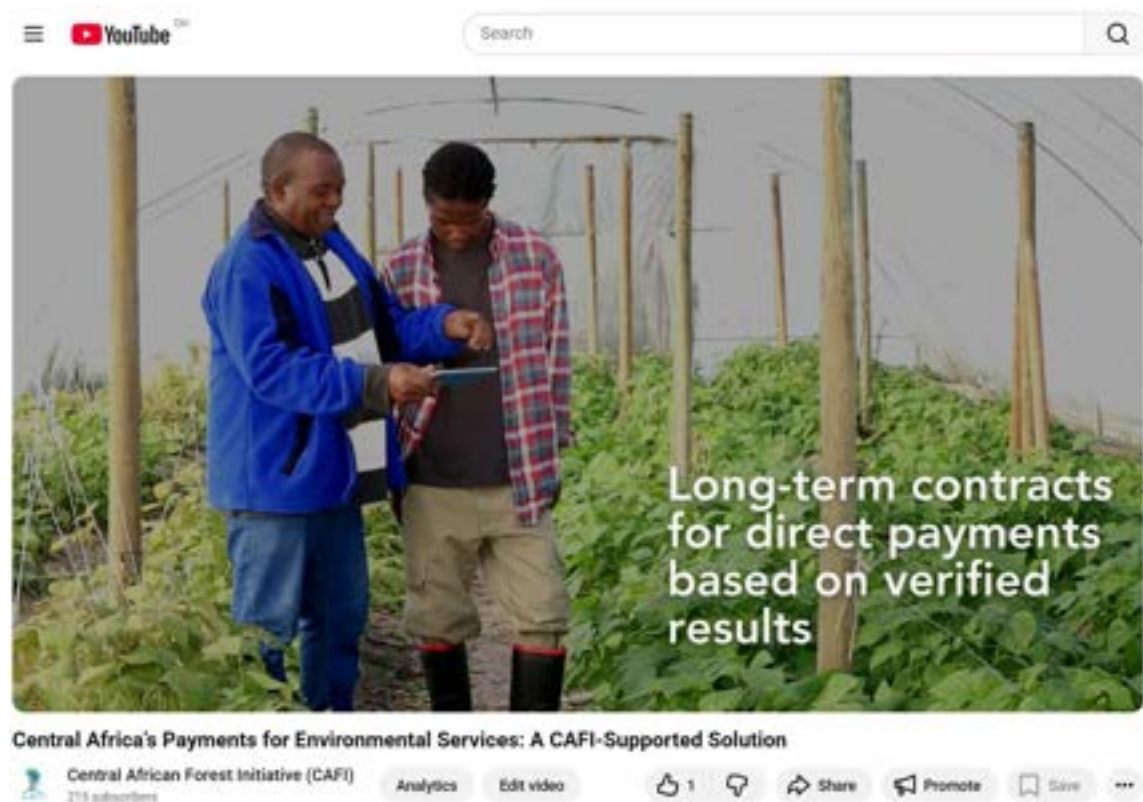
B. From pilots to operational programming

2025 marked the transition from PES design to operational programming.

The regional PES framework established in 2024 was further refined and expanded. Methodologies for four of the six PES activity types were strengthened, standardised templates were developed to accelerate project preparation, and an initial data protection framework aligned with international standards was put in place.

This framework guided national contextualisation processes in several CAFI partner countries, ensuring adaptation to country-specific conditions while maintaining a common structure.

CAFI also developed communication and mobilisation materials to make the PES model easier to understand and present to governments, partners, donors and communities. This included a dedicated PES video structured around the full delivery cycle, from regional and national frameworks to enrolment, contracting, monitoring, payments and scaling.



Initial PES pilots in the DRC and the Republic of Congo moved into early implementation, testing delivery systems and institutional arrangements in real conditions, including enrolment, contracting, monitoring and mobile payments. First payments are presented in the spotlight below.

At the same time, CAFI advanced its programming pipeline through the PROBAK initiative. Following the launch of a USD 25 million Call for Expressions of Interest in May 2025, a USD 15 million PES project with the Common Fund for Commodities was approved in November 2025. A second project developed with WWF was finalised shortly thereafter and approved in early 2026. Together, these two projects form the foundation of the PROBAK programme and set the stage for scale-up from 2026.

Partnerships were also strengthened to support the next phase, including collaboration with Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on impact evaluation and with Interpeace on conflict-sensitive approaches to PES implementation.

C. Tools and systems for scaling PES

CAFI's PES programme is underpinned by an integrated set of digital tools designed to support performance-based implementation at scale.

CAFI PES DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Target end 2025 - Fully integrated performance-based delivery



At the **planning stage**, Ground Impact provides a science-based platform combining satellite land cover, forest-loss data, biomass, biodiversity indicators and deforestation risk analysis across all six CAFI countries in the Congo Basin. It allows countries and donors to identify optimal investment strategies based on expected environmental and socio-economic returns.



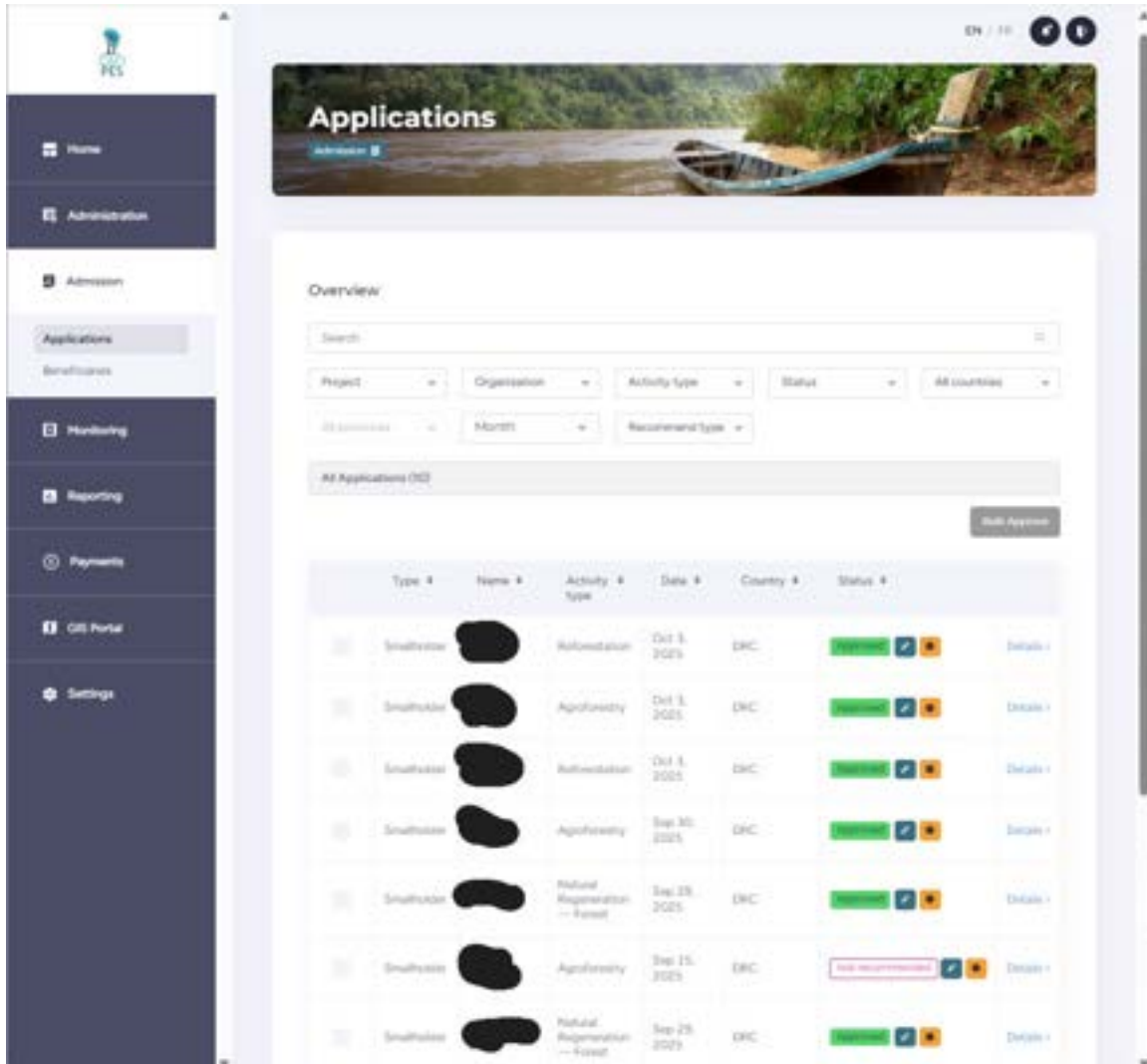
Screenshot of Ground Impact planning tool

The tool supports:

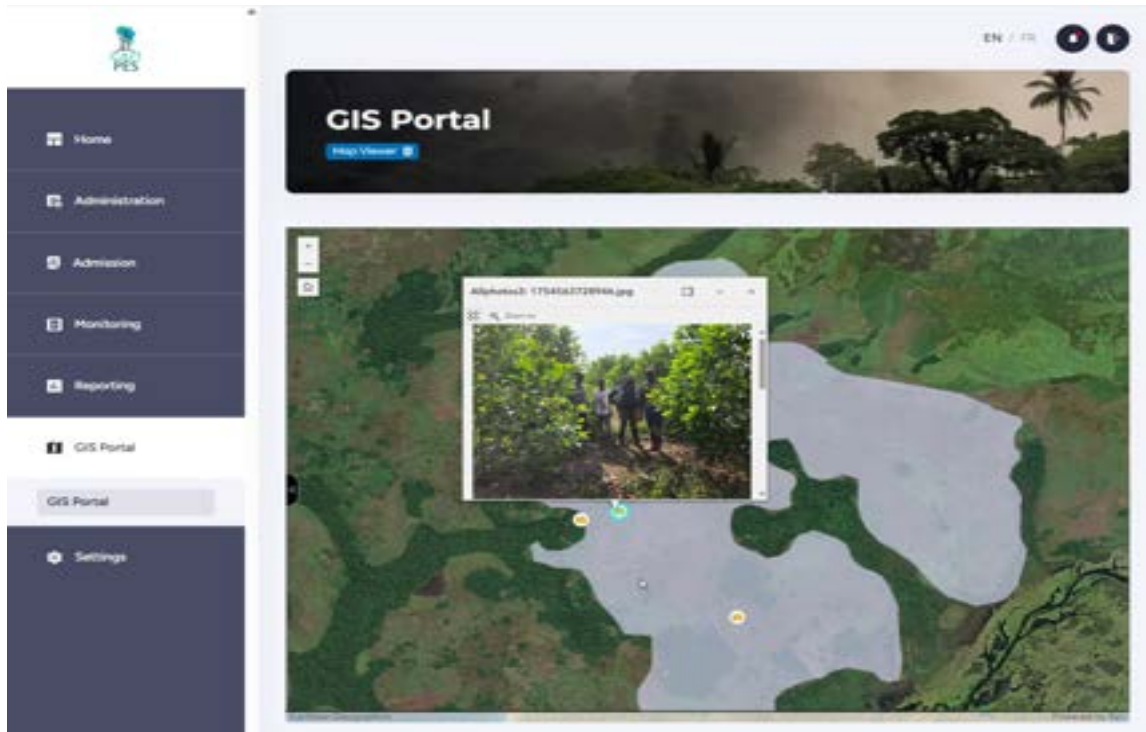
- estimation of eligible areas, beneficiaries and long-term costs
- comparison of investment scenarios based on impact and cost-efficiency

This provides a transparent and structured basis for decision-making and resource allocation.

At the **implementation stage** the PES Management System enables end-to-end management of PES projects, from enrolment to payments. It integrates mobile data collection, contract management, geotagged evidence and automated processing into a single system, supported by a real-time dashboard tracking applications, contracts and payments.



At the **monitoring level**, the PES GIS portal connects each contract to satellite-based observations, enabling continuous tracking of land-use changes and environmental performance. The system combines geospatial analysis with field data, including geotagged photos, to provide a consistent and transparent view of results.



CAFI PES GIS portal

Together, these tools form a coherent digital ecosystem linking planning, implementation and monitoring. All core components were operational and piloted in 2025, providing a solid foundation for scaling PES from 2026.



CAFI PES Dashboard

Project spotlight: From design to delivery: first PES payments on the ground

2025 marked the transition from design to delivery, with the first PES payments made to beneficiaries.



First PES beneficiaries in Central Africa

Pilot implementation in the DRC and the Republic of Congo tested the full delivery chain under real conditions.

Between October and December 2025, 426 applications were submitted through the PES system, covering 13,664 hectares. Following quality screening, 60 applications were approved, covering 2,631 hectares. By the end of the year, 31 contracts had been signed, covering 952 hectares.

Unlocking private investment for forest-positive development

In 2025, CAFI consolidated a shift in its approach to private sector engagement, moving from project-based grant financing toward a model designed to mobilise significantly larger volumes of public and private capital. This approach combines performance-based funding, blended finance structures and targeted pipeline development, positioning CAFI as a catalyst for investment in deforestation-free value chains across the Congo Basin.

Progress in 2025 was anchored in the Regional Private Sector Investment Facility, which provided the framework to structure and advance a portfolio of investment projects aligned with CAFI's objectives. Following the closure of the call for expressions of interest on 31 August 2025, the Secretariat consolidated a portfolio of **four active projects representing USD 83.5 million in CAFI funding**, alongside a pipeline exceeding USD 110 million under development.

The active portfolio reflects a diversified set of instruments targeting different segments of the market.

- The &Green Fund operates at the level of large agro-industrial companies, providing long-term loans and technical assistance to support deforestation-free commodity supply chains. In 2025, &Green focused on establishing its regional presence, applying its jurisdictional eligibility methodology across all six CAFI countries in the Congo Basin and building an initial pipeline of investment opportunities, with early engagement particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Further detail is provided in the Project Spotlight below.
- PRO-CONGO, implemented by UNEP and UNCDF, targets small and medium-sized enterprises and nature-positive businesses, combining concessional finance, guarantees and technical assistance to support early-stage enterprises and expand access to finance in challenging market conditions. The project became operational in 2025 following signature and first disbursement.
- The Catalytic Canopy Trust project introduces a blended finance structure combining technical assistance, early-stage capital and an investment fund, with implementation expected to accelerate following initial steps.
- The IUCN-led CPIC initiative continues to support early-stage pipeline development through the Nature+ Accelerator, combining technical assistance and investment windows, although progress has been affected by external constraints related to the fund's broader financing structure.

Beyond the active portfolio, 2025 saw significant progress in structuring the next generation of investment programmes.

- The Common Fund for Commodities developed a regional programme targeting agri-SMEs across the Congo Basin through a combination of loan facilities, technical assistance and a dedicated outcomes fund for performance-based payments. The programme is designed to address financing gaps across different enterprise sizes while linking investment returns to environmental outcomes.
- In parallel, the IDH ReVive programme advanced the design of an investment hub model in Cameroon combining project preparation, seed capital and Payment for Environmental Services to support deforestation-free value chains, including engagement with cocoa companies on co-financing PES schemes.
- The KfW PAMOL project, also in Cameroon, progressed as a preparatory grant focused on smallholder-based palm oil production, integrating land-use planning, access to finance and performance-based incentives to avoid deforestation.

A central feature of CAFI's approach is its ability to leverage additional sources of finance. Experience from these programmes shows that CAFI funding can unlock domestic public resources, private investment and international climate finance when combined with appropriate instruments and systems. This includes the use of grants to reduce risk, the structuring of concessional financing, and the integration of Payment for Environmental Services to create revenue streams linked to verified environmental outcomes.

At the same time, work conducted in 2025 highlighted structural constraints that continue to limit private investment in the Congo Basin. Through feasibility studies conducted under the UNOPS Technical Assistance Facility, CAFI supported seven companies operating across the region, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Gabon. These studies, undertaken by specialised technical partners and financed by CAFI, assessed the financial, operational and environmental viability of investment opportunities in sectors such as sustainable forestry, agroforestry, industrial plantations and ecosystem restoration.

The results point to a number of recurring challenges. Many projects remain highly dependent on carbon revenues, while companies often seek concessional capital rather than commercial financing. Weak financial track records, high perceived risk and limited availability of long-term financing further constrain investment. At the same time, these engagements identified concrete opportunities, including the potential use of Payment for Environmental Services as a complementary revenue stream or as collateral to support financing structures, and growing interest from investors where risks can be appropriately mitigated.

Taken together, these developments underline that unlocking private investment in forest-positive development requires more than individual projects. It requires the progressive construction of an integrated system linking pipeline development, financing instruments, performance-based payments and monitoring systems. In this context, the combination of investment financing with Payment for Environmental Services is emerging as a key innovation, allowing financial flows to be more directly linked to verified environmental outcomes, strengthening both impact and accountability.

CAFI's work in 2025 reflects this direction of growth. By building a diversified portfolio, advancing a pipeline of investment-ready projects and testing blended finance approaches, the initiative is laying the foundations for scaling up private investment in deforestation-free development across the Congo Basin.



Reinforcing political commitment and country ownership

Positioning the Congo Basin in global climate diplomacy

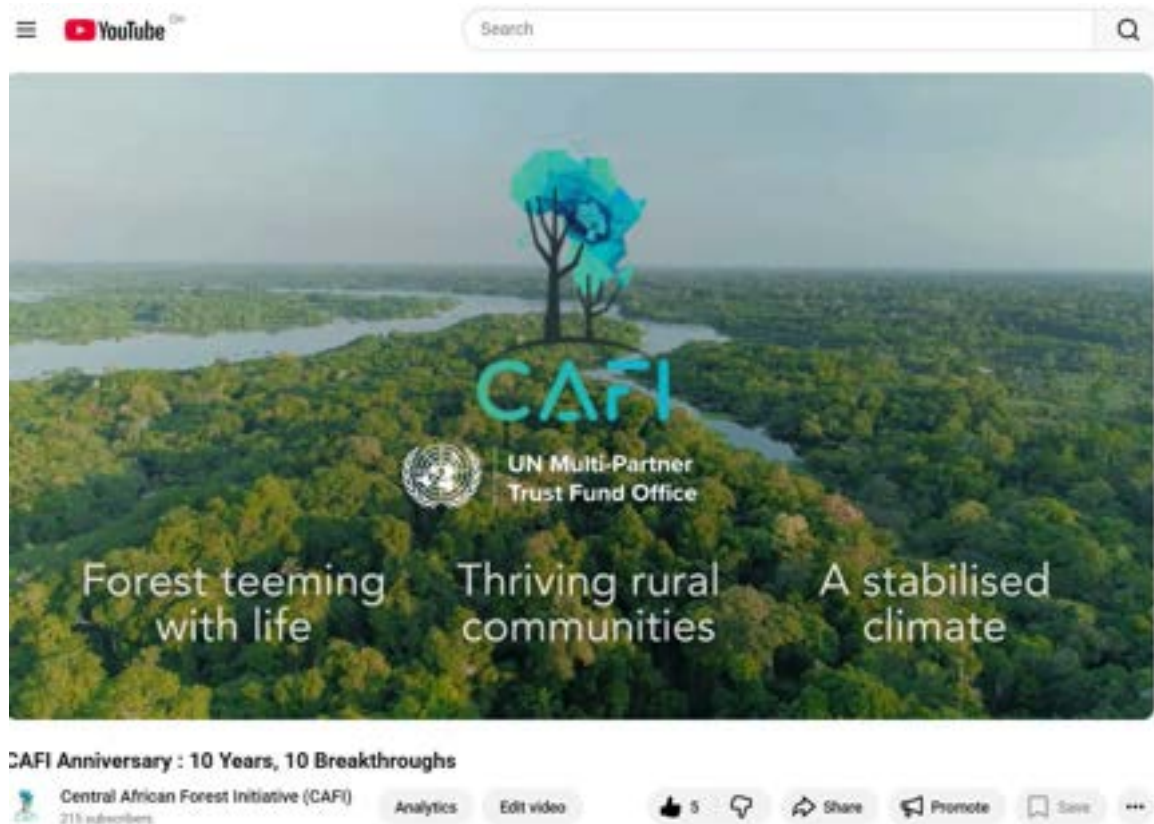
In 2025, CAFI played a central role in sustaining high-level political dialogue and positioning the Congo Basin at the forefront of global climate and forest agendas. The year was marked by a convergence of key moments including the 10-year anniversary at UNGA, mobilisation toward COP30 in Belém, and reinforced country-level engagement. Together, these helped consolidate CAFI's role as a platform aligning political commitments, financing and implementation.

At the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2025, CAFI marked ten years of partnership, bringing together ministers from partner countries, donor governments and multilateral institutions. The event highlighted a decade of joint progress and reaffirmed CAFI's role as a platform aligning political commitments, financing and implementation. The anniversary was also marked by the publication of CAFI's *10 Years, 10 Breakthroughs* report, showcasing ten major achievements and lessons from a decade of forest and sustainable development investments in Central Africa.



UNGA 10-year anniversary session

This milestone also helped frame the transition toward the next phase of CAFI, with discussions focusing on scaling performance-based approaches, strengthening country ownership and adapting governance arrangements to evolving needs.



[CAFI 10 years, 10 breakthroughs anniversary video](#)

At COP30 in Belém, CAFI supported partner countries in elevating the Congo Basin within global climate discussions. The Belém Call to Action mobilised renewed international commitments, including more than USD 2 billion pledged over five years, and reinforced the shared objective of halting and reversing forest loss by 2030.

“The Belém Call is a fundamental step forward,” a “historic commitment that demonstrates the joint mobilization of international partners and Central African countries in favor of forest protection and sustainable management.”

President Emmanuel Macron, President of France, Libreville, 23–24 November 2025

Payments for Environmental Services were central to this positioning. Building on the Kinshasa conference in January 2025, CAFI supported countries in showcasing PES as a scalable, results-based mechanism capable of channelling finance directly to communities, with strong political backing and increasing international visibility.

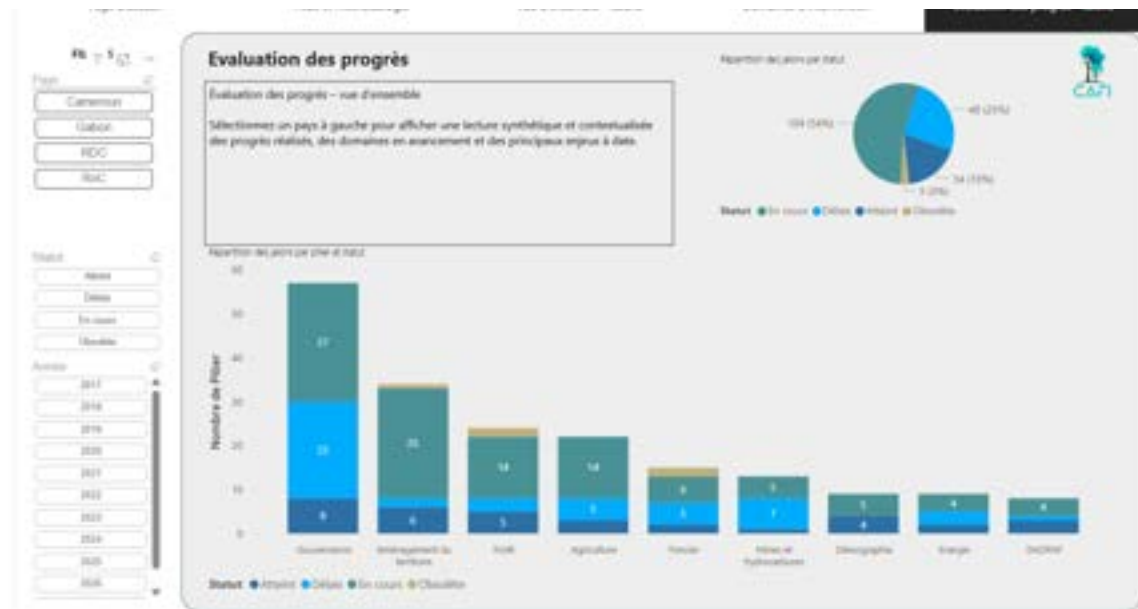
Strengthening country ownership through structured policy dialogue

Throughout 2025, CAFI maintained sustained, high-level engagement with partner countries, ensuring continuity of policy dialogue despite evolving political contexts.

Across all six countries, the Secretariat supported the monitoring of commitments under Letters of Intent, strengthened coordination between national authorities and donors, and facilitated alignment with broader reform and climate frameworks.

- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** sustained engagement following the 2025 government reshuffle, continued support to FONAREDD governance bodies, and alignment with broader reform frameworks, including discussions with the International Monetary Fund on forest-related reforms under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility.
- **Republic of Congo:** launch of the independent evaluation of the CAFI partnership and support to climate policy development, including the revision of the country's national climate commitments in the revised NDC.
- **Gabon:** rapid re-engagement with new authorities, structuring of a national PES workgroup, and strengthened positioning in international carbon and climate frameworks.
- **Cameroon:** operationalisation of the new Letter of Intent 2025–2035, including support to the National Climate Plan and the revision of the country's national climate commitments, defining updated mitigation and adaptation targets, implementation pathways and monitoring frameworks.
- **Equatorial Guinea and Central African Republic:** continued engagement to strengthen participation in regional processes and prepare the next phase of partnership development.

To support this engagement, CAFI introduced a dedicated milestone tracking tool embedded within the monitoring of Letters of Intent. This tool provides a structured view of progress against agreed reforms, strengthens transparency, and supports more informed policy dialogue between countries and the Executive Board.



Screenshot of Milestone tracking tool

Broadening partnerships and evolving governance dialogue

In parallel, CAFI continued to expand its partnership model and facilitate dialogue on its future evolution.

Costa Rica joined CAFI in 2025, creating a bridge between regions and bringing valuable experience on Payments for Environmental Services, reinforcing South South cooperation.



Costa Rica signing ceremony

“No country can tackle the major challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation alone. This is why we enthusiastically welcome CAFI’s invitation to

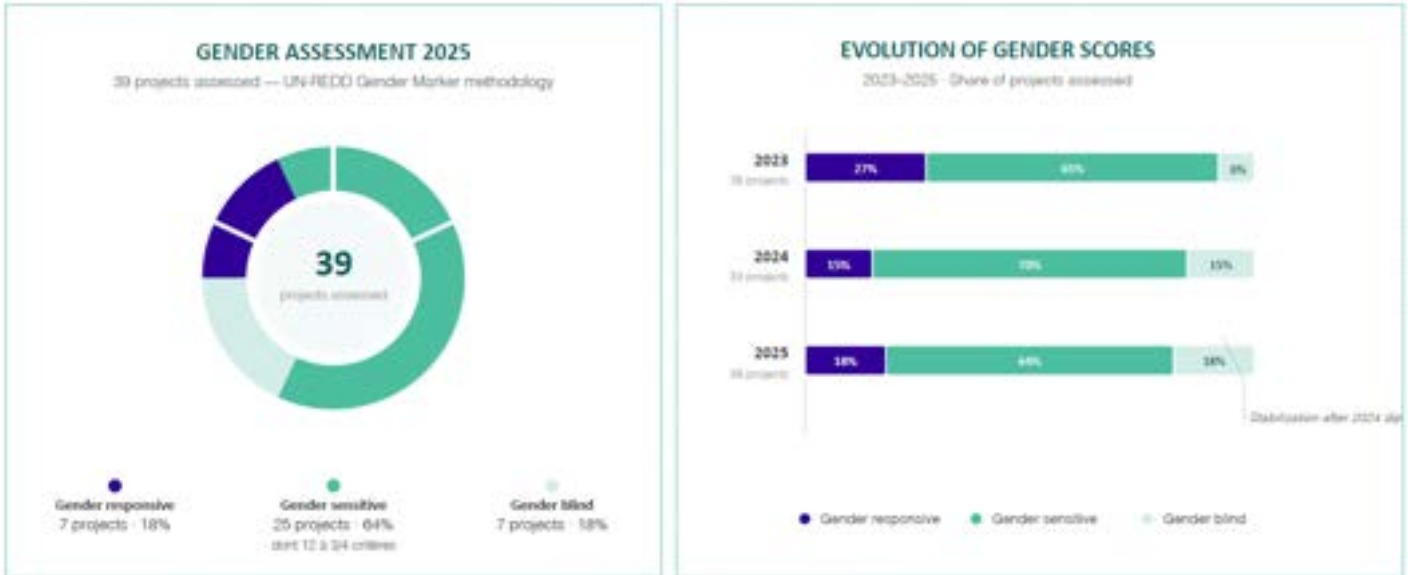
join the initiative as a South-South partner, a concrete and transformative example of cooperation among countries in tropical forest basins”
Christian Guillermet Fernández, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva, Geneva, 5 June 2025



[Costa Rica joins CAFI - A unique South South partnership on PES](#)

At the same time, discussions continued regarding how CAFI’s governance could progressively evolve to reflect the growing role of partner countries, while maintaining the accountability, fiduciary standards and collective decision-making that underpin the Fund. These exchanges reflect a shared recognition that the next phase of CAFI will require balancing inclusiveness, efficiency and performance.

Advancing gender equality and inclusive development



Mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion into CAFI programming is part of a human rights-based approach to forest and climate finance. In 2025, CAFI continued to track gender integration across its portfolio using the UN-REDD Gender Marker methodology, assessing whether projects integrate gender in their context analysis, implementation, monitoring and reporting, and budget or expertise.



Project beneficiary

The 2025 assessment covered **39 projects**. Of these, **7 projects were assessed as gender responsive**, meaning that gender was mainstreamed across all four criteria. **25 projects were gender sensitive**, with gender reflected in at least one criterion, including **12 projects meeting three out of four criteria**. Several projects also improved their scores compared with 2024, including PIREDD Équateur and the PIREDD Plateau. However, **7 projects remained gender blind**, largely linked to projects in inception phase or with limited implementation data available. The detailed 2025 assessment is available [here](#).

CAFI is also moving beyond portfolio-level tracking toward more operational tools for inclusion. Payments for Environmental Services (PES) are expected to become an important lever for gender equality and inclusion, particularly through digital payment systems that make it possible to identify individual beneficiaries, including women and Indigenous Peoples, more clearly. The emerging PES model also provides for targeted premiums for women and Indigenous Peoples, while recognising the need to manage social risks carefully, including risks of household or community-level conflict.

In 2025, CAFI also strengthened attention to conflict sensitivity and social inclusion in performance-based programming. Under PROBAK, a partnership with Interpeace was developed to support a standardised framework for conflict prevention and management, including conflict-sensitivity tools, provincial conflict analyses, capacity-building and practical guidance for implementing organisations. This work is intended to help ensure that PES delivery avoids reinforcing local tensions, especially around land, benefit-sharing and access to payments.

“I commend CAFI for this approach, which integrates human rights. This is quite important, especially at a time when the issue of direct access to finance for indigenous peoples is crucial”

Dr Albert Barume, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
Belém, November 2025

Together, these developments point to a more deliberate approach to gender and inclusion: one that combines annual portfolio assessment, stronger project design requirements, targeted PES tools, and safeguards to ensure that climate finance reaches and benefits the people most directly involved in protecting forests.

Country and regional overviews

Democratic Republic of the Congo



Country profile at a glance

Key facts, partners and financing

<p>Forest</p> <p>126m ha</p> <p>Natural forests</p> <p>18% of the world's tropical forests</p> <p>56% of the country's land area</p>	<p>National partners</p> <p>Led by the Ministry of Finance with</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ministry of Environment</td> <td>Ministry of Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ministry of Land Use Planning</td> <td>Ministry of Gender, Family & Children</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ministry of Agriculture</td> <td>Ministry of Planning</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ministry of Energy</td> <td>Ministry of Budget</td> </tr> </table>	Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Land Use Planning	Ministry of Gender, Family & Children	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Planning	Ministry of Energy	Ministry of Budget	<p>Financing</p> <p>USD 690m</p> <p>Pledged</p> <p>USD 394.7m</p> <p>Transferred</p> <p>USD 233.7m</p> <p>Spent</p>
Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Health									
Ministry of Land Use Planning	Ministry of Gender, Family & Children									
Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Planning									
Ministry of Energy	Ministry of Budget									



Partnership overview

CAFI-DRC PARTNERSHIP

Key milestones - 2015-2025



The CAFI–DRC partnership is implemented under the second Letter of Intent (2021–2031), signed in May 2022, which sets out a comprehensive framework to halt and reverse forest loss while supporting sustainable development and inclusive rural transformation.

In 2025, the partnership continued to consolidate, with sustained policy dialogue between the Government, CAFI donors and implementing partners, and steady progress in the implementation of milestones. As of early 2026, internal assessments indicate that around 76% of milestones for the 2021–2025 period have been achieved or in progress, reflecting overall positive momentum despite uneven progress across sectors.

The partnership remained anchored in structured governance and review processes. Following Annual Reviews held in February 2023 and March 2024, preparations are underway for the next review in 2026, alongside independent evaluations of both the CAFI–DRC partnership and FONAREDD, which will inform the next phase of engagement.

The year 2025 was marked by continued progress on key structural reforms, notably the promulgation of the Land Use Planning Law (July 2025), significantly strengthening the legal

MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

DRC - 64 milestones - Status at end 2025



framework for land governance, spatial planning and community rights. More broadly, progress across sectoral policies reflects increasing alignment between development pathways and forest protection and climate objectives.

The partnership also continued to align with broader international reform frameworks, including through engagement with the IMF Resilience and Sustainability Facility (approved January 2025), supporting reforms related to forest monitoring, forestry governance and environmental standards in extractive sectors.

At the same time, 2025 marked a strategic inflection point with the orientation of the CAFI Strategy 2026–2030, signalling a shift toward a model where “funds follow performance”. This approach combines continued support to policy reforms, the expansion of performance-based financing through Payments for Environmental Services (PES), and the

development of catalytic, co-financed investments to mobilise domestic and international resources.

At regional and global levels, the DRC further strengthened its role in climate and forest governance, including participation in regional PES discussions (Kinshasa, January 2025) and engagement at COP30 (Belém, November 2025).

Looking ahead, 2026 represents a pivotal year, marking the end of the first phase (2021–2026) of the Letter of Intent. In a more constrained financing context, the partnership is expected to shift toward blended and co-financed models, with CAFI increasingly acting as a catalyst to mobilise domestic, private and climate finance. Results-based instruments such as PES are expected to play a central role in this transition, supporting a more performance-driven and nationally anchored approach.

Portfolio overview



The CAFI-funded FONAREDD portfolio in the Democratic Republic of the Congo combines **large-scale integrated territorial programmes (PIREDDs)** with sectoral interventions in land tenure, agriculture, energy, governance and demography, addressing both direct and underlying drivers of deforestation.

In 2025, implementation continued to scale up across the portfolio, while additional programmes were approved, including in sustainable energy, territorial development and performance-based approaches under PROBAK, reinforcing a gradual shift toward more results-based programming.

<p>FAO – Integrated REDD+ Programme in Equateur</p> <p>Budget: USD 25.2 million</p> <p>Focus: Integrated territorial development (forest, agriculture, land-use planning)</p>	<p>AFD – Sustainable Savannas and Degraded Forests Programme</p> <p>Budget: USD 15 million</p> <p>Focus: Agroforestry, restoration and sustainable agriculture</p>	<p>AFD – Sustainable Forest Management Programme</p> <p>Budget: USD 12.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Forest governance and sustainable management</p>	<p>UN-Habitat II (Land Reform Support Programme)</p> <p>Budget: USD 15.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Land tenure reform and land information systems</p>
<p>UNOPS – Integrated REDD+ Programme in Plateau</p> <p>Budget: USD 11.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Integrated territorial development</p>	<p>UNDP – Sustainable Family Agriculture Support Project</p> <p>Budget: USD 45.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Climate-smart agriculture</p>	<p>Enabel – Integrated REDD+ Programme in Kasaï Oriental–Lomami</p> <p>Budget: USD 35.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Territorial development and agriculture</p>	<p>UNDP – Milestone Achievement Support Programme</p> <p>Budget: USD 8.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Support to policy reforms and LoI milestones</p>
<p>UNDP – Carbon Market Access Project</p> <p>Budget: USD 3.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Carbon finance readiness</p>	<p>UNFPA / UNOPS – PROMIS II</p> <p>Budget: USD 58.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Demographic transition and family planning</p>	<p>UNOPS – Health Infrastructure Programme</p> <p>Budget: USD 3.5 million</p> <p>Focus: Health infrastructure</p>	<p>GIZ – Standards for Mining and Hydrocarbons</p> <p>Budget: USD 6.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Environmental and social safeguards</p>
<p>CIFOR – Civil Society Support Programme II</p> <p>Budget: USD 5.5 million</p> <p>Focus: Governance and civil society engagement</p>	<p>One Acre Fund – Sustainable Smallholder Agriculture in Kongo Central</p> <p>Budget: USD 30.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Smallholder agriculture and livelihoods</p>	<p>UNCDF – Sustainable Energy Programme II</p> <p>Budget: USD 50.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Clean cooking and energy transition</p>	<p>Enabel – PIREDD Sud-Ubangi</p> <p>Budget: USD 25.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Integrated territorial development</p>

Results

EXPENDITURES BY OUTCOME

2025



1. Local governance and land-use planning

Strengthening decentralised governance and community planning

- **2,868 local governance structures established or strengthened**
This includes 235 new structures in 2025, supporting community participation and local natural resource governance.
- **1,031 local land-use plans developed**
A total of 142 new local land-use plans (PSAT) were elaborated in 2025.
- **7.95 million hectares covered by local land-use plans**
This includes 664,259 hectares added in 2025, strengthening the basis for more coordinated land-use decisions.
- **5 provincial land-use plans available**
One additional provincial plan (PPAT) was developed in 2025.

These results are reinforced by the strengthened legal framework for land-use planning, notably following the promulgation of the Land Use Planning Law in July 2025.



2. Land tenure

Advancing legal and institutional reform

- **New Land Law promulgated**
Law 25/62 was promulgated on 31 December 2025, marking a major step forward in land tenure reform.
- **Land reform implementation tools advanced**
Progress was made on the national land policy implementation plan, pilot Land Information Systems and improved integration of land tenure with environmental and land-use planning processes.

3. Agriculture and rural livelihoods

Supporting sustainable production and food security

- **29,309 hectares of perennial crops planted**
This represents 55% of the total target, including 3,959 hectares in 2025.
- **49,460 hectares of food crops cultivated**
This includes 4,526 hectares in 2025, exceeding the annual target.
- **2,108 hectares of seed production fields developed**
This represents 29% of the total target, including 1,790 hectares in 2025.

4. Sustainable energy

Reducing pressure on forests from wood-energy demand

- **220,518 improved cookstoves distributed**
This exceeds the overall target, with 6,567 units distributed in 2025.
- **25,982 hectares of agroforestry / wood-energy areas established**
This represents 44% of the total target, including 4,482 hectares in 2025.
- **55,416 hectares of savannahs set aside for natural regeneration**
This represents 31% of the total target, including 17,534 hectares in 2025.

5. Forest management and conservation

Supporting community-based forest governance

- **606,576 hectares of community forests formally titled**
This represents 33% of the total target, with 13,768 hectares added in 2025.

6. Demography

Supporting reproductive health and demographic transition

- **1,489,516 Couple-Years of Protection delivered in 2025**
PROMIS 2 exceeded its annual target of 1,335,000 CYP.
- **692,354 direct beneficiaries reached in 2025**
Around 95% were women, based on the annualised client methodology.

Project spotlight: Supporting sustainable livelihoods in savannah and forest landscapes (PSFD - AFD)

National partner: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (DRC), within the FONAREDD portfolio

Implementing organisation: Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

Budget: USD 15 million (with additional top-up approved)

Disbursed (Dec 2025): USD 11.9 million

Execution rate: 79%

The “Sustainable transformation of savannahs and degraded forests” programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo supports the development of sustainable agricultural systems in Kwilu and Tshopo provinces.

The programme is structured around **productive alliances** bringing together smallholder farmers, producer organisations, agricultural SMEs and technical service providers. These alliances develop investment projects based on inclusive models combining farmer contributions, grants and access to credit, with the objective of strengthening value chains while promoting sustainable land use.

Scaling sustainable production and land restoration



Nursery supported by the project

The programme has reached a significant scale in 2025, with more than **6,700 hectares planted and georeferenced**, representing close to **90% of the overall target**. These plantations include agroforestry systems and perennial crops established in degraded savannah and forest areas.

At the same time, **24 productive alliances** are operational across the two provinces, structuring investments and supporting coordinated development of agricultural value chains.

Delivering for farmers and local communities



Farmers supported by the project

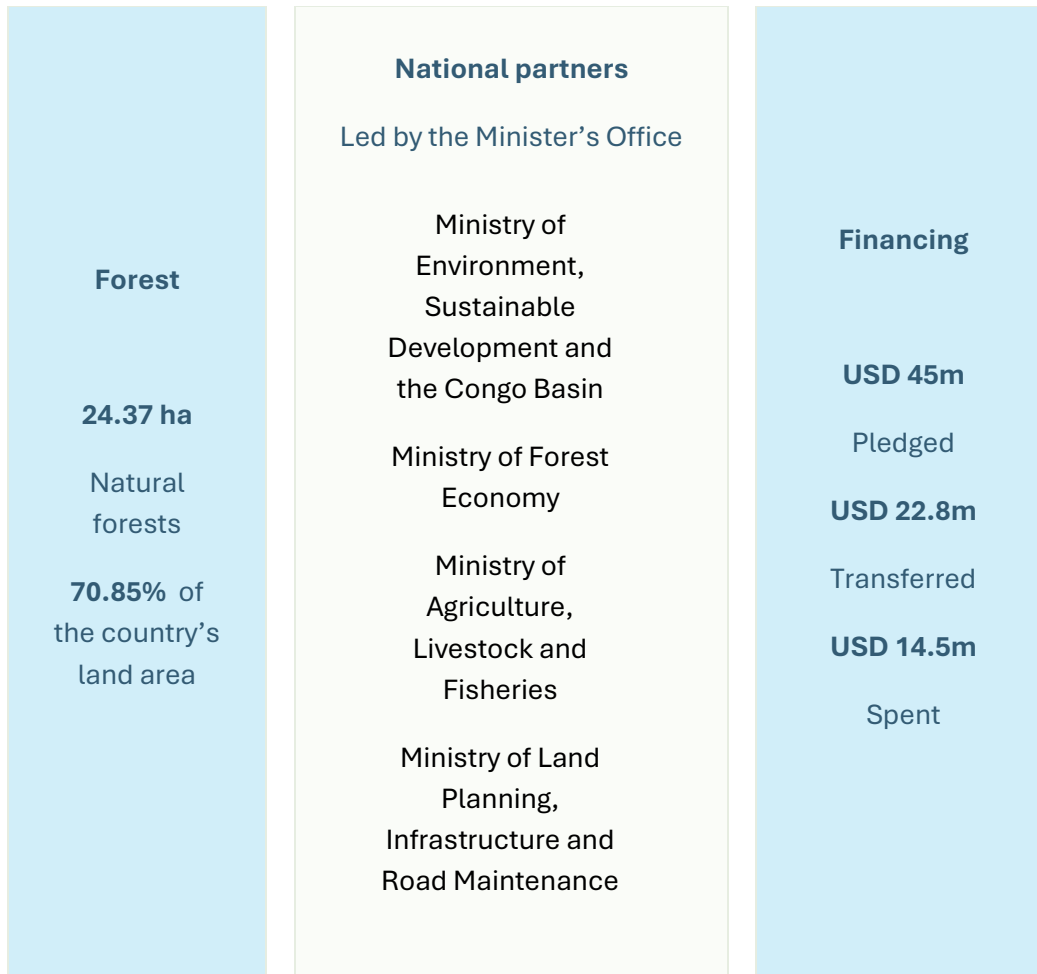
The programme supports a growing number of producers and rural households:

- **5,900+ direct beneficiaries**, exceeding initial targets
- **26% women participation**, stable compared to previous years
- **8,500+ indirect beneficiaries**

Republic of Congo

Country profile at a glance

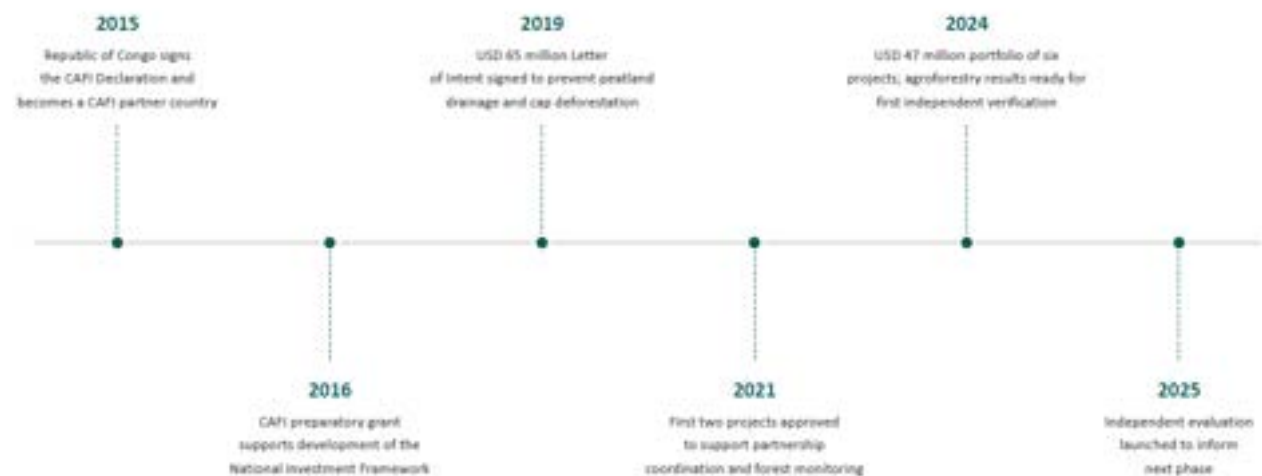
Key facts, partners and financing



Partnership overview

CAFI-REPUBLIC OF CONGO PARTNERSHIP

Key milestones - 2015-2025



MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Republic of Congo - 52 milestones - Status at end 2025



In 2025, the CAFI-Republic of Congo partnership reached a key transition point. The Letter of Intent signed in 2019 came to the end of its implementation period, while several major programmes were still moving from design and start-up toward implementation.

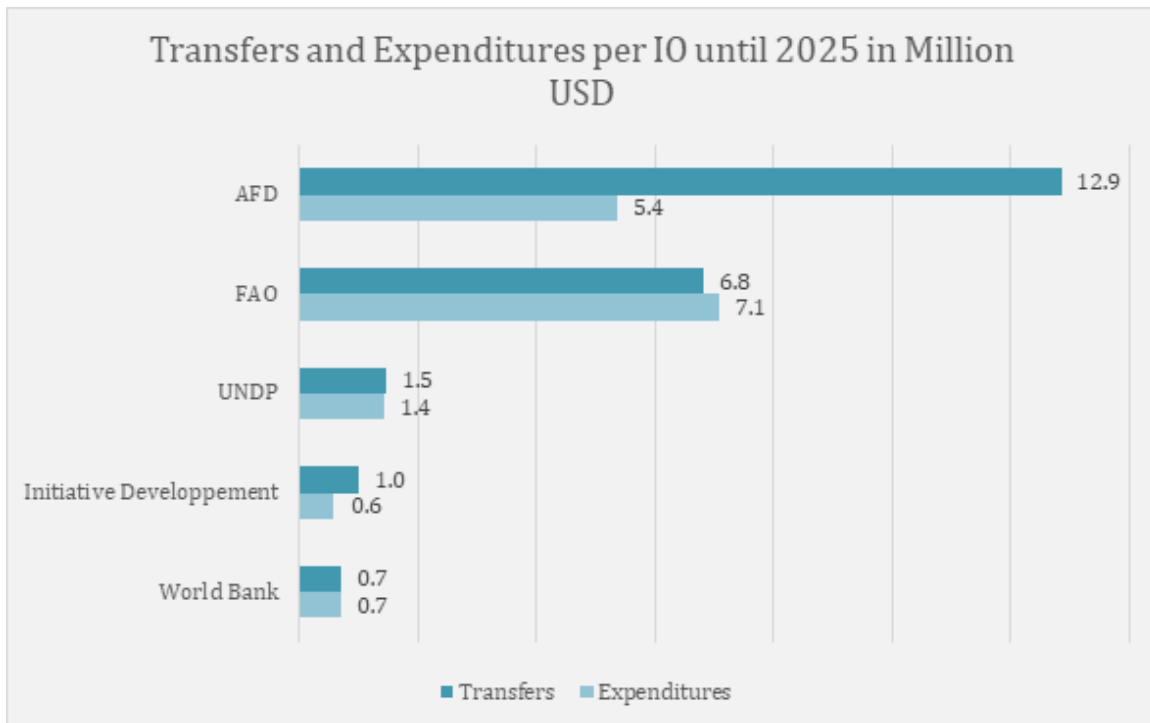
The year focused on taking stock of progress and preparing the next phase of the partnership. An independent evaluation launched in July 2025 provided initial findings to national counterparts and will inform discussions at the next annual review in 2026.

Progress has been most visible where programmes and technical support have been actively deployed, particularly in forest monitoring and climate reporting, environmental governance, and the development of land-use planning tools. At the same time, implementation delays and coordination challenges have limited progress in achieving some of the partnership's broader objectives.

Looking ahead, the partnership is entering a new phase of reflection and repositioning. Discussions with the Government are focusing on future priorities, including the potential deployment of Payments for Environmental Services, the continuation of ongoing programmes, and the need to simplify institutional arrangements and strengthen cross-sector coordination.

Overall, the partnership stands at a **strategic inflection point**, with solid analytical and institutional foundations in place, but a clear need to accelerate implementation and deliver results at scale.

Portfolio overview



In 2025, the Republic of Congo portfolio focused on building the systems and investments required for sustainable land use, including forest monitoring, land-use planning, climate-smart agriculture and wood-energy transition. While all projects are now active, several large programmes remain in early stages of implementation.

The portfolio reflects a coherent transition from system-building toward operational delivery. The main challenge ahead will be to translate planning, diagnostics and early pilots into concrete investments and measurable impacts for communities and ecosystems.



EXPENDITURES BY OUTCOME
2025 - Distribution per thematic sector



Results

1. Forest monitoring, climate reporting and carbon finance readiness

Equipping the country with systems and data to monitor forests and report emissions



@FAO MNV project

- **Revised Forest Reference Emission Level consolidated**
The Republic of Congo finalised exchanges with UNFCCC reviewers in 2025, with the revised FREL and technical assessment report made available through the UNFCCC process.
- **National MRV geoportal operational**
The SYNA-MNV geoportal is online and continues to be updated, improving access to forest monitoring data, with a Congo-specific EarthMap beta platform under development.
- **ART-TREES readiness advanced**
Technical workshops strengthened national understanding of ART-TREES requirements, safeguards and potential emission reduction pathways.

2. Land-use planning, governance and territorial diagnostics

Laying the groundwork for coordinated land-use decisions



Cover of atlas supported by AFD project in the Republic of Congo

- **GACAT established as a consultation platform**
The national land-use planning consultation platform was formally established, with its charter adopted and roadmap developed.
- **National CLIP guidelines validated**
Guidelines for Free, Prior and Informed Consent were validated in 2025, strengthening safeguards for land-use planning.

3. Sustainable agriculture and territorial investment preparation

Structuring the transition toward climate-smart and zero-deforestation agriculture

- **Agricultural potential mapping advanced**
A national agro-pedoclimatic atlas, departmental pedoclimatic analyses and nine thematic pedological maps for priority crops were produced and shared with national authorities to support agricultural planning, land-use decision-making and future zero-deforestation investment strategies.
- **60 agronomic trial plots installed**
Initial trials were launched in pilot zones to test climate-smart and zero-deforestation agricultural practices.

- **24 potential technical centre sites identified**
A preliminary mapping of infrastructure needs was completed to support agricultural extension and innovation systems.
- **145 potential agricultural investment projects identified**
- Early pipeline development identified investment opportunities among cooperatives, SMEs and larger operators.

4. Wood-energy transition and improved cooking solutions



Beneficiaries of ID project

Reducing pressure on forests from fuelwood demand

- **621 improved cookstoves sold**
Improved cookstoves were sold in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, contributing to reduced wood-energy consumption.
- **10 production workshops and 19 sales points operational**
A local improved cookstove value chain is emerging, involving trained artisans and structured distribution channels.
- **Around 1,000 tCO₂-eq avoided through early adoption**
Initial sales generated estimated emissions reductions during the first five months of implementation.

Overall, results in 2025 show strong progress in systems, planning and investment preparation, with initial operational results emerging in targeted sectors such as wood energy. The next phase will be critical to scale implementation and translate these foundations into measurable impacts on deforestation and livelihoods.

Gabon

Country profile at a glance

Key facts, partners and financing

Forest

High forest,
low
deforestation
country with
88% forest
coverage

National partners

Led by the National Climate
Council

Ministry of Planning

Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Waters,
Forests, Sea and
Environment

Agency for Spatial
Studies and Observations

Agricultural Development
Agency

Gabon National Parks
Agency

Gabon Normalisation
Agency

Financing

USD 195m

Pledged

USD 50.7m

Transferred

USD 26.1m

Spent

Partnership overview

CAFI-GABON PARTNERSHIP

Key milestones - 2015-2025



MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Gabon - 16 milestones - Status at end 2025



“CAFI has enabled Gabon to pilot and mobilize groundbreaking results-based payments”
 Louise Pierrette Mvono, Minister of Planning, Gabon, New York, 24 September 2025

In 2025, the CAFI-Gabon partnership focused on **re-establishing structured policy dialogue** following the government reorganisation of January 2025, while repositioning the partnership around a set of clear strategic priorities.

Early in the year, the Secretariat facilitated rapid engagement with the newly appointed authorities, including targeted briefings to the Ministers in charge of Environment and of Water and Forests. These exchanges helped clarify priorities, notably around **Payments for**

Environmental Services (PES) and human-wildlife conflict and ensured continuity of the partnership in a changing institutional context.

Throughout the year, the Secretariat played a central role in structuring dialogue and coordination across stakeholders. This included:

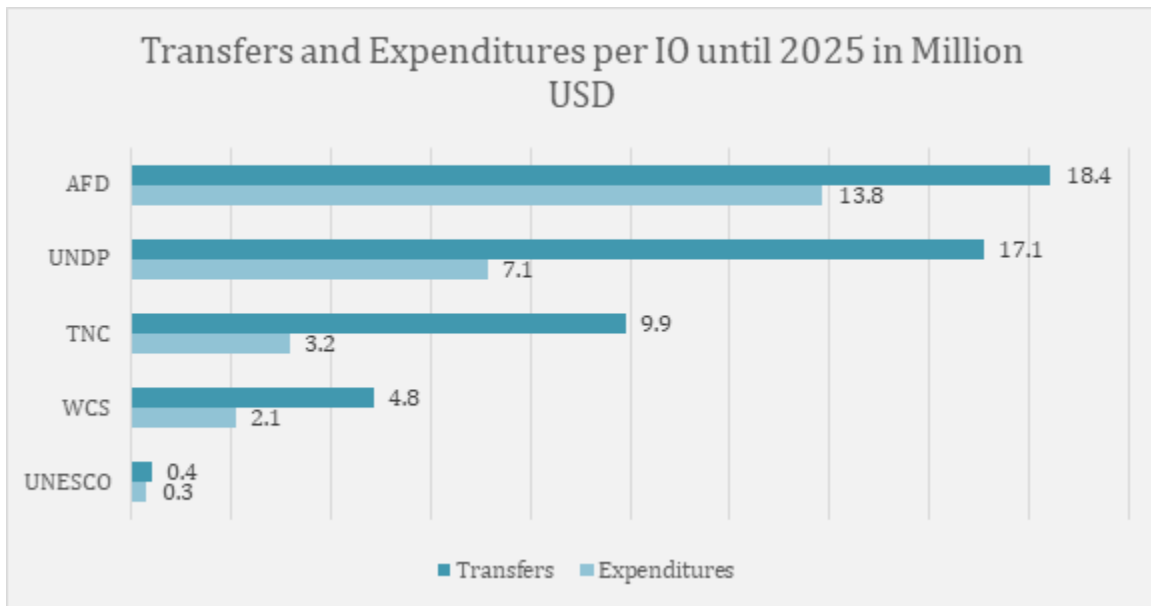
- Establishing and facilitating a **national PES workgroup**, bringing together government, research institutions, the private sector and civil society
- Supporting continuous technical exchanges to define **priority areas and implementation approaches for PES**
- Strengthening coordination between ministries and implementing organisations

At the same time, Gabon continued to strengthen its positioning in international climate frameworks. Progress was made on the **ART-TREES process**, with submission of registration and monitoring reports for the 2018–2022 crediting period and ongoing revisions. The **CAFI-Gabon Annual Review (October 2025)** also provided an important moment to consolidate dialogue and align stakeholders.



The partnership remained active and structured in 2025, with renewed political engagement, clearer priorities and stronger coordination across stakeholders.

Portfolio overview



In 2025, the Gabon portfolio combined the **closure of major foundational programmes (CAFI 1 and CAFI 2)** with a set of **active CAFI 3 projects and new targeted interventions**, reflecting a shift toward more operational and results-driven programming.

AFD – Land Use Planning and Monitoring (CAFI 1)

Status: Closed (2025)

Budget: USD 18.4 million

Focus: National land-use planning (PNAT), forest monitoring systems, village mapping

UNDP – Expansion of Protected Areas (CAFI 2)

Status: Closed (2025)

Budget: USD 5 million

Focus: Protected area expansion, agricultural land-use optimisation, carbon data systems

UNDP – Protected Areas (CAFI 3)

Status: Closed (2025)

Budget: USD 9 million

Focus: Protection and surveillance of national parks

<p>TNC – Certification and Legality (CAFI 2)</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Budget: USD 7.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Sustainable forest management and emissions reduction through improved forestry practices</p>	<p>UNDP – Coordination</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Budget: USD 1.5 million</p> <p>Focus: Institutional coordination and implementation support across the portfolio</p>	<p>UNDP / UNESCO – Urban Greening</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Budget: USD 2.0 million</p> <p>Focus: Urban forestry, environmental education and community engagement</p>
<p>TNC – Certification and Legality (CAFI 3)</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Budget: USD 2.9 million</p> <p>Focus: Continued support to sustainable forestry and certification systems</p>	<p>TNC – Research and Monitoring (CAFI 3)</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Budget: USD 2.5 million</p> <p>Focus: Forest ecosystem monitoring, biodiversity and carbon tracking</p>	<p>WCS – Peaceful human–elephant co-existence in Gabon</p> <p>Status: Active (launched 2025)</p> <p>Budget: USD 10 million</p> <p>Focus: Reducing human–wildlife conflict and protecting rural livelihoods</p>

The portfolio is transitioning from **large system-building programmes** toward a more **targeted mix of forestry, monitoring and community-focused interventions**, with increasing emphasis on **results-based approaches and operational delivery**.

Results

EXPENDITURES BY OUTCOME

Gabon - 2025



1. Forest monitoring and land-use planning

Building a national system for land-use and forest monitoring

- **1,548 villages mapped**
Participatory mapping reached around 60% of villages nationwide, with 908 maps validated and returned to communities and the remainder integrated into national systems.
- **1,877 village spatial footprints mapped**
Village boundaries were digitised across multiple provinces, supporting land-use allocation and planning processes.
- **100,096 deforestation alerts generated**
18,370 alerts were transmitted to authorities and 508 of which triggered field verification missions, strengthening enforcement and response capacity.
- **356 permanent forest monitoring plots established**
Together with 44 biodiversity transects and around 1,500 plant specimens collected, these contribute to the national forest inventory and ecosystem monitoring.
- **1,488 native tree species identified**
Including endemic and sub-endemic species, strengthening the national biodiversity knowledge base.
- **HCV and HCS mapping completed at national level**
High Conservation Value (HCV 1 and 3) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) areas were mapped, with three national map layers integrated into the PNAT database.
- **150 maps produced for CNAT**
These supported land-use allocation processes and were complemented by thematic maps and environmental alerts shared with sectoral ministries.
- **Operational national land-use database established**

Multi-sector datasets (forestry, mining, agriculture, infrastructure) are now integrated within a centralised platform supported by formal data-sharing agreements.

2. Protected areas, agriculture and communities

From systems to field-level impact

- **1,028 mobile electric fences installed**
Deployed across 508 villages under the Human–Elephant Conflict programme to reduce crop damage and protect livelihoods.
- **16,288 beneficiaries reached**
Rural communities across all provinces benefited directly from protection measures and associated support.



Beneficiaries from WCS project in Gabon



- **2,494 hectares of crops protected**
Electric fencing systems secured agricultural land from elephant intrusion, with an effectiveness rate of approximately 94%.
- **217 surveillance missions conducted**
Across 13 national parks, covering more than 27,600 km and strengthening on-the-ground presence.
- **200 individuals apprehended and 137 infractions recorded**
Including poaching, illegal fishing, mining and logging activities detected through strengthened patrol systems.
- **Operational capacity of national parks significantly reinforced**
18 vehicles and 1 bus deployed, park bases rehabilitated and equipped, and targeted training delivered to park managers and technical staff on planning, monitoring and financial management.
- **Monitoring and reporting systems strengthened**
Harmonised tools and improved data collection systems now support more consistent tracking of park-level performance.

- **Soil analysis and GIS laboratories constructed and operational**
Built with CAFI support, these facilities now provide national capacity to assess agricultural suitability and support land-use planning.
- **National agricultural land law drafted and submitted (May 2024)**
Providing a basis for improved governance and more sustainable management of agricultural land.

Results in 2025 show a clear shift toward operational delivery, combining **strengthened national systems with tangible benefits for communities**, particularly in addressing human–wildlife conflict.

Project spotlight: Human–wildlife coexistence: protecting communities and elephants (WCS)

National partner: Ministry of Water and Forests (Gabon), in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture

Implementing organisation: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Budget: USD 10 million

Disbursed (Dec 2025): USD 2.1 million

Start date: March 2025

The “Human–elephant coexistence” programme in Gabon addresses one of the most pressing challenges facing rural communities: crop destruction and livelihood insecurity caused by human–elephant conflict, while safeguarding one of the country’s most emblematic species.

The project operates across **all nine provinces of Gabon**, combining field deployment, institutional strengthening and community engagement to deliver practical, scalable solutions.

Delivering immediate protection for farmers



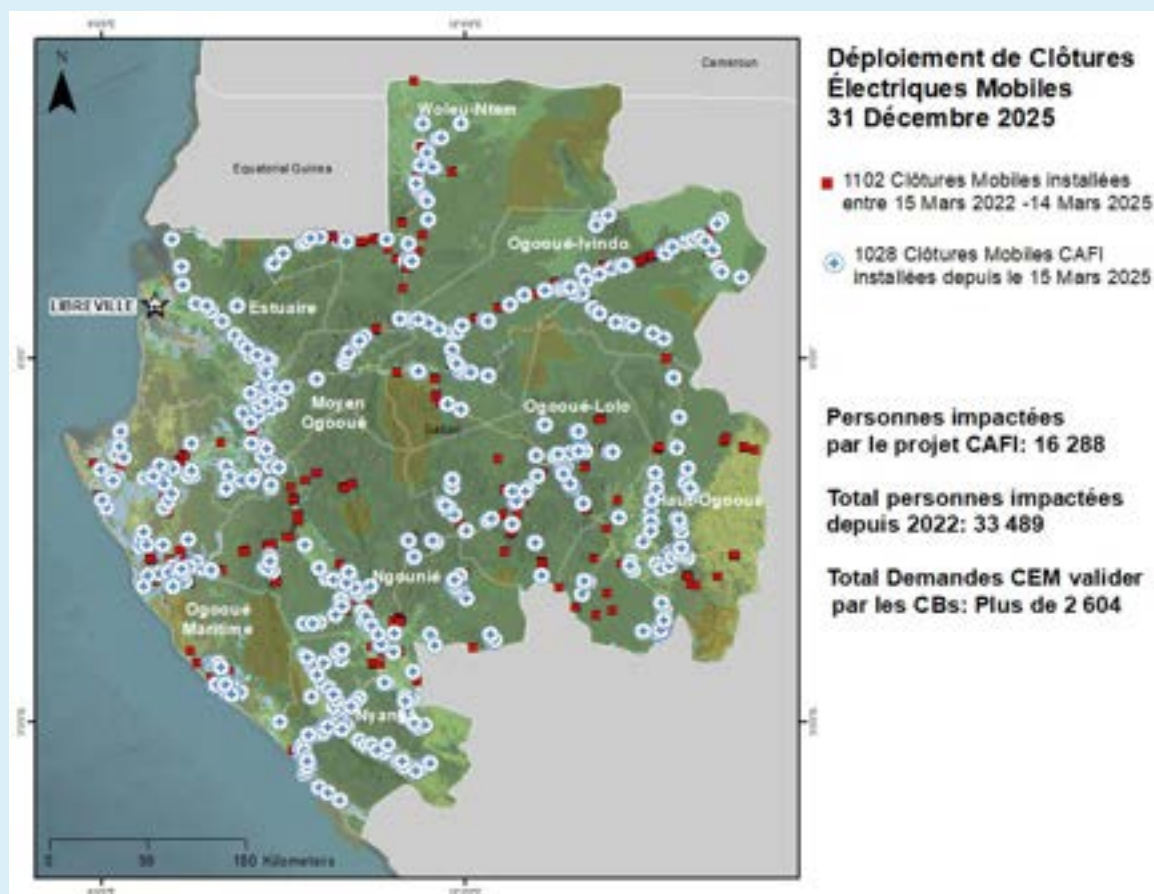
WCS Beneficiary Credit Thomas Nicolon- SFG

In 2025, the project moved rapidly from design to large-scale deployment following its launch in March. A total of **1,028 mobile electric fences** were installed across **508 villages**, protecting approximately **2,494 hectares of crops** and benefiting **over 16,000 people**.

With an **effectiveness rate of 94%**, these systems have significantly reduced elephant intrusions into agricultural areas, allowing farmers to secure harvests and stabilise food production.

Demand remains high, with more than **2,600 requests** recorded by the end of 2025, highlighting both the scale of the challenge and the relevance of the solution.

A coordinated national response



Map of fences installed by WCS project in Gabon

The programme is anchored in a strong partnership between WCS, national authorities and specialised technical partners, including Space for Giants. It supports the deployment of **inter-ministerial brigades** across the country, responsible for conflict mitigation, community outreach and monitoring.

Cameroon

Country profile at a glance

Key facts, partners and financing

Forest

20 million
hectares (FRA
2020)

National partners

Led by the Ministry of Economy,
Planning and Land Use Planning
(MINEPAT)

Ministry of Decentralisation
& Local Development

Ministry of Agriculture &
Rural Development

Ministry of Environment,
Nature Protection &
Sustainable Development

Ministry of Forests & Wildlife

Ministry of Land Affairs

Ministry of Mines, Industry &
Technological Development

Ministry of Commerce

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Research &
Innovation

Ministry of Housing & Urban
Development

Financing

USD 500m

Pledged

USD 50.7m

Transferred

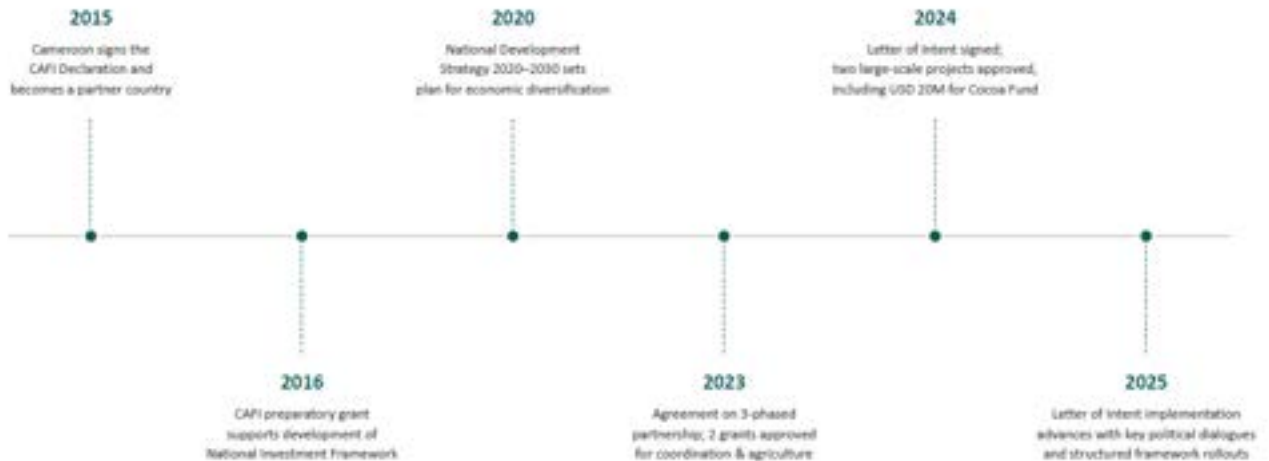
USD 25.1m

Spent

Partnership overview

CAFI-CAMEROON PARTNERSHIP

Key milestones - 2015-2025



MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Cameroon - 13 milestones - Status at end 2025



In 2025, CAFI and the Government of Cameroon moved into the first year of implementation of the **Letter of Intent (2025-2035)** signed in October 2024. The focus was on putting the partnership into motion, with an emphasis on coordination, policy work and early structuring.

The partnership is anchored in **MINEPAT** and organised around **33 milestones** spanning governance, sustainable agriculture, land-use planning and forest conservation. Throughout the year, CAFI supported the Government in advancing these priorities and strengthening coordination across CAFI institutions.

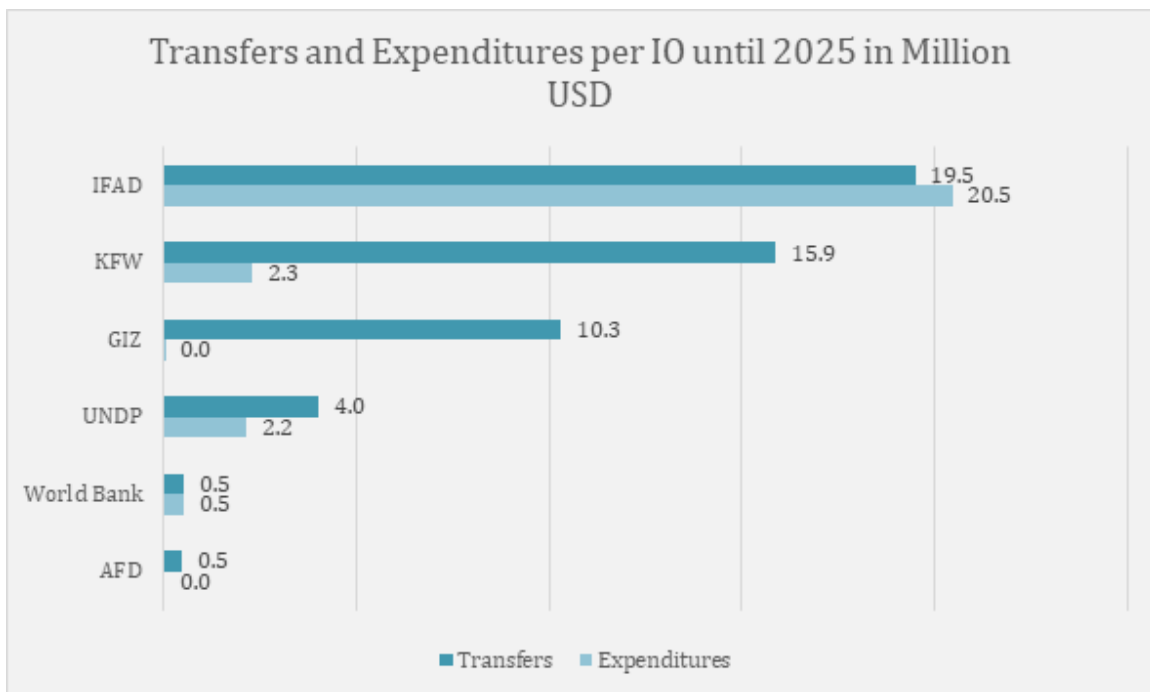
Work progressed well on climate planning. The **National Climate Plan (NCP)** and the revision of **NDC 3.0** reached an advanced stage, supported by technical work on mitigation, adaptation, MRV and gender. Two national workshops held in October and November 2025 helped consolidate inputs and produce a draft version, pending final validation.

In parallel, key reforms were launched or moved forward, including the **National Forest Economy Plan**, the **National Agro-Industrial Plan**, and work on the **Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)**. These processes are closely aligned with Cameroon's broader development strategy and are central to the partnership.

The preparatory grant continued to support coordination and ensure that work across ministries remained aligned and moving forward.

The partnership is now structurally in place, with governance, planning tools and policy frameworks actively being built.

Portfolio overview



In 2025, the portfolio took shape as a structured package of projects supporting the start-up phase of the partnership.

<p>GIZ – Intersectoral coordination project</p> <p>Budget: USD 13.6 million</p> <p>Focus: Strengthening interministerial coordination, implementation of reforms and overall partnership governance</p> <p>Key feature: Backbone of partnership coordination</p>	<p>IFAD – FODECC / PAIDATA project</p> <p>Budget: USD 22.45 million</p> <p>Focus: Sustainable agricultural intensification and agroecological transition through producer subsidies and advisory support</p> <p>Key feature: National-scale financing mechanism anchored in FODECC</p>	<p>KfW – Grand Mbam integrated landscape project</p> <p>Budget: USD 20 million</p> <p>Focus: Integrated landscape management combining land-use planning, agriculture, infrastructure and forest conservation</p> <p>Key feature: Performance-based design with independent verification</p>
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GIZ – Land-use planning capacity building project

Budget: USD 7.3 million (+ co-financing)

Focus: Development of land-use planning tools, local plans (PLADDTs) and forest monitoring systems

Key feature: Foundational investment in territorial governance

UNDP – Coordination (MINEPAT)

Budget: USD 4 million cumulative (extended in 2025)

Focus: Coordination of the partnership, implementation of milestones and policy development

Key feature: Operational engine of the partnership

In parallel, a pipeline for scale-up is emerging, notably through the **RACINE programme** (CAFI–GCF), whose concept note was endorsed in November 2025. While not yet part of the active portfolio, it provides context for the next phase.

Overall, the portfolio is now largely in place, with core projects approved and moving into implementation.

Results

As 2025 corresponds to the start-up phase, results are mainly visible in how the partnership has been set up and is beginning to operate.

Coordination is now functioning more effectively, with clearer roles across ministries and more regular policy dialogue supporting implementation of the Letter of Intent. This has helped move forward several key areas in parallel.

On the policy side, climate planning is well advanced, with the National Climate Plan and NDC 3.0 close to finalisation. Work on sectoral reforms, including the forest economy and agro-industrial plans, is also progressing and helping shape the overall direction of the partnership.

On the investment side, the main projects have been approved and are entering implementation. This phase has already helped identify practical challenges and refined how projects are monitored and supported.

At the same time, the groundwork is being laid for larger-scale investments, with growing engagement from partners such as the Green Climate Fund and the development of programmes like RACINE.

2025 was about putting the pieces in place, creating the conditions for implementation and scale in the years ahead.

Central African Republic

Country profile at a glance

Key facts, partners and financing

Forest

28.3 ha

Natural
forests

47% of the
country's
land area

National partners

Led by the Minister's Office

Ministry for
Environment and
Sustainable
Development

Ministry for Finances
and Budget

Ministry for Forestry

Financing

USD 2.6m

Transferred

USD 2.4m

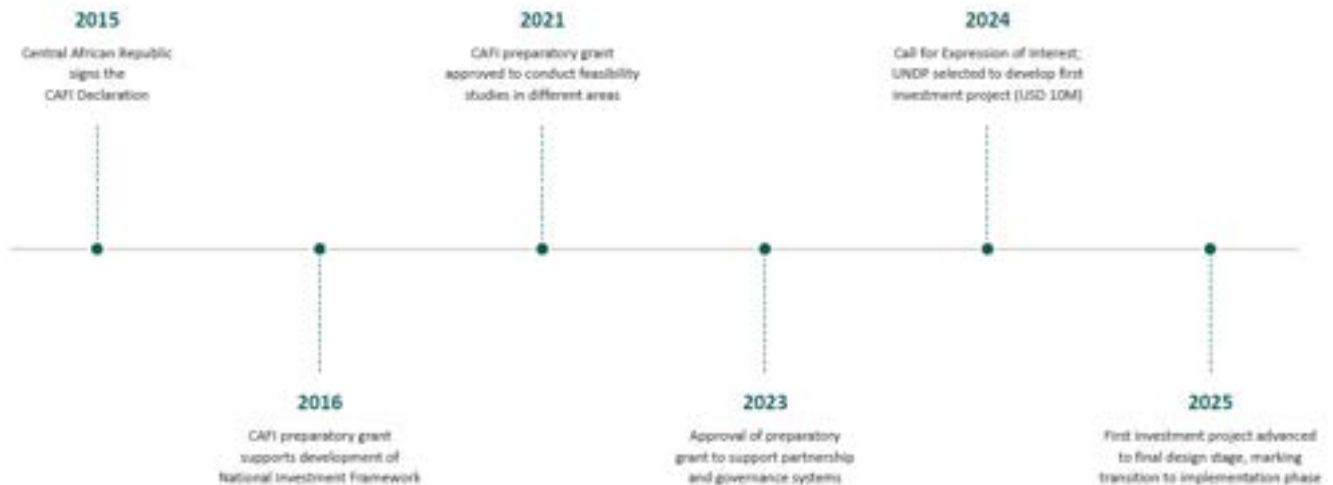
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Partnership overview

CAFI-CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC PARTNERSHIP

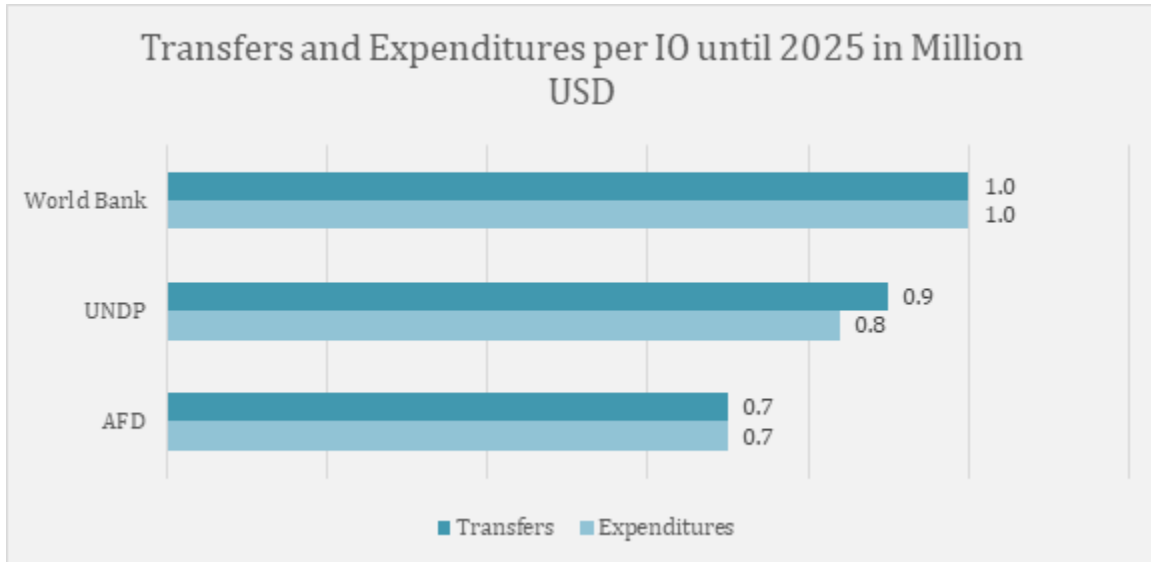
Key milestones - 2015-2025



In 2025, the partnership with the Central African Republic entered a transition phase toward investment. Policy dialogue remained sustained with the three focal ministries (Finance, Environment and Forestry), following the Government's instruction to deepen the partnership, and continued alignment of CAFI priorities with the National Development Plan and the REDD+ National Investment Framework.

CAR also strengthened its integration into the regional Payments for Environmental Services (PES) dynamic. Government representatives contributed to the development of national PES roadmaps at the Kinshasa interministerial conference (January 2025), and CAR was included in the first regional Call for Expressions of Interest to scale up PES programming, approved by the Executive Board in December 2025

Portfolio overview



In 2025, the first CAFI investment project advanced significantly from selection to near-finalisation. UNDP was selected as implementing organisation in January 2025, followed by the implementation of a preparatory grant (April–September 2025) to develop a USD 10 million PES pilot project in the Bangui area.

Equatorial Guinea



Partnership overview

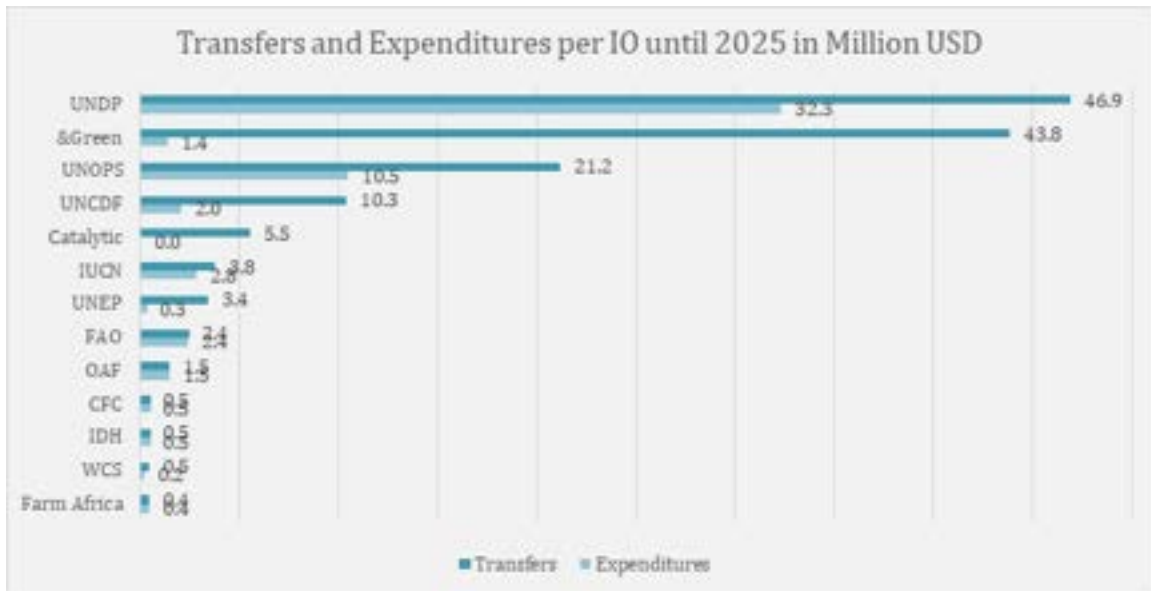
In 2025, engagement with Equatorial Guinea focused on preparing the transition toward an investment phase under the partnership. Government representatives participated in the regional Payments for Environmental Services (PES) conference in Kinshasa in January 2025, endorsing the regional roadmap and positioning the country within CAFI's performance-based approach.

Throughout the year, the Secretariat maintained dialogue with national counterparts and implementing organisations, focusing on two priority areas: feasibility studies for future investment programmes (led by AFD) and the development of a national land-use planning framework (supported by FAO). Progress was made in advancing these preparatory processes and addressing outstanding conditions for implementation.

This sustained engagement reflects a preparation phase aimed at structuring priority interventions and enabling future CAFI investments in the country.

Regional

Portfolio overview



Project spotlight: Flexible support to accelerate country delivery of CAFI commitments (UNOPS TAF)

Implementing organisation: UNOPS

Start date: December 2023

Budget: USD 26.57 million

Disbursed (Dec 2025): USD 20 million

Geographic scope: all six CAFI partner countries

The Regional Technical Assistance Facility, implemented by UNOPS, provides **flexible, on-demand support** to CAFI partner countries and regional initiatives. It helps **mobilise expertise quickly, respond to country priorities** and remove technical or operational bottlenecks that can slow down implementation.

A flexible mechanism for country delivery

Since the start of the project, UNOPS has received 32 technical assistance requests. By the end of 2025, 13 had been completed and 19 were under implementation. During 2025 alone, UNOPS worked on 27 requests, including 12 new requests received during the year and 15 continuing from previous workplans.

The Facility **covers a wide range of technical, operational and strategic priorities**, reflecting country demand and CAFI's evolving workstreams. These include:

- support to **PES roadmaps and pilots**
- **partnership coordination** and national climate commitments
- strengthening of **climate governance and institutions**
- development of **direct payment systems**
- support to **independent verification of project results**
- **private sector feasibility studies**
- logistical and communication support for **major international events**, including COP30

Supporting national institutions directly

A key strength of the Facility is that it can work directly with national institutions, helping them implement CAFI-related priorities while strengthening operational capacity.

Lessons from a decade of action

After ten years of implementation across Central Africa, CAFI's experience shows that progress comes from aligning political commitments, financing, and practical delivery. Over time, approaches have been tested and adjusted, highlighting where initial plans could have accelerated implementation and where current practices should be sustained and strengthened.

“I commend CAFI's ability to transform financing into tangible impacts and innovations”
Haoliang Xu, Acting Administrator of UNDP, New York, 24 September 2025

Lesson 1: Anchor political commitments early in delivery mechanisms

Letters of Intent and high-level agreements have been effective in setting direction. Impact is faster when these are matched from the outset with clear implementation arrangements, financing pipelines and institutional responsibilities. Aligning commitments and delivery earlier helps shorten the time between agreement and execution.

Lesson 2: Invest early in coordination across sectors

CAFI's whole-of-government approach has been essential to address deforestation drivers. Experience shows that stronger upfront coordination across ministries, with clear mandates and working structures, helps avoid delays during implementation and supports more coherent land-use decisions.

Lesson 3: Keep processes simple and supported in practice

As the portfolio expanded, increasing procedural complexity slowed implementation in some cases. Providing practical, on-demand support to partners, alongside standardised tools and clearer workflows, has helped unblock delivery. Keeping processes simple, while ensuring partners can navigate them effectively, is key to maintaining momentum.

Lesson 4: Build national delivery capacity from the start

Initial reliance on a limited set of international implementing organisations ensured strong fiduciary standards but constrained national ownership. Expanding access to national actors, combined with targeted capacity support, has strengthened delivery. Earlier investment in national systems could have broadened implementation options sooner.

Lesson 5: Link forest objectives to tangible local benefits

Programmes that connect forest protection with livelihoods, land rights, or energy access have shown stronger uptake and durability. This confirms that conservation efforts are most effective when they are directly aligned with economic opportunities and daily realities for communities.

Lesson 6: Use monitoring and verification systems to guide decisions

National monitoring systems, satellite data, milestone tracking and independent verification have strengthened the credibility of CAFI's approach. When actively used, they enable concrete decisions such as adjusting programmes, reallocating resources and validating results. Their systematic use strengthens both performance and accountability.

Lesson 7: Design performance-based approaches iteratively

Early experience with results-based payments and Payments for Environmental Services highlighted practical challenges including complex procedures, verification constraints and transaction costs. CAFI's shift toward standardised frameworks, digital tools and clearer contracts reflects this learning. Continued iteration is essential to ensure these mechanisms are efficient and scalable.

Lesson 8: Structure private sector engagement deliberately

Mobilising private investment has required dedicated tools, risk-sharing mechanisms and clear alignment with national priorities. Experience shows that private sector engagement does not happen organically and must be actively structured through pipelines, safeguards and de-risking instruments.

Conclusion

As CAFI marks ten years of partnership, 2025 confirmed both the urgency of protecting the Congo Basin forests and the need to evolve how forest and climate finance is delivered. The pressures on forests remain structural and persistent, but so too is the opportunity: to support development pathways where standing forests, sustainable livelihoods and national priorities reinforce one another.

Over the year, CAFI deepened this transition. The initiative strengthened performance-based management, advanced independent verification, expanded data and monitoring tools, and moved Payments for Environmental Services from design into early delivery. The first PES payments in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo showed that verified environmental results can be linked to direct incentives for communities and beneficiaries.

2025 also marked a step change in CAFI's investment model. Private sector engagement, blended finance and emerging PES pipelines are beginning to reshape the way CAFI mobilises capital, moving beyond grant financing toward approaches that can unlock domestic resources, private investment and climate finance. In a more constrained international financing context, this catalytic role will become increasingly important.

At country level, partnerships continued to mature. Structural reforms advanced, portfolios expanded or shifted toward implementation, and regional momentum grew around PES, gender and inclusion, and country ownership. Progress was uneven, and implementation challenges remain, but the direction is clear: stronger systems, clearer accountability, and a growing focus on measurable results.

The next phase will require acceleration. CAFI's task is now to translate the foundations built over the past decade into delivery at scale: more verified results, more predictable finance for countries, more benefits reaching communities, and stronger incentives to keep forests standing.

“The forests of the Congo Basin are too important to fail”

Mary Creagh, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Nature, United Kingdom, New York, 24
September 2025