

# THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO & CAFI

*Partnering to pave the way for green growth*



## QUICK FACTS

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**Ambitious commitments set out in the \$65 million Letter of Intent signed by Heads of State D. Sassou and E. Macron**

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**Policy to orient agriculture in savannah areas, stated in a decree banning agro-industrial concessions in forest areas**

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**A commitment not to convert HCS and HVC areas and to preserve the peatland area**

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**Promotion of timber legality control with the operationalisation of the legality verification system**

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**A piloting of the partnership with CAFI by the Prime Minister**

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With high forest cover and a low deforestation rate, the Republic of Congo has a vast forest area, estimated at more than **22 million hectares, or 65.4 per cent of the land area (FAO, 2015)**. The historically low gross annual deforestation rate is 0.07 per cent, which can be explained by economic growth based on the oil sector and the country's long-standing efforts to promote sustainable management of its forests.

Faced with an economic crisis, the country currently intends to diversify its economy by focusing on land-use based sectors, primarily agriculture but also the extractive sector. This is enshrined in its National Development Plan and the agreement signed with the International Monetary Fund. Nevertheless, the country has stated its willingness to develop sustainably and promote good management of natural resources and preserve the forest, especially in the most vulnerable areas. The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) intends to accompany the country in this ambition.

To this end, CAFI has committed to an initial amount of 65 million dollars by mobilizing a several partners, both longtime (France, European Union, Germany, Great Britain) and recent (Norway). The commitments of the Letter of Intent, signed on 3 September 2019 by the Head of State D. Sassou-Nguesso for the Republic of Congo, and President E. Macron for France as representative of the Executive Board, are ambitious. They underscore the country's strong will to manage its natural resources sustainably.

The Letter of Intent, which is piloted and monitored by the Prime Minister, enshrines ambitious and groundbreaking commitments to consolidate efforts undertaken by the Republic of Congo (notably its commitment to sustainably manage its production forests and within the FLEGT process). These include:

- **Develop its national territory through a multi-sectoral and inclusive spatial planning process**
- **Orient agricultural activities in savanna areas** following a ban adopted in October 2018, on the allocation of large-scale concessions in forest areas
- **Identify and avoid converting high carbon stock (HCS) and high conservation value (HCV) forests**
- **Cap the conversion of degraded forests** (with a provisional ceiling of 20,000 hectares per year)
- **Do not drain or dry peatland areas.**

Today, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo is in charge of coordination to ensure the implementation of intersectoral commitments and the accountability of the various sectors concerned. On 31 January 2020, CAFI launched a call for expressions of interest to select implementing agencies on the basis of a programming framework. The main focus of the programmes to be financed and/or co-financed by CAFI are as follows:

- Spatial planning - approximately US\$ 10 million over 5 years
- Development of agro-ecology and agroforestry in savanna and degraded forest areas - about US\$ 15 million over 5 years
- Delimitation, sustainable management and monitoring of the permanent and non-permanent forest estate - about US\$ 5 million over 3 years
- Development and implementation of sustainable energy supply master plan(s) for major urban centres - approximately US\$ 10 million over 5 years
- Improvement of the monitoring and enforcement of the respect of environmental and social standards - approximately US\$ 3 million over 3 years
- Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to implement and monitor the Letter of Intent commitments - approximately US\$ 2 million over 2 years.

For more information : [cafi.org](http://cafi.org)

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