



## **CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP (CBFP)**

### **EU Facilitation proposals on reinforced CBFP governance**

**June 2016**

## 1. Context, key principles and objectives

Experience of steering the CBFP in recent years has demonstrated that the increased number of partners (now amounting to 78) has created the need to find new ways of structuring interaction in order to sustain an effective dialogue and interaction among partners.

In addition, the nature and gravity of the challenges facing the Congo Basin Forests require the creation within the Partnership of improved possibilities for discussing policy issues and following up on common agreements and decisions.

In order to safeguard the relevance of the Partnership and enhance its impact and sustainability in the longer term, the EU Facilitation therefore proposes to provide the CBFP with an enhanced governance framework adapted to the internal and contextual shifts currently facing the Partnership.

In order to avoid lengthy negotiations before reaching consensus, this framework should be based on existing principles and agreed documents. This reinforcement of the structures of the Partnership will however need to be reflected in an update of the CBFP Cooperation Framework which the EU Facilitation intends to propose at a later stage.

This proposal is in the spirit of the Paris and Busan Declarations on Aid Effectiveness and in line with the overall objective of the CBFP to improve the efficiency of technical and financial contributions for biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of forest ecosystems and poverty reduction in the countries of Central Africa.

According to the EU Facilitation, the key principles of the governance structure to be promoted in CBFP should be the following:

- Transparency and accountability: the role and function of each part of this governance structure should be clear and understood by all partners;
- Membership and participation: this structure and the way it works should be acceptable to all partners. Each partner should feel able to express themselves and have their voice heard;
- Effectiveness and results: this structure should be a tool for achieving results (improving the individual results achieved by different partners and the collective results). This must not be a case of «institutionalisation» and «creating a structure» for its own sake, but of finding the most efficient and effective way of working;
- Adaptability: while the CBFP's basic operational principles must be preserved, the structures themselves must be able to adapt to change of context according to the principle of "learning by doing." The very principle of the continuing refining of these structures and the existence of a process to allow this to take place should be foreseen from the start. However, during a first phase some stability has to be achieved, in order to allow lessons to be drawn from the adopted approach.

In accordance with these principles, and taking into account the historic evolution of the CBFP, the specific objectives of this proposal are as follows:

- Building on the gains made by the CBFP as a network and forum for exchange between partners;
- Putting in place a functioning platform for policy dialogue, which will allow for effective inter-partner discussions on key issues, problems and priorities, as well as for putting across collective messages both towards the countries of the sub-region and towards partners providing financial and other support;
- Providing for better exchanges between political, strategic and operational levels.

## **2. Proposed governance structure**

The EU Facilitation proposes to establish a CBFP Council comprising delegates from seven representative colleges built around the various categories of CBFP partners.

The seven representative colleges would be as follows:

- *College 1.* Main Regional Organisations concerned and their Member States;
- *College 2.* Congo Basin Civil Society Organisations;
- *College 3.* International NGOs;
- *College 4.* Private sector;
- College 5. Donors: financial partner countries and multilateral institutions;
- *College 6.* Institutes of research and education;
- *College 7.* Intergovernmental / multilateral organisations not included in College 5.

This proposal fully preserves the key role of the annual Meetings of Parties (MoP), the impact and added value of which it seeks to enhance further.

This proposal also preserves the collaborative working method on thematic issues organised in thematic "streams" (or Cadres de Concertation Thématiques (CCT)), whose articulation with the major priorities of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan for 2015 – 2020 it will seek to reinforce.

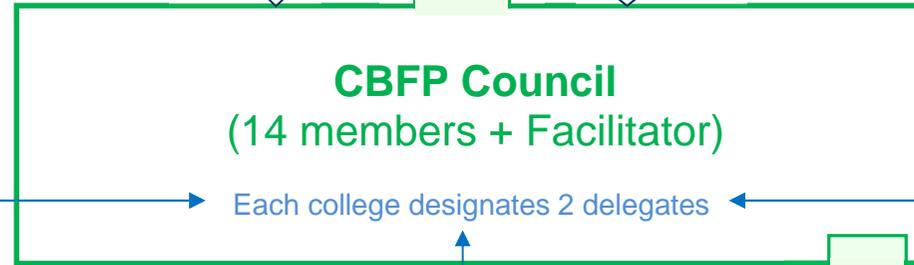
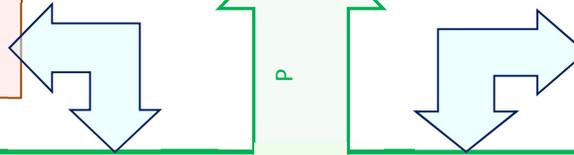
The different elements of the proposed governance structure are set out below (sections 2.1 to 2.5). The functional relationships that the EU Facilitation proposes to establish between these different elements are also described.

## Facilitator

- Facilitation of CBFP – Chairs the CBFP Council
- Represents the CBFP
- Organises the annual Meetings of Parties (MoP)
- Manages communication and information sharing tools

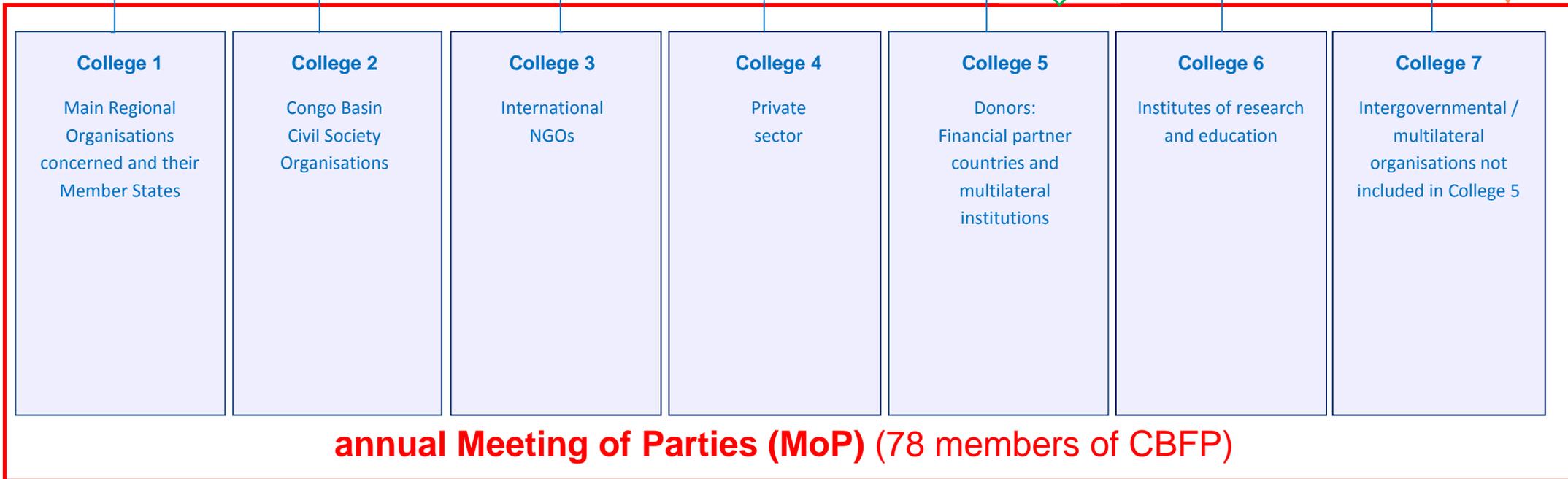
## Thematic activities

- Aligned with major priorities of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan
- *Streams* / Cadres de Concertation Thématique (CCT)
- Linked with COMIFAC Working Groups and COMIFAC technical Coordination Meetings
- On-going work, presentation and discussion of results during annual Meetings of Parties (MoP)



**CBFP Council**  
(14 members + Facilitator)

Each college designates 2 delegates



### College 1

Main Regional Organisations concerned and their Member States

### College 2

Congo Basin Civil Society Organisations

### College 3

International NGOs

### College 4

Private sector

### College 5

Donors: Financial partner countries and multilateral institutions

### College 6

Institutes of research and education

### College 7

Intergovernmental / multilateral organisations not included in College 5

**annual Meeting of Parties (MoP) (78 members of CBFP)**

## 2.1. Annual Meeting of Parties (MoP) – Plenary meeting of the CBFP

The Meeting of Parties or Plenary meeting of the CBFP (MoP) is the “General Assembly” of the members and observers of the CBFP. This meeting:

- Takes place once a year;
- Takes place in one of the COMIFAC Member States;
- Brings together all the stakeholders of the CBFP;
- Allows partners to express their opinions on the functioning of the CBFP and the conduct of the Facilitation;
- Provides a space for the exchange of information on the activities of different partners (the "Market of Information");
- Provides a setting for the organisation of thematic workshops (also called “streams” or "Cadres de Concertation Thématique" (CCTs)), which allow for the in-depth treatment of operational topics, for the organisation of discussions on these subjects, and for proposing resolutions to be presented to the political level (see further section 2.5. below).

The MoP adopts conclusions and proposes recommendations during a one-day high level plenary session, in which Ministers from COMIFAC Member States and Heads of Delegation of CBFP partners participate. The meeting also adopts a roadmap for implementing these conclusions and recommendations.

It is proposed that the CBFP Council (section 2.3 below) be charged with monitoring the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Meeting of Parties (MoP).

The MoP also serves as the setting for the "Market of Ideas", a forum for knowledge sharing on forest ecosystems in the Congo Basin. This market helps to strengthen coordination and fosters information sharing, mobilisation of CBFP partners, monitoring and evaluation of partners' actions and communication around actions undertaken. The forum also constitutes a good opportunity for raising the visibility of the Congo Basin at international level.

## 2.2. Partner colleges of the CBFP

Given the very significant increase in the number of CBFP members, partners will be grouped in colleges according to the type of actor, in order to allow for more efficient and effective dialogue among partners and for more effective participation of all partners.

As indicated in section 2 above, the EU Facilitation proposes that in the current configuration of CBFP seven colleges be established as follows:

*College 1.* Main Regional Organisations concerned and their Member States;

*College 2.* Congo Basin Civil Society Organisations;

*College 3.* International NGOs;

*College 4.* Private sector;

*College 5.* Donors: financial partner countries and multilateral institutions;

*College 6.* Institutes of research and education;

*College 7.* Intergovernmental / multilateral organisations not included in College 5.

Within each college, an internal process of exchange and discussion needs to be organised, and the modalities for the college's representation in the CBFP Council must be decided upon. Lead roles should be assigned to the most active CBFP partners in each college.

The ambition behind the establishment of the colleges is:

- To allow each partner to express their views more easily than during the annual Meetings of Parties (MoP), in which the areas of interest are numerous and varied;
- That discussion items to be brought to the CBFP Council have already undergone a stage of debate and a certain level of consolidation at college level;
- To allow specific groups of partners within the CBFP (represented by their college) to have their priorities clearly identified and brought to the attention of the CBFP Council;
- To ensure that channels for information sharing (both "bottom-up" from the partners to the CBFP Council and "top-down" from the CBFP Council to partners) are established and function as efficiently as possible.

### 2.3. The CBFP Council

The Council will be composed of representatives from the different colleges. It will be chaired by the Facilitator. Each college must determine how it wishes to be represented in the Council and will notify the Facilitator of its decision. It will, however, be absolutely necessary to limit the total number of participants in the Council in order to ensure that it can function efficiently. With seven colleges, it is foreseen that each college will have two seats on the Council.

The Council will therefore be composed of fifteen members (two representatives from each of the seven colleges as well as the Facilitator who provides the Chair).

The key function of the CBFP Council is to provide a vehicle for effective political and policy dialogue between the COMIFAC and its Member States and the other CBFP partners. The Council with its college-based composition will allow the viewpoints of different groups of partners to be brought together and considered more efficiently, in order to get a better grasp of the main issues, obstacles and priorities to ensure concerted and sustainable management of

the Congo Basin Forests. Furthermore, the Council will seek to promote consensus views regarding important questions on which partners may have different opinions.

The Council will also enable a more successful steering of the CBFP by the Facilitator. It will allow for more frequent and more targeted exchanges between partners than those which can take place during the Meetings of Parties (MoP). It is at Council level that the evolution of the Partnership and its governance should be managed and the effectiveness of its actions evaluated.

The Council will improve the possibilities for effective communication between the CBFP members and for the regular monitoring of activities carried out within the Partnership by following up on the minutes, conclusions and recommendations of the Meetings of Parties (MoPs). The Council should include in its agendas the approval of minutes of previous meetings and the follow-up of decisions taken. However, it will still be up to each partner to act on the outcome of Council meetings in line with their commitments made in the CBFP Cooperation Framework and their own circumstances.

The Council should be the strategic and political pivot for promoting a stronger harmonization and coordination of partner actions. It should allow for the development of a medium-term vision of the needs of and support provided for the forests and biodiversity of the Congo Basin, help to mobilize decision-makers from CBFP member institutions and work within partners' programming cycles to ensure the relevance, effectiveness and timeliness of actions undertaken.

The agenda of the Council will be drawn up on the basis of:

- requests articulated by partners and relayed via the colleges;
- decisions taken by COMIFAC and its Member States;
- international strategic guidelines on world tropical forest ecosystems;
- the results of thematic work undertaken within the framework of "streams"/Cadres de Concertation Thématiques(CCT).

It is proposed that the Council should meet twice a year, a priori once back-to-back with the annual Meeting of Parties (MoP) and once in between such meetings.

#### 2.4. The CBPF Facilitator

The form of governance chosen by the CBFP is steering through "Facilitation", a light structure for coordination that is provided voluntarily by one of the members belonging to the Partnership for a fixed period of time. The Facilitation also plays a key role in ensuring dialogue and cooperation within the Partnership and in representing the CBFP.

In the reinforced governance structure proposed by the EU Facilitation, the Facilitator will chair and coordinate the work of the CBFP Council. He or she will be supported by consensus decisions taken by the Council.

Through its roadmap for the period 2016-2017, the EU Facilitation will aim to support the strengthening of COMIFAC and involve it more and more in the facilitation of the CBFP, with the aim of enabling it to take on the role of main CBFP Facilitator in 2018, with the support of an external partner.

#### 2.5. Thematic work

Despite their diversity and specificities, the activities implemented by the CBFP partners predominantly fit into a limited number of themes, which furthermore overlap significantly with the major priorities of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan for the 2015-2025 period.

Multiple linkages exist already between the various themes within which CBFP partner activities fall. In order to ensure the overall effectiveness of these interventions, it is therefore desirable to put in place processes for exchange and coordination concerning operational activities.

It is also particularly useful that the results and experience gained at operational level under the different themes on an ongoing basis be brought to the attention of the strategic level (notably via the CBFP Council) and all CBFP partners (during the annual Meetings of Parties).

To this end, the EU Facilitation proposes the establishment of *Cadres de Concertation Thématique* (CCT). The objective is to allow CBFP members to stay informed of recent developments on a range of global themes and to contribute to the elaboration of common positions in order to influence those developments.

The establishment of these CCTs builds on the experience of the last year of the US Facilitation (2015), during which the notion of thematic "streams" was created. These were steered by partner "leaders" charged with mobilising all other CBFP partners working on a given theme to put together presentations, discussions and recommendations/resolutions during the Meetings of Parties (MoP).

The establishment of the CCTs must be linked to the other existing initiatives for thematic collaboration in the region, which bring together, mostly within the framework of COMIFAC, various groups of experts and practitioners working on the same topics:

- The technical Coordination Meetings of COMIFAC, which bring together mainly the technical assistants of the organisation and which have been regularly taking place at the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat for several years;
- The COMIFAC “Working Groups” (Biodiversity, Desertification, Climate, Governance), which have notably contributed to the development of common positions among the countries of the region in view of international conferences.

In order to insure efficiency and to reinforce the added value of these different regional efforts for thematic cooperation, it is desirable that these be better integrated with each other and more clearly linked to the major priorities of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan.

To this end, the efforts of the EU Facilitation to strengthen the governance of the CBFP in terms of thematic work will aim to:

- Strengthen the structure and the visibility of the Cadres de Concertation Thématique /« streams », so that they no longer serve only as preparation groups for thematic workshops during the annual Meeting of Parties (MoP), but become true platforms for technical exchange and sharing of experience, functioning on an on-going basis and regularly producing results that are of use to decision makers (reports, policy papers, etc.);
- Better support the functioning of the COMIFAC Working Groups, based on International Conventions (of which the “hard core” is made up of the national focal points of these conventions), in particular by coordinating their links with the Cadres de Concertations Thématiques (CCT)/“streams” working on the same themes;
- Organise and systematise exchanges of information between the operational level of these thematic groups and the strategic level of the CBFP Council.