

13th Meeting of the Governing Council of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Co-facilitators' Report

Tuesday 9 April 2024 (video conference)

14:00 - 4:30 PM(CET)

Courtesy translation

Summary report:

The Franco-Gabonese Co-Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) organised the 13th meeting of the Governing Council of the CBFP by video conference on Tuesday 9 April 2024.

The following points were discussed:

- Presentation of the activities of the CBFP Co-Facilitation as part of the implementation of the 2023-2025 roadmap of the CBFP.
 - Organisation of the Youth Forum (31 May-1 June) and the 20th Meeting of the Parties (3-5 June) in Kinshasa.
 - Organisation of regional workshops: the sustainable value chains workshop has been postponed to the second half of 2024 and the Congo Basin civil society workshop has been postponed to 7-9 May, with a contribution from ECCAS to cover two additional days (10-11 May) dedicated to capacity building.
 - Governance of the CBFP: Presentation of the terms of reference of the College of Donors, which will be discussed during the next meeting of the College at the Meeting of the Parties. The Governing Council was unanimous on the relevance of this initiative.
 - International agenda: major international deadlines were presented. Members of the Governing Council were encouraged to inform the CBFP facilitation of their events and initiatives so that they could be properly publicised.
 - Governing Council members were asked to respond to the survey conducted by the Scientific College on the mapping of research institutions and partners.
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Detailed Report

The 13th meeting of the Governing Council of the CBFP brought together some thirty participants representing the seven colleges of the CBFP and the team of the Franco-Gabonese Co-Facilitation of the CBFP:

- Regional college: ECCAS
- Civil society college: CEFDHAC-CPR; REFACOF and RECEIAC representatives
- College of international NGOs: WCS and ZSL and alternates: AWF
- Private sector college: ATIBT and Volcanoes Safaris
- College of donors: United States, United Kingdom
- Scientific and academic college: Laval University and RIFFEAC
- College of multilaterals: FAO, ITTO and Alternates UNESCO.

The meeting of the Governing Council of the CBFP was chaired by:

- Ambassador Christophe Guilhou, Director of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, CBFP Co-Facilitator (France)
- Ambassador Dr. Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo Ambassador in charge of Climate, Environment and Sustainable Development of Gabon, Co-Facilitator of the CBFP (Gabon)

CD-GC/Item 1: Opening session

Following the round table introduction of participants, the Governing Council was informed of the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Mrs Sylvie Louissette NGO YEBEL Epse FOUNGA, Communications Expert at the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat. On this sad occasion, the Franco-Gabonese Co-Facilitation sent its sincerest condolences to COMIFAC and to the family of the deceased.

The first part of the agenda, dedicated to the opening ceremony, was marked by a speech by Commissioner H. Tabuna (ECCAS), who praised the continued involvement of ECCAS in CBFP activities and the dedication and commitment of the two Co-Facilitators in leading the CBFP.

Co-Facilitator Christophe Guilhou then presented the draft agenda of the CBFP Governing Council meeting, which was adopted without amendment.

CD-GC/Item 2: Presentation of the activities of the CBFP Co-Facilitation in 2024

Co-Facilitator Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo recalled the 5 strategic axes of the 2023-2025 Roadmap of the CBFP. She highlighted the political mission of the CBFP Co-Facilitation in Kinshasa, as part of the preparations for the 20th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 20) to the CBFP. The Co-Facilitator underlined the warm welcome given by DRC authorities and their agreement in principle to host the CBFP MOP 20. She noted the enthusiasm of local CBFP partners for CBFP MOP 20, as demonstrated by several information meetings held by the CBFP Facilitation with civil society, financial partners, technical partners and others.

Following some logistical adjustments to the timetable, the Co-Facilitator informed the Governing Council of the forthcoming activities of the CBFP Co-Facilitation:

- Civil Society Workshop scheduled to take place from 7 to 9 May 2024 in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Co-Facilitator welcomed the contribution of ECCAS for potential support in covering two additional days for civil society capacity building from 10 to 11 May 2024 in Bujumbura, Burundi.
- Sustainable value chains workshop: For logistical reasons, this workshop will no longer be held from 17 to 19 April 2024 as originally planned. Discussions are underway with Cameroon, the host country, to postpone it to the second half of 2024.

With regard to science, the Co-Facilitator announced the support provided by the CBFP Co-Facilitation through a stand mobilised for the Scientific College at the next IUFRO World Congress in Stockholm, Sweden, at the end of June 2024.

Other forthcoming events in which the CBFP Co-Facilitation will be involved can be found in the CBFP Co-Facilitation presentation to the Board of Directors (see attachment 1).

Comments from the colleges of the CBFP:

The College of International NGOs requests that transhumance be included in the content of CBFP MOP 20.

The Civil Society College requests confirmation from the CBFP Co-Facilitation of the proposed number of participants at the workshop in Bujumbura. With regard to the 'sustainable value chains' workshop, the college requested that it be invited to participate. In response to a question from the CBFP Co-Facilitator on the content of the Bujumbura workshop, the College pointed out that information on this subject was contained in the ToRs discussed at their preparatory workshop.

The Co-Facilitator also recalled the possibility for partners to organise parallel events during CBFP MOP 20. Regarding the number of participants at the Bujumbura workshop, she asked that this be a bilateral discussion and confirmed that the college would indeed be invited to take part in the workshop on sustainable value chains. She also pointed out that transhumance would be taken into account, but as a sub-theme of thematic workshop 2 on land-use planning at MOP20.

3. CD-GC/Item 3: Organisation of the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the CBFP

The Co-Facilitator recalled the structure of the agenda for the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the CBFP, in particular:

- The Youth Forum: Friday 31 May - Saturday 1 June
- The Ministerial political segment: Monday 3 June
- The Technical Segment: Tuesday 4 June - Wednesday 5 June.

CD-GC/Item 3.1 Youth Forum

As regards the Youth Forum, Eva Desthieux presented the programme for the two days of the Forum:

- Capacity-building workshop in preparation for the 3 Rio COPs
- 3 panels on Science, Green Entrepreneurship and Volunteering
- 3 thematic sessions in line with the MOP20 themes

More information on the Forum's panels and thematic workshops can be found in the Youth Forum framework note attached to these minutes (see attachment 2).

Comments from the colleges of the CBFP:

The coordinators of the thematic workshops, namely the **Scientific College**, the **College of International NGOs** and the **Private Sector College** of the CBFP MOP 20, wanted to know whether their contributions were expected in the organisation of the Youth Forum, in particular the thematic workshops.

The **ECCAS Commissioner** wanted to know whether the youth network, REJEFAC was involved in organising the Forum.

The **scientific college** asked for information on the selection criteria for the 150 young people who would be taking part in the Forum, whether new applications were acceptable and whether the 150 number could be extended, as there would be several university students in Kinshasa who would like to take part in the Youth Forum.

The **civil society college**, through the President of the Network of Communicators (RECEIAC), emphasised their willingness to mobilise communication professionals from the sub-region to take part in the Youth Forum. He recalled that at previous CBFP MOP editions, communicators were invited systematically, and they would like the same to happen this year.

Lucas Ivernel welcomed the interest shown by the coordinators and emphasised that the CBFP Co-Facilitation would very much welcome the involvement of the coordinators in the organisation of the Forum's thematic sessions, and requested their physical presence, if possible, on Saturday 1 June 2024. He reaffirmed that REJEFAC is a member of the Forum's steering committee. As far as the selection criteria were concerned, he recalled that the participants were a cross-section of young people involved in science and practice in the field, young leaders, entrepreneurs and young indigenous people. As far as the number of participants was concerned, the logistical capacity could accommodate more than 150 young people. The Co-Facilitator stressed that communicators were welcome to the Forum and that communication should be maximised.

CD-GC/Item 3.2 Proceedings of CBFP MOP 20

Lucas Ivernel noted the importance of holding the meeting of the Governing Council, which comes just at the right time for preparations for CBFP MOP 20 and an opportunity for the CBFP Co-Facilitation to listen to the Governing Council. Outlining the objectives of CBFP MOP 20, he emphasised that it was being held at a pivotal time at international level, with the three COPs of the Rio Convention in 2024 and the COP 30 Climate Change Conference in Belém in 18 months' time. He stressed the need to mobilise all stakeholders to promote the forests of Central Africa at these major international events.

Regarding the date of MOP 20, it will be held from 3 to 5 June instead of 3 to 6 June. It will be held at the Pullman Hotel in Kinshasa. Parallel events and exhibition stands can be organised. An interpretation service will be available at MOP20, except for side events. Videoconferencing will be available for livestreaming during official events. For more information, see attachment 1 and the information note on CBFP MOP 20 (see attachment 4).

Questions from CBFP colleges:

The private sector (Volcanoes Safaris) pointed out that ecotourism has received the least attention in the MOPs of the CBFP for several years. He recalled the focus of Volcanoes Safaris on great ape conservation, ecotourism and economic development. He asked about the purpose of the meetings, the products and the discussions from an ecotourism perspective.

Lucas Ivernel explained that the aim would be to insert ecotourism into the meetings of the colleges and thematic workshops in a cross-cutting manner. He emphasised that the aim of the MOP 20 of the CBFP would be to make recommendations that would then be published on the CBFP website and sent to the negotiators of the three COPs of the Rio Convention, with a view to COP 30, in order to give the forests of the Congo Basin a higher profile at international level.

The Civil Society College of the CBFP asked for CBFP Governing Council meetings to be longer and for the colleges to have a little more time to express their views. The College would like a session to be organised between the college of donors and civil society at CBFP MOP 20.

The Co-Facilitator pointed out that there would be 3 hours available for the next CBFP Governing Council meeting. However, she reiterated the availability of the Franco-Gabonese Facilitation to respond to the requests of the members of the Governing Council and to improve the organisational arrangements for CBFP Governing Council meetings as and when necessary.

CD-GC/Item 3.3 Six thematic workshops

The six thematic workshops and their leaders were presented (see Attachment 1). As regards the level of preparation of the thematic workshops, their organisation is not uniform because the levels of maturity of the themes at sub-regional level are very varied. The approach for the thematic workshops is to decompartmentalise the CBFP colleges in order to encourage multi-partner exchanges within the CBFP. Each thematic workshop will have three 90-minute sessions.

CD-GC/Item 3.4 Parallel events

By 5 April, the CBFP Co-Facilitation had registered 49 proposals for slots ranging from 60 to 90 minutes. [The Call for Proposals remains open until 19 April 2024 on the CBFP website...](#)

CD-GC/Item 3.4 Meeting of colleges

Lucas Ivernel informed the meeting of two time slots set aside in the CBFP MOP 20 agenda to enable the CBFP colleges to meet. Each leader was reminded of their responsibility to organise their college meeting for the Meeting of the Parties.

Comments from the CBFP colleges:

The **Private Sector College** asked for the list of Leaders and Co-Leaders of the thematic workshops to be circulated in order to facilitate their preparation. He would like to know whether there have been any negotiations on visa facilitation and whether the service provider is working on negotiating preferential prices for hotels.

The Co-Facilitation will send out the list of Leaders and Co-Leaders after the meeting of the Governing Council. Visa facilitation negotiations are underway with authorities in the DRC. The MEDD Focal Point in the DRC is very active and is monitoring the matter. The Co-Facilitation will provide information as soon as possible on the visas and hotels negotiated.

CD-GC/Item 4 Governance of the CBFP: Leader of the College of Donors of the CBFP

The Co-Chairman of the College of Donors of the CBFP, Daniel Carl, USA, explained the rationale behind the process underway within the College of Donors to provide it with Terms of Reference. The College does not have any guidelines for its operation. The CBFP has a cooperation framework, adopted in Kigali in 2016, but without any provisions on the operation of the colleges or guidelines on the organisation and operation of the colleges.

The ToRs for the College are still being developed. A draft is available. The idea is to better define the duties and responsibilities of the Co-Chairs, to review how the Co-Chairs are elected, to define a system of governance for the College, the issue of College representation at meetings, and some guidelines on the decision-making process: The College would like to build consensus. The ToRs document is a core document that will be discussed at the CBFP donors' college meeting and then presented in Kinshasa.

Lucas Ivernel also pointed out that the Governing Board is an ideal framework for facilitating discussions between the co-chairs of the Colleges, so that the other Colleges can benefit from them. The Donors' College is leading the way on this issue.

Contributions from the Colleges of the CBFP

The Civil Society College expressed its interest in the proposal of the College of Donors. The forthcoming civil society workshop in Bujumbura will be an opportunity for the Civil Society College to work on its own governance and address the issues of its functioning. The College sought to know whether the ToRs of the College of Donors could be shared.

In response, the Co-Chairman of the CBFP College of Donors said that the possibility of distributing the College's ToRs to other colleges could be explored.

All the members of the CBFP Governing Council welcomed the initiative of the College of Donors in presenting its terms of reference, which would be a source of inspiration for the other colleges of the CBFP.

With regard to the governance of the CBFP in general, discussions between the members of the Governing Council highlighted the importance of having a space at the CBFP MOP 20 for exchanges on the CBFP, its governance, its role, its function and its added value. It would also be a good opportunity to share good practices, to question the parties on the value of the Partnership, and to better structure the Partnership so that it continues to be as effective as possible.

The CBFP Co-Facilitator stressed the importance of providing the CBFP with a secretariat and emphasised that this question should be raised at CBFP MOP 20

CD-GC/Item 5: Calendar of international events and visibility of Central African forests, COMIFAC and the CBFP

The Co-Facilitation presented the calendar of international events (see presentation, attachment 1). The Co-Facilitation underlined its interest in knowing about the activities organised by the members of the college. The CBFP's Co-Facilitation team follows news from partners to support and promote their priorities.

CD-GC/Item 6: OTHER MATTERS

- Next Governing Council meetings

The idea is to hold 4 CBFP Governing Council meetings a year. The next meeting of the Governing Council will take place on 2 June, and members are requested to confirm their availability as soon as possible. Following CBFP MOP 20, the next Governing Council meeting will take place in September 2024 in a virtual format.

- International advocacy on the forests of Central Africa by the Civil Society College.

The Civil Society College is asking members of the Governing Council to support it so that it can effectively carry out international, sub-regional and national advocacy on the forests of Central Africa.

The College is seeking support for the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) at major international events. The College would like to see more active dialogue with other CBFP colleges so that CSOs are well informed about their activities and can make their own contributions to advocacy. The CBFP Co-Facilitation noted that the views of the College were well heard.

- Questionnaire on the mapping of higher education, university and research institutions of the various CBFP member institutions and their partners.

The secretariat of the scientific college reminded members of the Governing Council of the CBFP of the importance of filling in the information-gathering questionnaire and circulating it to their respective colleges. The Secretariat of the CSA emphasised that this study would not only consist of mapping but also, and above all, of inter-actions between science and the other colleges.

The Private Sector College (ATIBT) reported on its Scientific Council, made up of representatives from the North and South. The ATIBT asked for the questionnaire to be circulated within its scientific committee.

CD-GC/Item 7 Conclusion

The Co-Facilitator thanked the participants for the fruitful discussions. She pointed out that the Co-Facilitation of the CBFP was keen to improve synergies among its members. The Co-Facilitator reminded participants of the date of the next meeting of the CBFP Governing Council, to be held in Kinshasa on 2 June, before bringing the 13th meeting of the CBFP Governing Council to a close.