



**Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)
during German Facilitation (2021 – 2022)**

Road Map

The Facilitation's overarching objective for 2021 and 2022 is to contribute to the preservation and sustainable use of Central Africa's incredibly rich forest landscapes. Safeguarding their threatened integrity is crucial for the sustainable development of states and populations in the Basin as well as for the fight against global challenges like a declining biodiversity or a changing climate. In doing so, the Facilitation aims to add value to and build on the important work of the Partnership's members and preceding Facilitations.

By means of an official ceremony in Douala in December 2019, the Facilitation of Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) was handed over from the Kingdom of Belgium, represented by Minister of State François-Xavier De Donnea, to the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the new CBFP Facilitator Dr. Christian Ruck. Marked by a launch in Berlin on 14 February 2020 under the auspices of Dr. Gerd Müller, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development in the presence of various representatives from COMIFAC member countries, the work of German Facilitation has undoubtedly begun.

The Road Map at hand indicates several key topics which the German Facilitation intends to emphasize together with the whole Partnership. An overall objective of the Facilitation effort in 2020 and 2021 will be to promote and strengthen intensive cooperation for transparent as well as concerted multi-stakeholder leadership. Addressing the ever more pressing threats for Central Africa's forest ecosystems, their biodiversity, and their populations will require a strong and equal Partnership as well as consistency with the work of preceding Facilitations. Hence, the Facilitation intends to bring together CBFP partners in the Congo Basin and beyond. It proposes to the Partnership to put particular focus on a number of governance subjects and wants to trigger broad discussions on different thematic matters. These key subjects are closely aligned with the strategic areas of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, the medium-term priorities of the CBFP, the Rio Conventions, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I. Consolidation of achievements to date:

To begin with, the Partnership should stay committed to consolidating its achievements under the preceding Belgian Facilitation on cross-border anti-poaching efforts, security concerns and management of transhumance issues in the region. The Facilitation encourages the Partnership to follow up on the commitments laid out in the N'Djamena declaration and to encourage practical measures on the ground.

II. Governance within the partnership:

We remain convinced that the Partnership is of decisive importance for safeguarding the Central African forests, the various ecosystem services they provide and the rich possibilities they harbor for sustainable development within the region. Thus, the Facilitation aims to strengthen CBFP's governance, broaden its membership network and bolster interactions and cooperation within the Partnership in order to safeguard its relevance and increase its impact. Besides the regular holding of meetings of and between

the Colleges, meetings of the Governing Council and as well as the organization of the annual Meeting of Parties of the CBFP, a key objective will be to make greater use of the vast expertise assembled in the Colleges and to proactively tap into this knowledge resource by assigning the Colleges a stronger role in the Partnership's thematic work.

III. Biodiversity, wildlife & protected area management:

Furthermore, the incoming Facilitation urges the Partnership to underline the Congo Basin forests' relevance in global efforts to conserve biodiversity and will work to identify possibilities for long-term financing of conservation efforts. It intends to promote increased coordination and synergies between policies and various existing conservation instruments. It aims to move CBFP members to seek a way forward for managing transboundary protected areas and to reduce gaps in the conservation – development – security nexus. A prioritized aim is to facilitate a common perspective from the Congo Basin to be brought to the table at this year's landmark CBD Conference of Parties in Kunming.

In order to protect the forests' rich biodiversity, the Facilitation also wants to accentuate the need for an improved management of protected areas along guiding principles for human rights and participation of local and indigenous groups. Conservation of vulnerable landscapes and wildlife can only succeed if resident populations are participating substantively in management approaches like parks or nature reserves. Resident communities should receive the tangible benefits – economic and beyond – protected areas can provide for them if they are to support conservation efforts.

IV. Forests and climate:

Calling attention to the Congo Basin forests' outstanding role as stock for carbon sequestration in global efforts to curb climate change, the Partnership should stay committed to raising the profile of the region in current and upcoming international climate negotiations which are at a decisive state for future environmental politics. The Facilitation intends to act as neutral intermediary within the Partnership and to work towards a shared position of Congo Basin countries at UNFCCC COPs 26 and 27. It also aims to activate the Partnership's network in order to identify ways for enabling REDD+ in Central Africa, to discuss additional mechanisms for valuing the forests' vital ecosystem services and to appropriately consider Central African forests and the ecosystem services they provide in finance flows of international climate politics.

A further ambition will be to encourage restoration of degraded landscapes as well as conserving peatlands within the Congo Basin. By revitalizing degraded landscapes, pressure on vulnerable virgin forests might be decreased.

V. Sustainable land use:

Being aware of the relevance of the Congo Basin forests and their resources for local livelihoods and regional economies, the Facilitation aims to stimulate a debate on ways to utilize forests, natural resources and lands in Central Africa in a sustainable way. Inducing discussions on how to move towards an integrated land use planning within the region and developing ideas on how to strengthen approaches such as – amongst others – certification, ecotourism, adding value to forest-related products or deforestation-free supply chains are key aspirations for the next two years. The long-term objective is to move towards regulative harmonization and minimum standards within the region for the sustainable optimization of all resource and land use in order to support conservation, biodiversity and sustainable management and – above all – the economic development of the populations of Central Africa.

VI. Dialogue with China:

Again with reference to the preceding achievements, the Facilitation aims to deepen the dialogue of the

CBFP and its members with partners from China. A focus will be to link actors from the private sector with the political level in order to render cooperation and investment beneficial and sustainable in the long term.

The Facilitation wants to affirm that the upcoming two years 2020 – 2021 represent a crucial window of opportunity for protecting the rainforests in the Congo Basin and for enabling them to continue providing ecosystem services which are vital on local, regional and global levels. With a CBD COP 15 as a milestone biodiversity conference, UNFCCC COPs 26 and 27 as turning points for global climate politics and the EU - China Summit as a key moment in taking stock of China's growing engagement in the Congo Basin, it is essential for the Partnership to speak with a common voice. The Facilitation firmly believes that a coordinated and harmonized stance will benefit the Partnership as well as the Congo Basin and its forests in impinging on these crucial negotiations. To this end, it aims to make use of the moment in creating synergies with Germany's current simultaneous presidency of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI).

In close alignment with the Convergence Plan of the COMIFAC, the German Facilitation proposes the Road Map outlined above to its partners from Central Africa and beyond. It invites the members of the Partnership to come together and to move forward in the protection and sustainable management of the rainforests of the Congo Basin as well as the sustainable development of its Population. It stays open for suggestions and ideas from its partners and welcomes new initiatives and ideas from all sides.