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Mapping of international funding flows to support the forest and environment sectors in Central Africa

An update

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CIFOR-ICRAF

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AB	Amazon Basin
CAR	Central African Republic
CA	Central Africa
CBFF	Congo Basin Forest Fund
CAFI	Central African Forest initiative
CIF	Climate Investment Fund
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EODA	Environmental official development assistance
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FEODA	Forestry and environmental official development assistance
GCCB	Global Climate Change Alliance
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
NDF	Nordic Development Fund
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OFAC	Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa
RIOFAC	Renforcement et Institutionnalisation de l'Observatoire des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SEA	Southeast Asia
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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Executive summary

Background

The forestry and environmental sectors' funding has become a focal point for policymakers in Central Africa (CA). In 2019, the Observatory for Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) addressed this issue by conducting a study that mapped international financial flows to these sectors in CA. They also published an initial policy analysis paper examining international funding for these sectors from 2008 to 2017. During that period, CA received a measly sum of USD 2 billion, which represented 11% of the USD 15 billion in forestry and environmental official development assistance (FEODA) allocated to tropical regions. Subsequently, Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) member countries submitted their second revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to combat climate change impacts, making them eligible to apply for funding to international funding mechanisms for forestry and environmental sectors. Given these developments, it is necessary to update the previous study on international financial flows for forestry and environmental sectors in CA to assess any changes that have occurred since the initial research.

Aim and objectives

The study aimed to update previous analyses and identify changes to better inform COMIFAC's upcoming policy brief by the end of 2024. The objectives of the study included the analysis of financial support for nature conservation, sustainable forest management (SFM) and climate change in CA; identification of main funded areas and assessment of imbalances and gaps; comparison of funding flows among tropical zones; and identification of needs and opportunities for financing of CA's forestry and environmental sectors.

Methodology

The current study used an approach from Favada et al. 2019, including desk research, data collection and analysis. The data was obtained from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) database, covering 2008–2022 and six subsectors each for the forestry and environmental sectors. The financial flows were analysed from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and multilateral institutions. The study used commitment data instead of disbursements due to data completeness issues. Regarding limitations, International Tropical timber Organization (ITTO) data was not included due to difficulties in determining project approval years.

Analysis of flows

Total FEODA to CA amounted to approximately USD 3.1 billion from 2008 to 2022, representing a 50% increase compared to 2008–2017. By source, bilateral contributions accounted for 50.3% and multilateral contributions accounted for 49.7% of total FEODA. By sector, environmental official development assistance (EODA) to CA was USD 2.2 billion, a 69.2% increase, constituting 69.9% of total FEODA. Total FEODA top five donors were Germany (23%), the European Union (19%), the Global Environment Facility (12%), the World Bank (9%) and the United States (9%). These were the same as in the previous period, but shifting of ranking between the World Bank and the United States during the period 2008–2022. The bilateral FEODA top five donors were Germany (45%), the United States (17%), France (9%), Japan (5%) and Luxembourg (5%). The first four donors also appeared in the top five of the previous periods. The multilateral FEODA top donors were the European

Union (38%), the Global Environment Facility (24%), the World Bank (19%), the African Development Bank (8%) and the Climate Investment Fund (5%). These donors also occupied the top five positions in the previous period. The top five beneficiaries of total FEODA were the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) at 52% of total FEODA, followed by Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (9%), Chad (9%) and Republic of the Congo (6%). The DRC's share increased, while Cameroon and Chad's shares decreased in the current period. Equatorial Guinea had the lowest share at approximately 1% in both periods. Regarding bilateral FEODA, the DRC again led with 61%, followed by Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (10%), Gabon (7%), and Republic of the Congo (5%). The DRC's share increased, while those of Cameroon, Rwanda and Gabon decreased during the current period. For multilateral FEODA, the DRC was the highest recipient at 43%, with Chad (16%), Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (8%) and Republic of the Congo (8%). The shares of Chad, Rwanda and Republic of the Congo increased slightly, while the shares of the DRC and Cameroon decreased slightly during the current period. The top five areas of total FEODA included biodiversity (29%), environmental policy and administrative management (27%), forestry policy and administrative management (18%), forestry development (11%) and biosphere protection (9%). The shares for biodiversity and environmental policy slightly increased, while biodiversity protection decreased. The top five areas of bilateral FEODA were biodiversity (39%), environmental policy and administrative management (26%), forestry policy and administrative management (17%), forestry development (11%) and environmental research (3%), with increases in the first four top areas except environmental research, which recorded a decrease in the current period. The top five areas of multilateral FEODA included environmental policy and administrative management (28%), biodiversity (20%), forestry policy and administrative management (19%), biosphere protection (16%) and forestry development (12%). The shares of forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development decreased, while the shares of environmental policy and administrative management and biodiversity protection increased during the current period.

Imbalance and gaps in flows

Overall, between 2008 and 2022, the trend of total FEODA has been slightly upward, compared to the previous period, reflecting a growing global recognition of environmental conservation and SFM. The top five areas covered by total FEODA accounted for 95% (approximately USD 3.0 billion) of total FEODA value (USD 3.1 billion) during the period 2008–2022. Total FEODA covered only two areas of the forestry sector in CA, highlighting imbalance in funded areas in CA. From 2008 to 2022, Rwanda and the DRC led the CA region with 17 bilateral donors each. Cameroon followed closely with 16 donors, while Burundi and Republic of the Congo had 11 each, and the CAR had 10. The remaining countries in the region, including Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe, had fewer than 10 donors each. Overall, there was a slight increase in donor presence compared to the previous period. Conversely, Equatorial Guinea experienced the highest number of bilateral donor absences at 23, followed by São Tomé and Príncipe with 22, Chad and Gabon with 21 each, CAR with 20 and Burundi and Republic of the Congo with 19 each. Notably, all countries in the CA region saw an increase in bilateral donor absences compared to the previous period. During 2008–2022, a total of 20 bilateral donors provided 715 ODA contributions to the CA region. This represents an increase from the previous period, which saw 17 contributors providing 470 ODAs.

During the current period, Rwanda led the CA region with the highest number of multilateral donors at eight. The DRC followed with seven donors, while Cameroon and Republic of the Congo each had six. Burundi, CAR, Chad and São Tomé and Príncipe all had five donors each, with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea having the lowest at three each. Compared to the previous period, there was a slight increase in multilateral donors for Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe. Regarding multilateral donor absences, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon topped the list with 11 each. Burundi, CAR, Chad and São Tomé and Príncipe each had nine absences, while the DRC and Cameroon had eight. Rwanda had the lowest number of absences at six. Compared to the previous period, multilateral absences increased slightly in Cameroon, CAR, Chad, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda, while remaining unchanged in Burundi and São Tomé and Príncipe. In the current period, ten multilateral donors provided a total of 321 ODA contributions to the CA region. Compared to the previous period, the number of multilateral donors decreased from 12 contributors to 10 contributors, while the number of multilateral ODAs increased from 189 ODAs to 321.

Regional comparison

Total FEODA for the three tropical zones – Central Africa (CA), the Amazon Basin (AB) and Southeast Asia (SEA) – amounted to USD 20 billion. This funding was distributed across the regions with the AB receiving the largest share at 47%, followed by SEA at 38% and CA at 16%. Compared to the previous period, there were significant changes in funding allocation. Both CA and the AB experienced substantial increases, each growing by 82%. In contrast, SEA saw a 7% decline in its funding. The financing area coverage for both bilateral and multilateral FEODA varied across the three regions. In the category of bilateral FEODA, CA received funding primarily focused on biodiversity, which accounted for

39% of its funding, followed by environmental policy and administrative management at 26%. In the AB, donors allocated the majority of their FEODA to environmental policy and administrative management, comprising 56% of total funding, followed by biodiversity at 28%. Similarly, in SEA, donors prioritized environmental policy and administrative management, accounting for 59% of its bilateral FEODA, while allocating 13% to biodiversity. Regarding multilateral FEODA, in CA, donors prioritized environmental policy and administrative management, representing 28% of its total multilateral FEODA, followed by biodiversity at 20%. In the AB, donors focused primarily on biodiversity, constituting 42% of multilateral FEODA to the region, followed by environmental policy and administrative management at 27%. Lastly, SEA's multilateral FEODA mirrored its bilateral focus areas, with environmental policy and administrative management accounting for 41% and biodiversity for 18% of the funding.

Bilateral and multilateral donors in tropical zones

The distribution of bilateral donors varied across the three regions of CA, the AB and SEA. In CA, Germany emerged as the dominant donor, contributing 45% of the bilateral FEODA, followed by the United States with 18% and France with 9%. The donor landscape in the AB showed a more balanced distribution, with Germany leading at 30%, closely followed by Norway at 26% and France at 22%. In SEA, the order of major donors shifted, with France taking the lead at 29%, followed by the United States at 22% and Germany at 18%. The bilateral FEODA distribution highlights the different priorities and levels of engagement of these donor countries across the three regions. The distribution of multilateral donors showed distinct patterns across the regions of CA, the AB and SEA. In CA, the European Union (EU) was the primary contributor, providing 38% of the multilateral FEODA, followed by the Global environment Facility (GEF) at 24%, and the World Bank (WB) at 19%. The situation in the AB was markedly different, with the GEF accounting for 65%, followed by the Green Climate fund (GCF) at 18%, and the EU at 9%. SEA presented a more balanced distribution among top donors, with the WB leading at 39%, closely followed by the GEF at 37%, while the GCF and EU each contributed 7% of the multilateral FEODA. These variations reflect the different priorities and focus areas of multilateral organizations in each region.

FEODA trends in tropical zones

Recent trends and patterns in forestry and environmental funding showed several notable developments. First, there has been an increased focus on biodiversity and environmental policy and administrative management across all regions, indicating a growing global awareness of these issues. Second, there appears a slight shift in donor priorities but a significant shift in donor contributions between the periods of 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, suggesting evolving strategies in forestry and environmental funding. Third, there is considerable variation in the least-funded areas across different regions and funding types, highlighting potential gaps or changing priorities in forestry and environmental support. These trends and patterns underscore the dynamic nature of forestry and environmental support worldwide.

Needs for financing forests and the environment in CA

As the second largest block of dense moist forest after the Amazon, Central Africa's forests are an exceptional reservoir of carbon and biodiversity for the countries they cover, and for the planet as a whole. These forests provide livelihoods to 60 million people, and help to feed 40 million more in nearby towns and cities. They play an essential social and cultural role in the lives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The ecological, economic, social and cultural importance of Central Africa's forests places them at the heart of international discussions aimed at preserving these unique ecosystems, which are vital to the health of the planet (Dalimier et al. 2022).

Central African forests sequester about 40 gigatons (Gt) of carbon (Saatchi et al. 2011). These forests have structural characteristics that distinguish them from Amazonian forests; while the density of trees per hectare is lower, there are more trees of a greater diameter, and trees at a similar diameter are taller. This results in a higher average level of carbon or biomass per hectare than that of Amazonian forests (Sullivan et al. 2017). While the atmospheric carbon absorption capacity of undisturbed Amazonian forests has been declining for around 30 years due to an increase in tree mortality blamed on climate change (Brienen et al. 2015), this trend has not yet been observed in Central Africa (Hubau et al. 2020). Currently, despite their comparatively smaller area, the undisturbed forests in Africa are now absorbing more carbon than those in the Amazon. However, an increase in carbon loss from 2011 has been observed, suggesting that the absorption capacity of intact forests in Central Africa will become saturated in the future, despite the stability observed to date (Eba'a Atyi 2022).

Opportunities for financing of forestry and environmental sectors

The global community has increasingly recognized the importance of SFM in CA to combat climate change, leading to a surge in funding initiatives offering various avenues for financial support to CA forests and environment. However, current participation levels

vary among CA countries across different initiatives, suggesting a potential for increased funding for countries that had received less FEODA. The CA's share of the total funding for environmental policy and administrative management is low at 6%, highlighting a potential for increased donor funding directed to the region specifically for this sub sector.

Conclusions

Key findings

Funding flows analysis for CA: From 2008 to 2022, international funding for CA's forestry and environmental sectors increased by 50% compared to the previous period of 2008 to 2017, suggesting growing recognition of CA's ecological significance in global climate regulation and biodiversity conservation. The donor landscape remained relatively stable, with only minor changes in the ranking of the top five contributors, reflecting sustained commitment from key global actors. The DRC emerged as the primary recipient of bilateral and multilateral funding, underscoring its pivotal role in regional environmental initiatives and increased global attention. The consistent prioritization of funding for biodiversity and environmental policy and administrative management aligns with the broader global conservation priorities.

Imbalances and gaps in funding flows: Funding trends in CA countries are influenced by global environmental accords, as evidenced by the peak in FEODA in 2015, coinciding with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement by CA countries. For the period 2008–2022, the top five areas funded by total FEODA consisted of three environmental areas, suggesting growing global concerns for environmental sustainability. Donor presence varies among CA countries, highlighting the need for balanced regional support and increased funding for underfunded countries.

Comparative analysis of funding flows to tropical zones: The CA received less funding than other tropical forest regions, particularly in environmental policy and administrative management, hindering SFM and conservation efforts. Increased focus on environmental policy and administrative management globally indicates growing environmental awareness. Donor priorities shifted slightly, while contributions changed significantly between 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, suggesting evolving forestry and environmental funding strategies. Germany led bilateral FEODA in CA and the AB, while France led in SEA. The EU, GEF and WB were the top multilateral donors in CA, the AB and SEA respectively, reflecting varied priorities and engagement levels.

Needs and opportunities for increased funding for forests in CA: CA forests, crucial for carbon sequestration and biodiversity, remain a significant carbon sink despite net loss. This necessitates increased international funding to match other tropical regions. While various initiatives offer financing for forestry and environmental programmes, CA countries' participation varies, indicating room for greater engagement and funding. CA's share of tropical FEODA and environmental policy funding is the lowest among tropical zones, suggesting untapped opportunities.

In conclusion, the study revealed a complex funding landscape in CA, with increasing overall funding, but shifting donor priorities and recipients. CA received the lowest share among tropical zones despite substantial growth. Funding priorities and major donors varied across regions. The research emphasized CA forests' crucial role in global climate regulation and biodiversity conservation, highlighting the need for continued financing to address deforestation and degradation threats. The funding disparity presents an opportunity to boost support for SFM and conservation in CA. These findings can guide future policy and funding decisions in global forestry and environmental initiatives.

Policy implications

The study's findings reveal important policy implications for FEODA in the CA region. The significant funding increase from 2008 to 2022 suggests policymakers should continue developing forestry and environmental programmes aligned with international climate change policies to attract more financial support. However, the consistent top donor landscape indicates a need for improved coordination to maximize impact and avoid redundancy.

The influence of global agreements on funding decisions highlights the need to align national policies with international commitments. The CA's lower share of total FEODA compared to other regions indicates a need for enhanced regional cooperation and increasing CA's profile in global environmental funding initiatives. This could be achieved by strengthening regional bodies like COMIFAC and OFAC; developing a unified CA environmental strategy; and collectively participating in global climate and biodiversity negotiations to increase bargaining power.

The global recognition of CA forests in climate regulation requires international funding for forest conservation and SFM. Positive trends, like higher tree cover gain than loss, should be maintained by reinforcing successful conservation strategies through analysis, scaling up effective programmes, and sharing best practices

via OFAC. Given that the DRC accounts for over half of net forest loss, targeted policies to reduce deforestation there are crucial, while maintaining efforts in other CA countries. Additionally, the underutilization of funding opportunities by some CA countries underscores the need for capacity building and improved access to funds.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations emanating from the study findings, among others, include:

1. Policymakers should engage with donors to prioritize increasing total FEODA to CA, building on the positive trend observed from 2008 to 2022, and to maintain the stability of the donor landscape while encouraging new donors to participate.
2. The influence of global environmental agreements on funding trends suggests that COMIFAC member countries should align national and regional policies more closely with international commitments in order to attract more FEODA.
3. Recognizing the crucial role of CA forests in carbon sequestration, COMIFAC member countries should strengthen policies that incentivize forest conservation and sustainable management practices.
4. COMIFAC and OFAC should assist member countries to build capacity and improve access to existing funding opportunities, particularly for countries that have underutilized available funds.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Financing the forestry and environmental sectors has increasingly drawn the attention of policymakers in CA. In February 2018, representatives of COMIFAC member countries prioritized financing the forestry and environmental sectors of Central Africa (CA). To this end, in 2019, the Observatory for Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) conducted a mapping study on international financing flows directed to the forestry and environmental sectors of CA (Favada et al. 2019) and published the first policy analysis paper on the international financing of the forestry and environmental sectors of CA for the period 2008–2017 (OFAC 2019). One key finding was that from 2008 to 2017, CA received a meagre amount of USD 2 billion, representing 11% of the USD 15 billion forestry and environmental official development assistance (FEODA) for the three tropical zones. A recent study analysing financial flows to CA between 2017 and 2021 (Streck et al. 2023) confirmed the continued low level of international financial support for CA's forestry and environmental sectors. However, from 2020 to 2022, COMIFAC member countries submitted their second revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to fight climate change impacts, making them eligible to apply for international funding mechanisms in place for forestry and environmental sectors. This development necessitated a review of international financial flows directed to forestry and environmental sectors in CA to determine recent changes in financial flows.

1.2 Objectives and scope of the study

The aim of this research was to provide an updated assessment of international funding for the forestry and environment sectors in CA, which will serve as a background paper for OFAC to develop a policy brief planned for publication by mid-2024. The specific objectives of this research were:

- To present and analyse financial support directed towards CA for nature conservation, sustainable forest management (SFM) and climate change, as documented in the previous report;
- To identify the main areas currently receiving funding and to assess potential imbalances and gaps;
- To conduct a comparative analysis of funding flows to Central Africa (CA), the Amazon Basin (AB) and tropical Southeast Asia (SEA);
- To identify the financial needs and opportunities for the forestry and environmental sectors in CA.

1.3 Organization of the report

This report comprises four distinct sections. Section 1 serves as the introduction, followed by Section 2, which delves into the methodology employed in this research. Section 3 focuses on the analysis of financial flows to CA (funding flow levels, flow types and sources, recipients of funds, areas covered by flows); imbalance and gaps in flows (trends in flows, areas covered by flows, donor presence and absence); comparative flow analysis in tropical regions (funding flows level, area covered by flows, donors by tropical zone); and needs and opportunities for increased funding of forestry and environmental sectors in CA. Lastly, Section 4 presents the conclusions of the study comprising a summary of key findings, policy implications and recommendations.

2 Methodology

2.1 Study approach

The study employed the methodology outlined by Favada et al. (2019). The primary components of the research process comprised desk research, data collection and analysis, and identification of needs and opportunities for financing forestry and environmental sectors of CA (as illustrated in Figure 1). The financial flow data were procured from the OECD database.

2.2 Data and its sources

OECD data spanning 15 years were extracted from 2008 to 2022. The forestry and environmental sectors consisted of six subsectors (shown in Table 1). However, Favada et al. (2019) reported that flood prevention and control was a subsector of the environmental sector, but it was later removed from the OECD database. The data included bilateral flows from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and multilateral institutions. Appendix 3 provides a list of bilateral and multilateral sources.

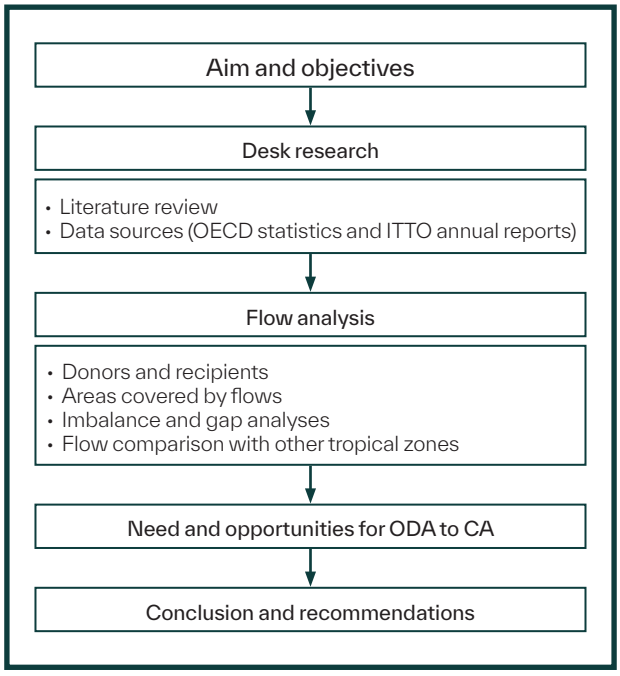

Figure 1. Study approach

2.3 Methodological limitations

The OECD reports flow data as commitments and disbursements by the DAC members. Disbursement data may not always be complete or up-to-date for all the donors. Therefore, previous studies by Simula (2008) and Favada et al. (2019) used commitment data instead of disbursements, and this study followed suit. Unfortunately, data from the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) was not used because it was not possible to retrieve data by year from its project database, making it tedious to determine the year of approval for each project. Nevertheless, the exclusion of ITTO data might not have a significant impact on the results, as its share of total multilateral FEODA was only USD 0.6 million between 2008 and 2017.

Table 1. Areas covered by flows

Forestry Sector	Environmental Sector
Forestry research	Environmental policy and administrative management
Forestry education or training	Biodiversity
Forestry development	Biosphere protection
Forestry policy and administrative management	Environmental education or training
Forestry services	Environmental research
Fuelwood or charcoal	Site preservation

3 Funding flows to support forestry and environmental sectors in CA

3.1 Analysis of Funding flows

3.1.1 Overview of funding flows

The total forestry and environmental ODA (FEODA) provided to CA amounted to approximately USD 3.1 billion during the period spanning 2008 to 2022. This represents a roughly 50% increase compared to the previous period of 2008 to 2017 (as shown in Table 2 and Appendix 2). Of total FEODA, bilateral and multilateral FEODA accounted for roughly 50.3% and 49.7%, respectively. While the bilateral share was slightly larger in both periods, it slightly decreased in the latter period, while the multilateral share experienced an increase. Environmental ODA (EODA) flows to CA amounting to USD 2.2 billion, which represents a 69.2% increase compared to the previous period, constituted 69.9% of total FEODA. Despite some year-over-year volatility, there was an overall upward trend in total FEODA to CA over the period 2008–2022 (as depicted in Figure 2). The spike in total FEODA values in 2015 may be attributable to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which led to increased funding for existing multilateral institutions and the establishment of new funding mechanisms.

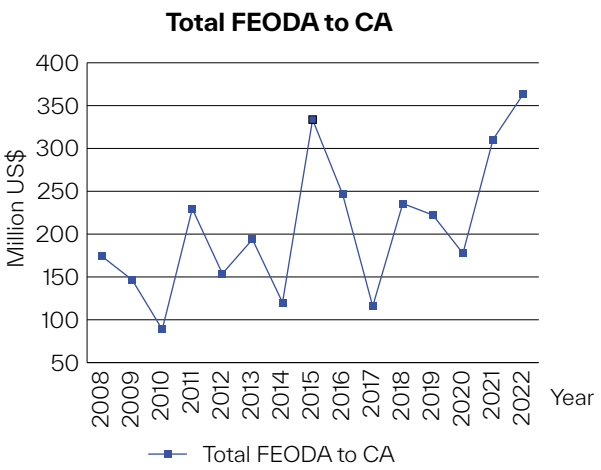

Figure 2. Trends in total FEODA to CA, 2008–2022

3.1.2 Flow types and sources

Figure 3 depicts the fluctuating trends in bilateral and multilateral FEODAs from 2008 to 2022. While both types of FEODAs experienced variations over the same period, multilateral FEODA reached its highest peak in 2015 at USD 219 million. This indicates that the peak observed in Figure 2 for total FEODA to CA in 2015 was largely influenced by multilateral FEODA. Although the trends for both bilateral and multilateral FEODAs showed a declining trend between 2008 and 2017, the period from 2018 to 2022 exhibited continued growth with fluctuations for both types of FEODAs. This growth may be partly attributed to the fact that all countries in CA signed, ratified and renewed their NDCs during the same period, and partly to the increased climate and environmental awareness in western countries based on the COP21 Paris Agreements.

Figure 4 presents the donors' share of total FEODA over the period 2008–2022, including only donors with a share of 1% or more. The top five bilateral and multilateral donors were Germany, which contributed 23% of total FEODA, the EU with a 19% share, the GEF with a 12% share, the WB with a 9% share and the United States

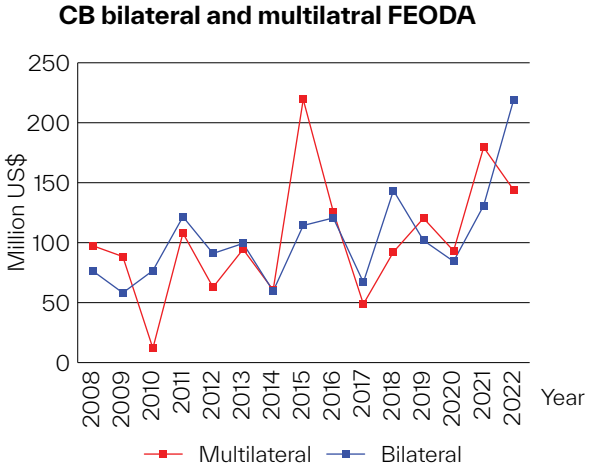

Figure 3. Trends in bilateral and multilateral FEODA to CA, 2008–2022

Table 2. Total FEODA to CA, 2008-2022 (USD million)

Flow type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total 2018-2022	Share 2018-2022 (%)
Total FEODA to CA																	
Bilateral	15.8	13.1	38.0	61.2	11.0	14.0	10.2	44.3	15.7	44.5	8.4	58.0	29.0	50.0	30.9	444.0	14.3
Multilateral	10.7	43.6	5.1	43.0	16.8	28.1	38.5	27.5	17.4	21.9	40.2	10.6	32.7	64.8	92.9	493.7	15.9
Subtotal	**26.5**	**56.8**	**43.0**	**104.2**	**27.8**	**42.0**	**48.7**	**71.8**	**33.1**	**66.4**	**48.6**	**68.6**	**61.6**	**114.8**	**123.8**	**937.8**	**30.1**
Total EODA to CA																	
Bilateral	60.7	45.0	38.8	60.4	80.0	85.4	49.4	70.0	104.9	22.5	135.1	43.9	55.4	80.9	188.4	1,120.9	36.0
Multilateral	86.7	44.8	6.9	64.9	46.0	66.4	22.1	191.9	108.5	26.9	52.0	109.7	60.5	114.7	51.0	1,053.1	33.8
Subtotal	**147.4**	**89.8**	**45.7**	**125.3**	**126.0**	**151.8**	**71.5**	**261.9**	**213.4**	**49.4**	**187.2**	**153.6**	**115.9**	**195.6**	**239.4**	**2,173.9**	**69.9**
Total FEODA to CA																	
Bilateral	76.5	58.2	76.7	121.6	91.0	99.4	59.6	114.3	120.6	67.0	143.5	101.9	84.4	130.9	219.3	1,564.9	50.3
Multilateral	97.5	88.4	12.0	108.0	62.8	94.5	60.5	219.4	125.8	48.8	92.2	120.4	93.1	179.5	143.8	1,546.8	49.7
Grand total	**173.9**	**146.6**	**88.7**	**229.6**	**153.8**	**193.9**	**120.2**	**333.7**	**246.4**	**115.8**	**235.7**	**222.2**	**177.6**	**310.4**	**363.2**	**3,111.7**	**100.0**

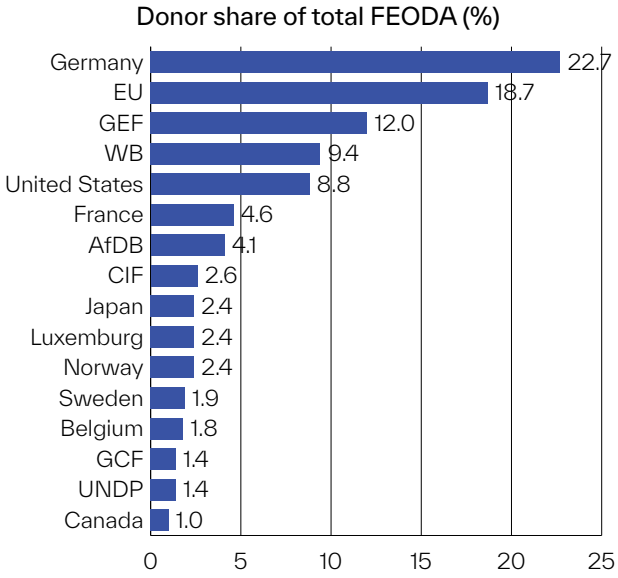

Figure 4. Donors' share of total FEODA to CA (%)

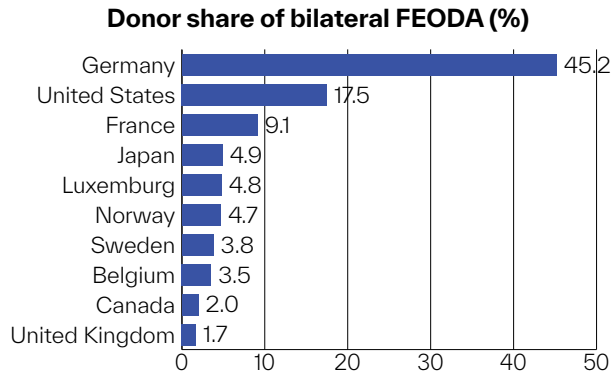

Figure 5. Donors' share of bilateral FEODA, 2008–2022

with a 9% share (see Appendix 3 for a complete list of all donors). While the top five bilateral and multilateral donors remained the same as in the previous period, the WB surpassed the United States during the period 2008–2022, securing the fourth position in the top five.

Figure 5 depicts the shares of bilateral FEODA from 2008 to 2022. The top five donors were Germany, which accounted for 45% of total bilateral FEODA, followed by the United States with 17%, France with 9%, Japan with 5% and Luxemburg with 5% (see Appendix 4 for a complete list of all donors). Over the period 2008–2022, the relative shares for Germany, the United States and Japan decreased slightly. France maintained its position as the third largest bilateral FEODA donor. Luxemburg replaced Sweden, which ranked among the top five donors in the previous period. During the period 2008–2022, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, New Zealand, Poland and Slovakia were absent in CA.

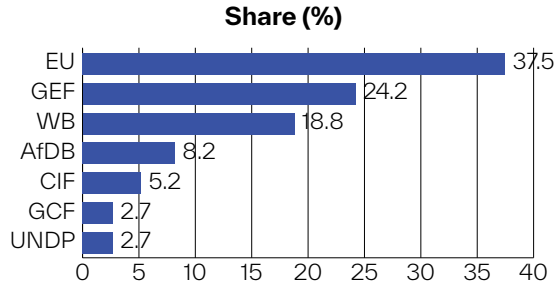

Figure 6. Donors' share of multilateral FEODA, 2008–2022

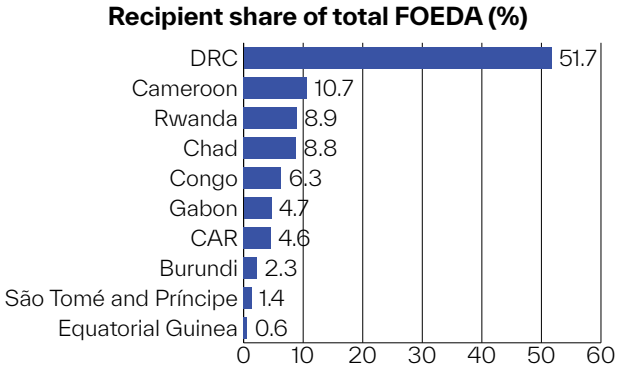

Figure 7. Recipients' shares of total FEODA to CA, 2008–2022

Figure 6 displays the shares of multilateral FEODA across the period spanning from 2008 to 2022. The top five donors comprised the EU, which contributed 38% of the total multilateral FEODA, the GEF, which provided 24%, the WB, which contributed 19%, the African Development Bank (AfDB), which provided 8% and the Climate Investment Fund (CIF), which contributed 5% (see Appendix 5 for a complete list of all donors). These donors also occupied the top five positions in the previous period. In the current period, the shares of the EU and CIF decreased, while those of the GEF and AfDB increased. Notably, multilateral institutions such as the Adaptation Fund, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) did not provide ODAs to CA during this period.

3.1.3 Recipients of FEODA to CA

Figure 7 displays the recipients of total FEODA to CA during the period 2008–2022 (see Appendix 6). The top five beneficiaries of total FEODA were the DRC, accounting for 52% of the total, followed by Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (9%), Chad (9%) and Republic of the Congo (6%). The DRC's share increased in the current period, while Cameroon and Chad's shares decreased.

Republic of the Congo replaced Gabon, which was present in the previous period. Equatorial Guinea had the lowest share (approximately 1%) in both the previous and current periods.

Figure 8 depicts the recipients of bilateral and multilateral FEODAs for the period 2008–2022 (see Appendices 7 and 8). The top five recipients of bilateral FEODA were the DRC (61% of the total bilateral FEODA), followed by Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (10%), Gabon (7%) and Republic of the Congo (5%). Notably, the share of the DRC increased, compared to the previous period, while the shares of Cameroon, Rwanda, and Gabon decreased. Additionally, Republic of the Congo replaced Chad, which appeared in the top five in the previous period. In terms of multilateral FEODA, the top five recipients were the DRC (43% of the total multilateral FEODA), followed by Chad (16%), Cameroon (11%), Rwanda (8%) and Republic of the Congo (8%). Compared to the previous period, the shares of Chad, Rwanda and Republic of the Congo increased slightly during the current period, while the shares of the DRC and Cameroon decreased slightly during the same period. Lastly, Equatorial Guinea had the lowest share of both bilateral and multilateral FEODA (0.2% and 1%, respectively).

3.1.4 Areas covered by total feoda

Figure 9 displays the areas or subsectors covered by total FEODA during the period 2008–2022 (see Appendix 9). The top five areas covered by total FEODA were

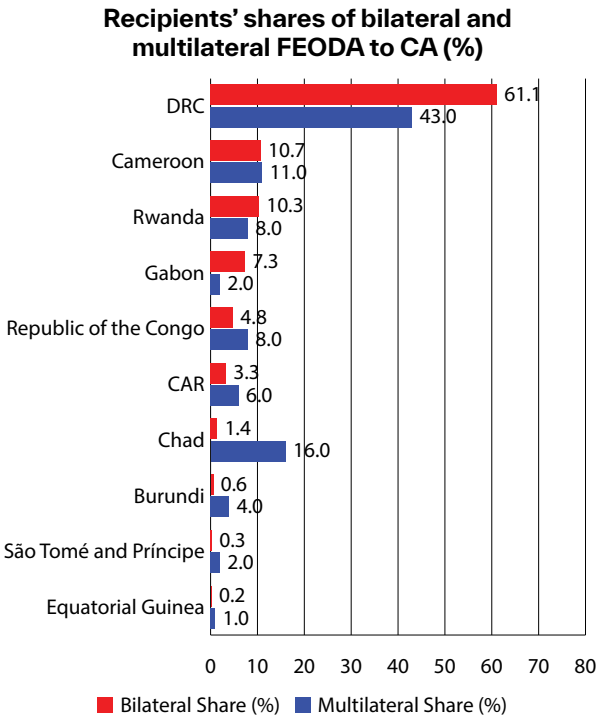

Figure 8. Recipients' shares of bilateral and multilateral FEODA to CA, 2008–2022

biodiversity (29% of total FEODA to CA), environmental policy and administrative management (27%), forestry policy and administrative management (18%), forestry development (11%) and biosphere protection (9%). During the current period, the shares of biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, and forestry policy and administrative management increased slightly, while the share of biodiversity protection decreased slightly. Forestry development emerged among the top five areas covered by total FEODA, replacing environmental research, which had been among the top five areas in the previous period. The share of forestry services in total FEODA was negligible, accounting for approximately 0% (one decimal place).

The areas covered by bilateral FEODA during the period 2008–2022 are illustrated in Figure 10 (see also Appendix 10). The top five areas covered by the bilateral flows were biodiversity (39%), environmental policy and administrative management (26%), forestry policy and administrative management (17%), forestry development (11%) and environmental research (3%). When compared to the previous period, the shares of biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, forestry policy and administrative management, and forestry development increased, while the share of environmental research decreased. The share of forestry services in the bilateral FEODA was minimal, accounting for approximately 0% (one decimal place).

Regarding multilateral FEODA (Figure 11, See also Appendix 11), the top five areas covered were environmental policy and administrative management (28%), biodiversity (20%), forestry policy and administrative management (19%), biosphere protection (16%) and forestry development (12%). Relative to the previous period, the shares of forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development increased, while the shares of environmental policy and administrative management and biodiversity protection decreased during the current period. There was no change in biodiversity's share. Environmental education and training, and fuelwood or charcoal subsectors recorded infinitesimal shares. The subsectors that did not receive multilateral flows included forestry education and training, forestry research, forestry services and environmental research.

3.2 Imbalances and gaps in flows

3.2.1 Development of Total FEODA

The allocation of total FEODA to CA varied from 2008 to 2022, with a notable peak in 2015 that can be attributed to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change in that year (see Figure 11). Despite these fluctuations, the overall

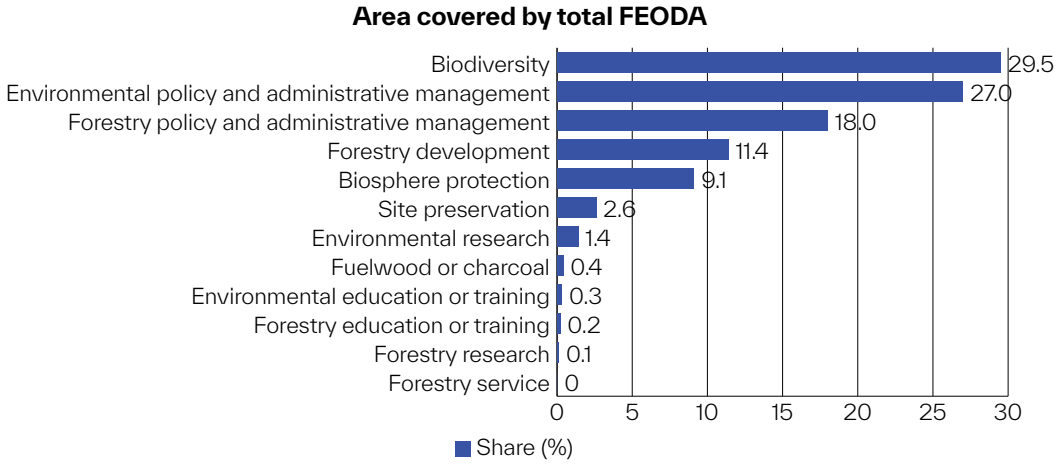

Figure 9. Areas covered by total FEODA, 2008–2022

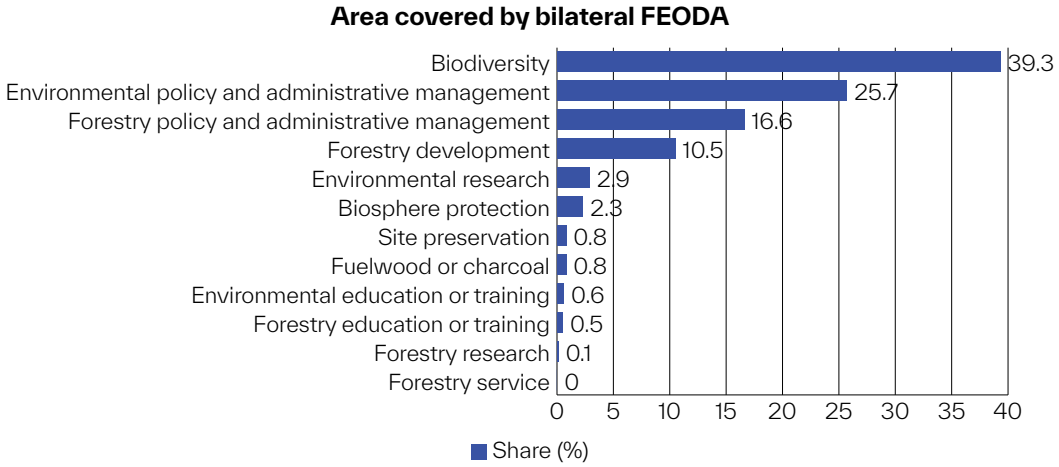

Figure 10. Areas covered by bilateral FEODA, 2008–2022

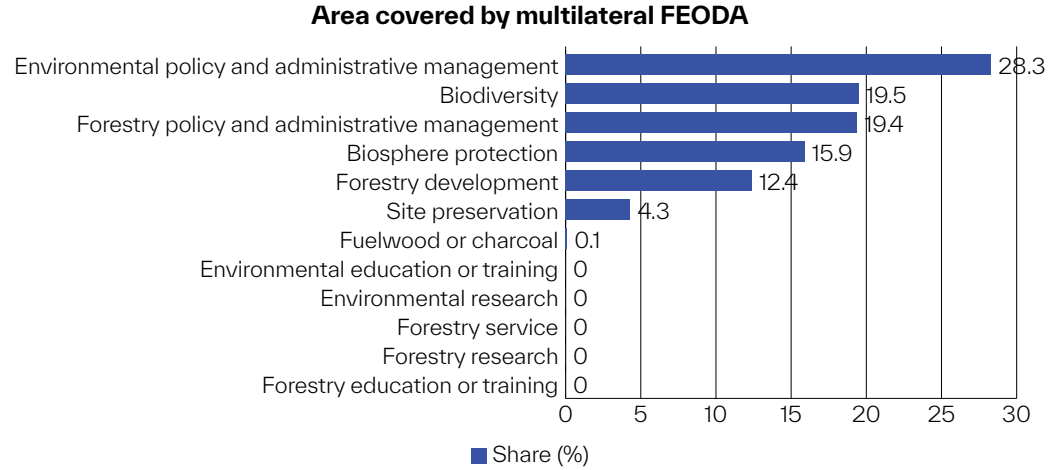

Figure 11. Areas Covered by Multilateral FEODA, 2008–2022

trend of total FEODA provided to CA has been slightly upward, although not consistently linear over the past 15 years. This trend could be attributed to the growing global recognition of environmental conservation and SFM. On the other hand, the period from 2008 to 2017 showed a general downward trend. Examining total FEODA in more detail, both bilateral and multilateral FEODAs fluctuated during the study period, reflecting varying levels of ODA

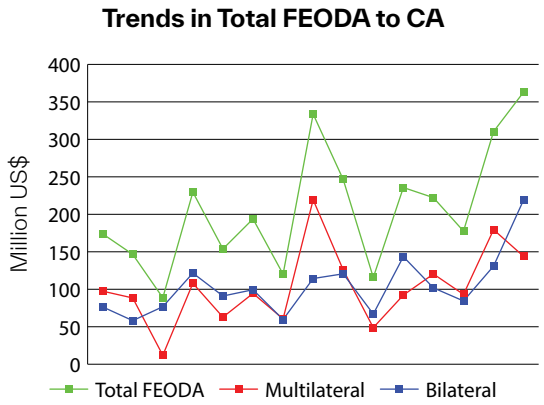

Figure 12. Trends in FEODA, 2008–2022

support for the forestry and environmental sectors in CA. While both categories experienced peaks in different years, the multilateral FEODA showed a significant increase in 2015, which contributed to the overall peak in FEODA that year. In the last three years, bilateral FEODA had increased steadily, while multilateral FEODA had fluctuated.

3.2.2 Gaps in Areas covered by TOTAL FEODA

The top five areas covered by total FEODA, presented in Figure 9 above, accounted for 95% (approximately USD 3.0 billion) of total FEODA value (USD 3.1 billion) during the period 2008–2022. Site preparation and environmental research accounted for about 3% and 1% of total FEODA, respectively. The other six subsectors accounted individually for less than 0.5% of total FEODA. Compared to the previous period, the share of the top five areas covered by total FEODA increased by 6%. Environmental research, which ranked fourth among the top five areas covered by FEODA in the period 2008–2017, was replaced by forestry development in the current period, giving the forestry sector two areas covered by total FEODA.

3.2.3 Bilateral and multilateral donor presence and absence

Table 4 displays the presence and absence of bilateral and multilateral donors, and their contributions to ODAs from 2008 to 2022. Donor presence refers to the provision of ODA to a country, which was measured by the number of donors identified in each recipient country. Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) recorded the highest number of bilateral donors (17 each), followed by Cameroon (16), Burundi and Republic of the Congo (11 each), CAR (10) and the remaining countries, including Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe, which had less than 10 donors each. Equatorial Guinea had the lowest number of bilateral donors (7). Compared to the previous period, donor presence increased slightly during the period 2008–2022. Donor absence, on the other hand, refers to the non-provision of ODA by a donor. Equatorial Guinea had the highest number of bilateral donor absences (23), followed by São Tomé and Príncipe (22), Chad and Gabon (21 each), CAR (20) and Burundi and Republic of the Congo (19 each). DRC and Rwanda recorded the lowest number of donor absences (13 each). Compared to the previous period, bilateral donor absences increased for each country in CA. Donors that were absent from Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe were Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. Donors that were absent only in Equatorial Guinea were Australia, Portugal and the United Kingdom, whereas those who were absent only in São Tomé and Príncipe were Germany and Luxembourg. During the period 2008–2022, twenty bilateral donors provided a total of 715 ODAs to CA. Of these, the DRC received 141 ODAs, which accounted for 20% of the total bilateral ODAs. Cameroon and Rwanda each received 139 and 126 ODAs, respectively, representing 19% and 18% of the total. These three countries accounted for a combined 57% of the total bilateral ODAs provided to CA, making them the most heavily funded. The remaining countries each received less than 10% of the total bilateral ODAs. Notably, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe received the lowest number of ODAs, with about 4% each. In relation to the previous period, the number of bilateral donors and ODAs increased from 17 contributors and 470 ODAs to 20 contributors and 715 bilateral ODAs in the current period.

Regarding the presence of multilateral donors during the period 2008–2022, Rwanda recorded the highest number of donors (8), followed by the DRC (7), Cameroon and Republic of the Congo (6 each), Burundi, CAR, Chad and São Tomé and Príncipe (5 each), and Gabon and Equatorial Guinea (3 each). Relative to the period 2008–2017, the number of multilateral donors slightly increased in Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe, while it decreased in Gabon. In terms of multilateral donor absences during the same period, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon recorded the highest number of absences (11 each), followed by Burundi, CAR, Chad and São Tomé and Príncipe (9 each), the DRC and Cameroon (8 each) and Rwanda recording the lowest number of absences (6). The AfDB was absent in Equatorial Guinea, while the FAO was absent in Gabon. The donors that were absent from both countries included the Adaptation Fund, BADEA, CIF, EU, GCF, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), UNECE, UNEP, and the WB. Compared to the period 2008–2017, the

Table 3. Bilateral and multilateral donor presence and absence in CA

Recipient	Bilateral				Multilateral			
	Donor presence	Donor absence	Number of ODAs	Share (%)	Donor presence	Donor absence	Number of ODAs	Share (%)
Burundi	11	19w	45	6.3	5	9	25	7.8
Cameroon	16	14	136	19.0	6	8	37	11.5
CAR	10	20	38	5.3	5	9	36	11.2
Chad	9	21	52	7.3	5	9	45	14.0
Republic of the Congo	11	19	57	8.0	7	7	49	15.3
DRC	17	13	141	19.7	6	8	45	14.0
Equatorial Guinea	7	23	30	4.2	3	11	16	5.0
Gabon	9	21	58	8.1	3	11	17	5.3
Rwanda	17	13	126	17.6	8	6	37	11.5
São Tomé and Príncipe	8	22	32	4.5	5	9	14	4.4
Total CA			**715**	**100**			**321**	**100**

multilateral absence increased slightly in Cameroon, CAR, Chad, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda. However, it remained unchanged in Burundi and São Tomé and Príncipe. During the period 2008–2022, ten multilateral donors provided 321 multilateral ODAs to CA. Republic of the Congo received 49 multilateral ODAs, which accounted for 15% of the total, while Chad and DRC each received 45, representing 14% of the total for each country. Cameroon and Rwanda each received 37 multilateral ODAs, equivalent to 12%, while the CAR received 36, which represented 11% of the total. Burundi received 25 multilateral ODAs, which was 8% of the total, while the remaining recipients recorded fewer than 20 multilateral ODAs. São Tomé and Príncipe recorded the lowest number of multilateral ODAs at 14, which was equivalent to 4% of the total. Compared to the previous period, the number of multilateral donors decreased from 12 contributors to 10 contributors, while the number of multilateral ODAs increased from 189 ODAs to 321 in the current period.

Table 4 provides information on the number of bilateral ODAs received by recipient countries in CA during the period 2008–2022. It is noteworthy that CA received the highest number of bilateral ODAs (57) in 2014 and the lowest number (37) in 2008. On average, Cameroon and the DRC received the highest number of bilateral ODAs (9 each) per year, followed by Rwanda (8), Republic of the Congo and Gabon (4 each), Burundi, CAR and Chad (3 each), and São Tomé and Príncipe (2). Remarkably, Burundi did not receive any bilateral ODA in 2017, and São Tomé and Príncipe did not receive any ODA in 2010. Relative to the period 2008–2017, the annual average number of ODAs for Cameroon increased slightly, while the number for Republic of the Congo decreased slightly in the current period.

Table 5 presents the annual number of multilateral ODAs received by recipient countries in CA during the period 2008–2022. The CA received the highest and lowest number of multilateral ODAs in 2021 and 2015, respectively, amounting to 46 and 12. On average, Cameroon, Chad, Republic of the Congo and DRC received about 3 multilateral ODAs, followed by Burundi, Cameroon, CAR and Rwanda, which received 2 each. Notably, Burundi and CAR did not receive multilateral ODA in 2010 and 2015, respectively. Equatorial Guinea did not receive multilateral ODA from 2014 to 2017 or in 2021. Gabon did not receive multilateral ODA in 2008, 2010 and 2021. São Tomé and Príncipe did not receive multilateral ODA in 2009, 2010, 2014–2017, or 2019. Compared to the previous period, the annual average multilateral ODA increased slightly for Burundi, CAR, Chad, Republic of the Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe, but decreased slightly for Cameroon and Gabon.

3.3 Comparative study of funding flows in CA and other tropical zones

3.3.1 Funding flow levels

Total FEODA for the three tropical zones (tropical total FEODA) from 2008 to 2022 was USD 20 billion (Table 6). Of this amount, CA received USD 3.1 billion, accounting for 15.6% of the tropical total FEODA. The AB received USD 9.3 billion, which represents 46.6% of the tropical total FEODA. SEA recorded USD 7.5 billion, equivalent to 37.8% of the tropical total FEODA. Total FEODA for CA was the lowest among the three tropical zones. The difference between bilateral and multilateral shares of tropical total FEODA was very large for the

Table 4. Bilateral frequency of funding and non-funding by year

Recipient	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Annual average
Burundi	2	4	2	3	3	3	5	3	2	0	3	3	4	5	3	45	3
Cameroon	6	7	8	8	8	9	10	8	8	10	10	12	11	10	11	136	9
Central African Republic	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	38	3
Chad	3	5	4	3	3	2	5	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	5	52	3
Republic of the Congo	3	4	1	5	3	5	5	3	6	3	4	5	4	4	2	57	4
DRC	7	8	10	8	8	9	9	10	10	10	9	10	11	13	9	141	9
Equatorial Guinea	1	4	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	30	2
Gabon	3	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	58	4
Rwanda	7	7	10	9	8	10	12	8	5	8	11	7	6	8	10	126	8
São Tomé and Príncipe	2	3	0	1	1	3	3	1	4	3	3	3	1	1	3	32	2
Total CA	**37**	**50**	**43**	**48**	**42**	**51**	**57**	**45**	**45**	**42**	**51**	**52**	**48**	**50**	**54**	**715**	**48**

Table 5. Multilateral frequency of funding and non-funding by year

Recipient	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Annual average
Burundi	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	25	2
Cameroon	3	2	2	1	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	4	4	3	37	2
Central African Republic	1	2	2	2	2	3	1	0	3	1	3	3	3	7	3	36	2
Chad	3	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	3	1	1	4	3	2	14	45	3
Republic of the Congo	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	3	0	3	2	19	3	49	3
DRC	3	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	3	2	3	3	4	4	4	45	3
Equatorial Guinea	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	2	16	1
Gabon	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	17	1
Rwanda	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	37	2
São Tomé and Príncipe	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	2	14	1
Total CA	**16**	**19**	**13**	**17**	**20**	**23**	**15**	**12**	**20**	**15**	**17**	**25**	**26**	**46**	**37**	**321**	**21**

Table 6. Forestry and environmental flows to tropical zones, 2008–2022 (USD million)

Flow type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Share (%)
Central Africa																	
Bilateral	76.5	58.2	76.7	121.6	91.0	99.4	59.6	114.3	120.6	67.0	143.5	101.9	84.4	130.9	219.3	1,564.9	7.8
Multilateral	97.5	88.4	12.0	108.0	62.8	94.5	60.5	219.4	125.8	48.8	92.2	120.4	93.1	179.5	143.8	1,546.8	7.7
Subtotal	**173.9**	**146.6**	**88.7**	**229.6**	**153.8**	**193.9**	**120.2**	**333.7**	**246.4**	**115.8**	**235.7**	**222.2**	**177.6**	**310.4**	**363.2**	**3,111.7**	**15.6**
The Amazon Basin																	
Bilateral	151.0	314.4	651.4	472.3	354.5	380.3	433.7	903.3	591.6	509.1	711.7	406.7	467.4	799.0	774.7	7,921.0	39.7
Multilateral	41.8	83.9	51.3	40.6	152.8	84.4	36.6	87.0	126.4	137.3	34.7	306.8	73.7	19.5	106.3	1,383.0	6.9
Subtotal	**192.9**	**398.2**	**702.7**	**512.8**	**507.3**	**464.7**	**470.4**	**990.3**	**718.0**	**646.4**	**746.4**	**713.5**	**541.0**	**818.4**	**880.9**	**9,304.0**	**46.6**
Southeast Asia																	
Bilateral	400.0	490.8	654.7	289.4	434.3	407.9	476.6	301.1	296.1	221.4	266.4	389.6	261.2	354.0	478.1	5,721.8	28.7
Multilateral	52.8	99.3	45.2	64.0	223.0	118.9	85.1	75.2	385.5	149.0	68.4	142.0	205.6	67.3	41.3	1,822.5	9.1
Subtotal	**452.8**	**590.0**	**699.9**	**353.4**	**657.3**	**526.8**	**561.7**	**376.3**	**681.6**	**370.5**	**334.8**	**531.6**	**466.8**	**421.3**	**519.4**	**7,544.4**	**37.8**
Tropical zones																	
Bilateral	627.6	863.3	1,382.8	883.4	879.9	887.6	970.0	1,318.8	1,008.3	797.5	1,121.5	898.2	813.0	1,283.9	1,472.1	15,207.7	76.2
Multilateral	192.1	271.5	108.4	212.5	438.6	297.8	182.2	381.5	637.8	335.1	195.4	569.2	372.4	266.2	291.4	4,752.3	23.8
Grand total	**819.6**	**1,134.8**	**1,491.3**	**1,095.8**	**1,318.4**	**1,185.4**	**1,152.2**	**1,700.3**	**1,646.1**	**1,132.6**	**1,316.9**	**1,467.4**	**1,185.4**	**1,550.1**	**1,763.5**	**19,960.0**	**100.0**

AB and SEA, but small (0.1%) for CA. The tropical total FEODA increased from USD 15 billion to USD 20 billion, representing a 43% increase from the previous period. CA and the AB experienced an 82% increase in funding flows, while SEA experienced a 7% decline.

3.3.2 Financing area coverage

Table 7 displays the areas covered by total FEODA during the period 2008–2022. In CA, the top five areas covered by total FEODA flows were biodiversity (30% of total FEODA to CA), environmental policy and administrative management (27%), forestry policy and administrative management (18%), forestry development (11%) and biosphere protection (9.1%). Relative to the previous period, funding increased for biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, forestry policy and administrative management, but decreased for biosphere protection. Forestry development replaced environmental research, representing 11% of total FEODA. In the AB, the top five areas covered by total FEODA were, in order of importance, environmental policy and administrative management (52% of total FEODA to the AB), biodiversity (30%), forestry policy and administrative management (6%), forestry development (4%) and biosphere protection (4%). Compared to the previous period, funding surged for biodiversity and forestry policy and administrative management, but decreased for environmental policy and administrative management and biosphere protection. Forestry development replaced flood prevention or control, constituting 4% of total FEODA. In SEA, the top five areas covered by total FEODA were, in order of importance, environmental policy and administrative management (55% of total FEODA to SEA), biodiversity (14%), biosphere protection (9%), forestry policy and administrative management (8%) and forestry development (7%). Relative to the previous period, funding increased for environmental policy and administrative management, biodiversity, forestry policy and administrative management and biosphere protection. Forestry development replaced flood prevention or control, accounting for 7% of total FEODA.

The subsector that received the lowest total FEODA flow in CA was forestry services (USD 0.1 million), equivalent to 0.004% of total FEODA to CA. In the AB, the subsector that received the lowest funding flow was forestry research at USD 1.8 million, accounting for about 0.02% of total FEODA to the AB. In SEA, the area that received the lowest funding flow was fuelwood or charcoal (USD 0.03 million), equivalent to 0.0004% of total FEODA to SEA). Comparing the two periods, forestry services was the least funded area in CA over the two periods. For the AB, forestry research was the least funded area over the two periods. In SEA, fuelwood or charcoal was the least funded area in both periods.

Comparing the top five areas covered by FEODA flows in CA, the AB and SEA, the most common areas covered by FEODA flows were biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, forestry policy and administrative management, forestry development and biosphere protection. Biodiversity has emerged as a top priority for CA, ranking second for the AB and SEA. Environmental policy and administrative management took precedence in the AB and SEA, securing the top spot, but took second place in CA. Forestry policy and administrative management maintained a consistent presence, ranking third in CA and the AB, and fourth in SEA. Forestry development ranked fourth for CA and the AB, but fifth for SEA. Biosphere protection ranked fifth for CA and the AB, but third for SEA. Upon comparing the two periods, it was observed that the most common funding areas of the top five covered by flows expanded by covering forestry development.

Table 8 presents the areas or subsectors covered by bilateral FEODA during the period 2008–2022. The top five areas covered by flows differed across tropical zones. In CA, the top five areas covered by flows were biodiversity (39% of the total bilateral FEODA to CA), environmental policy and administrative management (26%), forestry policy and administrative management (17%), forestry development (11%) and environmental research (3%). Compared to the period 2008–2017, funding increased for biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development, but decreased for environmental research. In the AB, the top five areas covered were environmental policy and administrative management (56% of the total bilateral ODA to the AB), biodiversity (28%), forestry policy and administrative management (4%), biosphere protection (4%) and forestry development (3%). In contrast to the previous period, funding increased for biodiversity and decreased for environmental policy and administrative management, biosphere protection and forestry development, but remained constant for forestry policy and administrative management.

The top five areas covered in SEA were environmental policy and administrative management (59% of the total bilateral ODA to SEA), biodiversity (13%), biosphere protection (10%), forestry policy and administrative management (7%) and environmental research (5%). Compared to the previous period, funding increased for environmental policy and administrative management, biodiversity, biosphere protection, forestry policy and administrative management, but remained constant for forestry policy and administrative management.

In the period 2008–2022, the subsector with the lowest bilateral funding in CA was forestry services, receiving USD 0.1 million and accounting for just 0.01% of the total bilateral ODA to CA. In the AB, the subsector with

Table 7. Total FEODA funded areas by tropical zone

Central Africa			The Amazon Basin			Southeast Asia		
Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)
Biodiversity	917.5	29.5	Environmental policy and administrative management	4,794.5	51.5	Environmental policy and administrative management	4,151.3	55.0
Environmental policy and administrative management	840.5	27.0	Biodiversity	2,791.3	30.0	Biodiversity	1,046.4	13.9
Forestry policy and administrative management	560.0	18.0	Forestry policy and administrative management	580.9	6.2	Biosphere protection	671.8	8.9
Forestry development	354.8	11.4	Forestry development	388.2	4.2	Forestry policy and administrative management	634.0	8.4
Biosphere protection	282.8	9.1	Biosphere protection	379.7	4.1	Forestry development	503.9	6.7
Site preservation	79.4	2.6	Environmental research	188.6	2.0	Environmental research	370.7	4.9
Environmental research	45.0	1.4	Site preservation	114.3	1.2	Site preservation	61.0	0.8
Fuelwood or charcoal	13.9	0.4	Environmental education or training	48.6	0.5	Environmental education or training	56.8	0.8
Environmental education or training	8.8	0.3	Fuelwood or charcoal	7.4	0.1	Forestry research	21.7	0.3
Forestry education or training	7.3	0.2	Forestry services	5.6	0.1	Forestry services	21.0	0.3
Forestry research	1.7	0.1	Forestry education or training	3.0	0.03	Forestry education or training	5.9	0.1
Forestry services	0.1	0.004	Forestry research	1.8	0.02	Fuelwood or charcoal	0.03	0.0004
Total	**3,111.7**	**100**	**Total**	**9,304.0**	**100**	**Total**	**7,544.4**	**100**

Table 8. Bilateral funding areas by tropical zone (USD million)

Central Africa			The Amazon Basin			Southeast Asia		
Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)
Biodiversity	615.5	39.3	Environmental policy and administrative management	4,426.8	55.9	Environmental policy and administrative management	3,398.3	59.4
Environmental policy and administrative management	402.1	25.7	Biodiversity	2,211.9	27.9	Biodiversity	715.6	12.5
Forestry policy and administrative management	259.2	16.6	Forestry policy and administrative management	338.4	4.3	Biosphere protection	546.6	9.6
Forestry development	163.6	10.5	Biosphere protection	338.1	4.3	Forestry policy and administrative management	370.5	6.5
Environmental research	45.0	2.9	Forestry development	271.1	3.4	Environmental research	292.9	5.1
Biosphere protection	36.3	2.3	Environmental research	188.1	2.4	Forestry development	265.4	4.6
Site preservation	13.2	0.8	Site preservation	91.1	1.2	Environmental education or training	53.3	0.9
Fuelwood or charcoal	12.1	0.8	Environmental education or training	48.3	0.6	Site preservation	42.2	0.7
Environmental education or training	8.8	0.6	Forestry education or training	3.0	0.04	Forestry research	21.7	0.4
Forestry education or training	7.3	0.5	Forestry services	2.5	0.03	Forestry services	9.4	0.2
Forestry research	1.7	0.1	Forestry research	1.8	0.02	Forestry education or training	5.9	0.1
Forestry services	0.1	0.01	Fuelwood or charcoal	0.01	0.0001	Fuelwood or charcoal	0.03	0.001
Total	**1,564.9**	**100**	**Total**	**7,921.0**	**100**	**Total**	**5,721.8**	**100**

the least funding was fuelwood or charcoal, receiving USD 0.1 million, equivalent to 0.0001% of the total ODA. Similarly, in SEA, the lowest funding was directed towards fuelwood or charcoal, amounting to USD 0.03 million and representing 0.001% of the total bilateral ODA. Comparing the periods 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, in CA, forestry services was the least funded area over the two periods. In the AB, forestry services and fuelwood or charcoal were the least funded areas in the previous and current periods, respectively. In SEA, forestry education and training and fuelwood or charcoal were the least funded areas for the previous and current periods, respectively.

Comparing the top five areas covered by bilateral flows in CA, the AB and SEA, the most common areas covered by bilateral flows were biodiversity, environmental policy and administrative management, forestry policy and administrative management, biosphere protection and forestry development. Biodiversity ranked first for the AB, and second for CA and SEA. Environmental policy and administrative management ranked first for CA and SEA, and second for the AB. Biosphere protection ranked fourth for CA, and fifth for the AB and SEA. Forestry policy and administrative management ranked third for CA, the AB and SEA. Compared with the previous period, the most common funding areas covered by flows expanded to include biosphere protection and forestry development.

Table 9 displays the areas covered by multilateral ODA during the period 2008–2022. In CA, the top five areas covered by multilateral flows were environmental policy and administrative management (28% of the total multilateral ODA to CA), biodiversity (20%), biosphere protection (16%), forestry policy and administrative management (19%) and forestry development (12%). Compared to the period 2008–2017, funding increased for forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development, while it decreased for environmental policy and administrative management and biosphere protection. There was no change in the funding for biodiversity. In the AB, the top five areas covered by multilateral flows were biodiversity (42% of the total multilateral ODA to the AB), environmental policy and administrative management (27%), forestry policy and administrative management (18%), forestry development (9%) and biosphere protection (3%). Relative to the previous period, funding increased for biodiversity, forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development, whereas it decreased for environmental policy and administrative management. In SEA, the top five areas covered by multilateral flows were environmental policy and administrative management (41% of the total multilateral ODA to SEA Asia), biodiversity (18%), forestry policy and administrative management (15%), forestry development (10%) and biosphere protection (7%). Compared to the previous period, funding surged for environmental policy and administrative management, biodiversity, forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development.

In CA, environmental education or training was the subsector that received the lowest multilateral funding (USD 0.03 million, equivalent to 0.03% of the total multilateral ODA to CA). Forestry education or training, forestry services, forestry research and environmental research were not covered by multilateral ODA during the study period. Similarly, for the AB, environmental education or training received the lowest funding (USD 0.3 million, equivalent to 0.02% of the total multilateral ODA to the AB). Forestry research and forestry education or training did not receive multilateral funding during the study period. In SEA, forestry education or training received the lowest multilateral funding (USD 0.01 million, equivalent to 0.001% of total multilateral ODA to SEA). Fuelwood or charcoal did not receive multilateral funding during the study period. Comparing the two periods, forestry research and environmental education or training were the least funded areas for CA in the period 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, respectively. In the AB, environmental education or training was the least funded area in both periods. For SEA, environmental education or training and forestry education or training were the least funded during the periods 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, respectively.

Comparing the top five areas covered by multilateral flows in CA, the AB and SEA, the most common areas covered by flows were environmental policy and administrative management, biodiversity, forestry policy and administrative management and forestry development. Environmental policy and administrative management ranked first for CA and SEA and second for the AB. Biodiversity ranked first for the AB and second for CA and SEA. Forestry policy and administrative management ranked third for CA, the AB and SEA. Finally, forestry development ranked fifth for CA, but fourth for the AB and SEA. Comparing the two periods, the most common funding areas of the top five covered by flows did not expand.

3.3.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Donors by Tropical Zone

Table 10 displays the bilateral donors in tropical regions for the period spanning 2008 to 2022. In CA, Germany was the most significant contributor, providing USD 708 million, which accounted for 45% of the total bilateral ODA received by the countries in CA (USD 1.6 billion). The United States contributed 18% of the total bilateral ODA, with a value of USD 274 million. France

Table 9. Multilateral funding areas by tropical zone (USD million)

Central Africa			The Amazon Basin			Southeast Asia		
Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)	Subsector	Total 2008-2022	Share (%)
Environmental policy and administrative management	438.4	28.3	Biodiversity	579.4	41.9	Environmental policy and administrative management	752.9	41.3
Biodiversity	302.0	19.5	Environmental policy and administrative management	367.7	26.6	Biodiversity	330.8	18.1
Forestry policy and administrative management	300.8	19.4	Forestry policy and administrative management	242.6	17.5	Forestry policy and administrative management	263.4	14.5
Biosphere protection	246.5	15.9	Forestry development	117.1	8.5	Forestry development	238.5	13.1
Forestry development	191.2	12.4	Biosphere protection	41.7	3.0	Biosphere protection	125.1	6.9
Site preservation	66.2	4.3	Site preservation	23.1	1.7	Environmental research	77.8	4.3
Fuelwood or charcoal	1.8	0.1	Fuelwood or charcoal	7.4	0.5	Site preservation	18.9	1.0
Environmental education or training	0.03	0.002	Forestry services	3.1	0.2	Forestry services	11.6	0.6
			Environmental research	0.5	0.04	Environmental education or training	3.5	0.2
			Environmental education or training	0.3	0.02	Forestry research	0.04	0.002
						Forestry education or training	0.01	0.001
Total	**1,546.8**	**100**	**Total**	**1,383.0**	**100**	**Total**	**1,822.5**	**100**

Table 10. Bilateral donors by tropical zone, 2008–2022

Central Africa			The Amazon Basin			Southeast Asia		
Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)	Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)	Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)
Germany	707.8	45.2	Germany	2,344.8	29.6	France	1,665.5	29.1
United States	273.5	17.5	Norway	2,079.2	26.2	United States	1,281.7	22.4
France	142.8	9.1	France	1,739.6	22.0	Germany	1,031.0	18.0
Japan	75.9	4.9	United States	851.1	10.7	Norway	655.2	11.5
Luxemburg	74.9	4.8	United Kingdom	336.7	4.3	Korea	206.0	3.6
Norway	74.2	4.7	Switzerland	128.2	1.6	Australia	190.1	3.3
Sweden	60.1	3.8	Spain	78.3	1.0	United Kingdom	169.6	3.0
Belgium	55.1	3.5	Netherlands	75.0	0.9	Denmark	143.9	2.5
Canada	30.7	2.0	Canada	56.4	0.7	Finland	90.4	1.6
United Kingdom	26.9	1.7	Denmark	53.8	0.7	Canada	74.4	1.3
Korea	13.6	0.9	Belgium	49.9	0.6	Sweden	73.7	1.3
Netherlands	10.4	0.7	Sweden	43.7	0.6	Belgium	67.8	1.2
Switzerland	5.2	0.3	Korea	35.0	0.4	Switzerland	41.3	0.7
Portugal	3.2	0.2	Italy	20.3	0.3	Spain	9.1	0.2
Italy	3.0	0.2	Finland	19.0	0.2	Italy	7.1	0.1
Ireland	2.3	0.1	Australia	3.7	0.05	Netherlands	6.8	0.1
Spain	2.3	0.1	Austria	3.2	0.04	Austria	3.4	0.1
Australia	1.9	0.1	Luxemburg	1.4	0.02	New Zealand	2.3	0.04
Austria	0.7	0.05	Ireland	1.0	0.01	Luxemburg	1.6	0.03
Slovenia	0.5	0.03	Portugal	0.7	0.01	Ireland	0.5	0.01
			Czechia	0.1	0.00	Czechia	0.3	0.01
			New Zealand	0.03	0.0003	Lithuania	0.002	0.00003
			Slovenia	0.01	0.0002			
			Hungary	0.003	0.00004			
Total CA	**1,564.9**	**100**	**Total Amazon**	**7,921.0**	**100**	**Total SEA**	**5,721.8**	**100**

provided 9% of the total value, amounting to USD 143 million. Japan's contributions totalled USD 76 million, making up 5% of the total bilateral ODA to the region. Luxemburg's contributions were around 5% of the total value, amounting to USD 75 million. During the period 2008–2017, the shares of Germany and the United States decreased slightly, while Japan's share increased slightly. France's share remained constant during the two periods. In the AB, Germany was the largest donor, providing USD 2.3 billion or 30% of the total bilateral ODA to the AB, which amounted to USD 7.9 billion. Norway was the second largest donor, accounting for 26% with a total value of USD 2.1 billion. France ranked third, providing USD 1.7 billion or 22% of the total ODA to the AB. The United States contributed USD 851 million or 11% of the total ODA, while the United Kingdom provided USD 337 million or 4% of the total ODA. It is worth noting that the shares of Germany and France increased compared to the previous period, while the share of Norway declined. The United States' share remained constant between the two periods. In the SEA region, France was the largest contributor, providing USD 1.7 billion or 29% of the total bilateral ODA to SEA, which amounted to USD 5.7 billion. Coming in second was the United States, with a total value of USD 1.2 billion or 22%. Germany accounted for 18% with a total value of USD 1.0 billion. Norway contributed USD 655 million, representing 12% of the total. The Republic of Korea accounted for approximately 4%, with a total value of USD 206 million. Compared to the previous period, the shares of France, Germany, Norway and the United States increased.

Table 11 depicts the multilateral donors in tropical regions for the period spanning 2008 to 2022. In CA, the EU was the most significant contributor, providing USD 581 million, which accounted for 38% of the total multilateral ODA to CA, amounting to USD 1.5 billion. The GEF came in second with a total value of USD 375 million, equivalent to 24%. The WB accounted for 19% of the total ODA, contributing USD 291 million. The AfDB accounted for 8%, contributing USD 126 million. The CIF contributed a total value of USD 80 million, equivalent to 5%. Comparing the current period to the previous one, the contributions from the GEF and AfDB increased, while those from the EU and CIF decreased. The WB's contribution remained unchanged between the two periods. In the AB, the total funds received from the GEF amounted to USD 895 million, making it the leading donor and accounting for 65% of the multilateral funds directed towards the AB (USD 1.4 billion). The GCF came in second with a contribution of USD 243 million, which represented 18% of the subregional total. The EU contributed a total value of USD 124 million, equivalent to 9% of the subregional total. The CIF accounted for 8% with a total value of USD 109 million. Lastly, the GGGI contributed a total value of USD 7 million, accounting for 1% of the subregional total. When compared to the previous period, contributions from the GEF, EU and CIF decreased slightly, while the GCF's contribution increased over the two periods. In SEA, the WB was the largest donor, providing a total of USD 716 million, which accounted for 39% of the total multilateral ODA to the subregion (USD 1.8 billion). The GEF provided a total of USD 679 million, equivalent to 37% of the subregional total. The GCF and the EU contributed a total of value of USD 123 and 120 million, respectively, equivalent to approximately 7% each of the subregional total. The CIF provided USD 99 million, which is equivalent to 5% of the subregional total. Comparing the current period to the previous one, the contributions from the GEF and EU increased, while those from the WB and CIF decreased.

Table 11. Multilateral donors by tropical zone, 2008–2022

Central Africa			The Amazon Basin			Southeast Asia		
Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)	Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)	Donor	Total 2008–2022	Share (%)
EU	580.7	37.5	GEF	895.4	64.7	WB	716.0	39.3
GEF	374.8	24.2	GCF	243.2	17.6	GEF	679.3	37.3
WB	291.1	18.8	EU	124.0	9.0	GCF	123.4	6.8
AfDB	126.4	8.2	CIF	109.0	7.9	EU	120.3	6.6
CIF	80.3	5.2	GGGI	6.9	0.5	CIF	98.6	5.4
GCF	42.5	2.7	UNDP	3.0	0.2	UNDP	48.9	2.7
UNDP	42.2	2.7	Adaptation Fund	0.9	0.1	GGGI	25.8	1.4
NDF	4.5	0.3	FAO	0.5	0.04	NDF	8.9	0.5
GGGI	3.4	0.2				FAO	1.0	0.1
FAO	0.9	0.1				Adaptation Fund	0.4	0.02
Total	**1,546.8**	**100**	**Total**	**1,383.0**	**100**	**Total**	**1,822.5**	**100**

3.4 Needs and opportunities for financing forestS and THE environment in CA

3.4.1 Needs for financing forests and the environment in CA

CA forests, which constitute the Earth's second largest tropical forest ecosystem only surpassed by the Amazon rainforests in terms of size, are widely recognized as a common good because of their extensive benefits and services. These forests serve as crucial carbon and biodiversity reservoirs, supporting the livelihoods of approximately 60 million people living in and around them. Additionally, they provide essential social and cultural functions for local and Indigenous communities, and play a vital role in regulating both regional and global climate systems. International initiatives to combat global warming acknowledge the critical role of these forests, and advocate for their sustainable management and use. However, the current unsustainable exploitation of these forests is a cause for concern among ecologists, as it could potentially undermine the fight against climate change. Table 13 depicts the changes in tree cover, as well as carbon emissions and removals for countries within CA. During the period 2000–2020, there was a total tree cover gain of approximately 25% of the total tree cover loss that occurred between 2001 and 2023, which amounted to 12 million hectares (Mha). This resulted in a net loss of tree cover of -9 Mha. In contrast to the previous period, the total tree cover gain increased by 81.3%, while the total tree cover loss decreased by 28.4% within CA. Among the countries, the DRC accounted for more than two thirds (69%) of the total net loss, followed by Chad (10%), CAR (8%), and Cameroon (7%). Comparatively, the shares of the DRC and Cameroon decreased, while those of CAR and Chad increased. The total amount of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) emitted from biomass loss between 2001 and 2023 was 15 gigatons (Gt), which accounted for 52% of the total CO_2 removed during the same period (-29 $GtCO_2e$). This resulted in a net CO_2 flux of -14 $GtCO_2e$. Compared to the previous period, biomass emissions decreased by 17 $GtCO_2e$ (53%). The DRC contributed 46% of the total CO_2 sequestration, followed by CAR with 19%, Republic of the Congo with 12% and Cameroon and Gabon with approximately 11% each. The negative carbon flux signifies that the forests in CA functioned as a net carbon sink, absorbing more CO_2 than was emitted, thereby making a positive impact on climate change mitigation efforts. However, ongoing deforestation and forest degradation, accompanied by associated CO_2 emissions, continue to pose significant challenges to global initiatives aimed at addressing climate change.

3.4.2 Opportunities for financing forests and the environment in CA

Over the past two decades, the global community has become increasingly aware of the necessity to secure funding for SFM to combat climate change. As a result, numerous funding initiatives have been established to provide financial opportunities for forest conservation and environmental protection, especially in tropical regions (Simula 2008; Maniatis 2012; Asare and Gohil 2016; Bird et al. 2017; Lujan et al. 2018). Table 13 presents an updated overview of countries in CA that have received funding from these initiatives. This information expands on and updates data originally compiled by Maniatis (2012). Since then, the number of CA countries that have participated in various funding initiatives has increased. However, Burundi, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe recorded low participation, whereas CAR, Cameroon and DRC recorded high participation. The GCF and GEF are the only initiatives in which all CA countries have participated. Seven CA countries are now partners of UN-REDD and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), while six are partners of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and the Adaptation Fund. The availability of these funding initiatives indicates the readiness and willingness of donors to provide financial support for the sustainable management of forests and the environment in CA and other tropical regions. Consequently, these initiatives present opportunities for CA countries to fund their forestry and environmental programmes. Compared to the previous period, a greater number of CA countries participated in the GCF, the Adaptation Fund and CIF. During the period 2008–2022, CA forests received the least funding among the three tropical forest zones, amounting to USD 3.1 billion through bilateral and multilateral sources. In comparison, the AB received USD 9.3 billion, and SEA received USD 7.5 billion. This presents an opportunity for increased funding from donors directed towards CA countries. Among the common areas covered by FEODA flows, environmental policy and administrative management secured the top spot in the AB and SEA, but took second place in CA. The CA's share of total value committed to environmental policy and administrative management in the three zones, amounting to USD 7.5 billion, is 6%. The shares of the AB and SEA were 37% and 57%, respectively. This suggests that there is potential to increase ODA flows in CA for environmental policy and administrative management.

Table 12. Selected forestry and environmental statistics of Central African countries

Country	Tree cover gain 2000–2020 (ha x 1,000)	Tree cover loss 2001–2023 (ha x 1,000)	Net change (ha x 1,000)	Share (%)	Country	Gross emissions 2001–2023 ($MtCO_2e$)	Gross removals 2001–2023 ($MtCO_2e$)	CO_2 net fluxes ($MtCO_2e$)	Share (%)
DRC	1,591.2	7,593.1	-6,001.9	69.0	DRC	12,275.5	18,723.6	-6,448.1	46.1
Chad	256.6	1,100.4	-843.8	9.7	CAR	480.1	3,143.2	-2,663.1	19.0
CAR	482.4	1,210.3	-727.8	8.4	Republic of the Congo	618.0	2,244.3	-1,626.3	11.6
Cameroon	351.1	976.9	-625.8	7.2	Gabon	327.4	1,844.0	-1,516.6	10.8
Republic of the Congo	113.1	444.8	-331.7	3.8	Cameroon	1,231.1	2,706.9	-1,475.8	10.6
Gabon	50.0	149.0	-99.0	1.1	Equatorial Guinea	94.9	209.7	-114.8	0.8
Equatorial Guinea	5.2	44.5	-39.4	0.5	Rwanda	32.6	113.4	-80.8	0.6
Burundi	16.4	34.7	-18.3	0.2	Burundi	16.3	52.6	-36.3	0.3
Rwanda	16.1	33.0	-17.0	0.2	Chad	25.0	41.7	-16.7	0.1
São Tomé and Príncipe	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	São Tomé and Príncipe	0.0	2.6	-2.6	0.0
Total	**2,882.1**	**11,586.8**	**-8,704.7**	**100**	**Total**	**15,101.0**	**29,082.0**	**-13,981.0**	**100.0**

Source: Global Forest Watch

Table 13. Funding initiatives to support forests and the environment

Recipient	Adaptation Fund	CAFI	CIF	FCPF	GCCB+	GCF	GEF	LDCF	SCCF	UN-REDD programme partners
Burundi	Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes		
Cameroon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
CAR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Chad	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Republic of the Congo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes
DRC		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Equatorial Guinea		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Gabon		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes
Rwanda	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
São Tomé and Príncipe					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Number of Participants	6	6	5	6	5	10	10	7	1	7

Note: CBFF is not active, GCCB+ has no info, and ITTO Reddes has no info or data.
Source: Various funding initiative websites

4 Conclusions

4.1 Summary of key findings

Funding flows analysis for CA: The updated review of international funding for CA's forestry and environmental sectors from 2008 to 2022 reveals a 50% increase in total FEODA, signifying growing recognition of CA's ecological significance in global climate regulation and biodiversity conservation, and evolving strategies in forest and environmental funding. The stable donor landscape, with minor ranking changes among the top five contributors, reflects continued commitment from key global actors. The DRC's emergence as the primary recipient of bilateral and multilateral FEODA underscores its pivotal role in regional environmental initiatives, and increased global attention. The consistent prioritization of funding for biodiversity and environmental policy and administrative management mirrors global conservation priorities.

Imbalances and gaps in funding flows: Funding trends in CA countries are influenced by global environmental accords, as evidenced by the peak in FEODA in 2015 coinciding with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement by CA countries. For the period 2008–2022, the top five areas funded by total FEODA consisted of three environmental areas, suggesting growing global concerns for environmental sustainability. Donor presence varies among CA countries, highlighting the need for balanced regional support and increased funding for underfunded countries.

Comparative analysis of funding flows to tropical zones: Despite its ecological importance, CA received less funding compared to other tropical forest regions, particularly in environmental policy and administrative management, posing a challenge for SFM and conservation efforts. An increased focus on environmental policy and administrative management across all regions indicates a growing global awareness of environmental issues. Overall, there appeared to be a slight shift in donor priorities, but a significant shift in donor contributions between the periods of 2008–2017 and 2008–2022, suggesting evolving strategies in forest and environmental funding. Germany was the leading bilateral donor of FEODA in CA and the AB, while France led in SEA. The EU, GEF and the WB were the leading multilateral donors in CA, the AB and SEA, respectively, reflecting different donor priorities and engagement levels.

Needs and opportunities for increased funding for forests in CA: Central African forests are vital for carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, remaining a significant carbon sink despite net forest loss. This warrants increased international financial support to bridge the funding gap with other tropical forest regions. Various funding initiatives provide opportunities for CA countries to finance forestry and environmental programmes, but participation varies, indicating potential for greater engagement and funding. CA's share of total tropical FEODA and environmental policy and administrative management flows was the lowest among tropical zones, suggesting untapped funding opportunities.

In conclusion, the study uncovered a complex funding landscape in CA, with overall funding increasing, but donor priorities and recipient countries shifting. Comparative analysis revealed significant disparities in funding allocation among tropical zones, with CA receiving the lowest share despite substantial growth. Funding priorities and major donors differed across regions. The research highlighted the crucial importance of CA forests for global climate regulation and biodiversity conservation, emphasizing the need for continued global financing to address ongoing deforestation and degradation threats. The funding disparity presents an opportunity to increase support for SFM and environmental conservation in CA. The findings offer insights to guide future policy and funding decisions in global environmental and forestry initiatives.

4.2 Policy implications

The study's findings indicate several policy implications for FEODA to the CA region. The funding surge from 2008 to 2022 suggests that policymakers should continue developing environmental and forestry programmes aligned with international climate change policies to attract more financial support from current and new donors. However, the consistent top donor landscape calls for improved coordination to maximize impact and avoid redundancy. The disproportionate allocation of funds to the DRC, due to its large CA forest area, necessitates strategies to reduce deforestation and degradation there, alongside more equitable funding strategies to foster balanced regional development.

While biodiversity and environmental policy and administrative management remain funding priorities, addressing underfunded subsectors like forestry services and environmental education can enhance funding for forestry and environmental issues in CA. The limited funding for environmental policy and administrative management suggests bolstering this area could improve overall environmental governance. The influence of global environmental agreements on funding decisions underscores the importance of aligning national policies with international commitments. CA's lower share of total FEODA compared to the AB and SEA suggests a need for policies that enhance regional cooperation and increase CA's profile in global environmental funding initiatives. This could involve strengthening existing regional bodies like COMIFAC and OFAC, developing a unified CA environmental strategy, and jointly participating in global climate and biodiversity negotiations to increase the region's collective bargaining power.

Global recognition of CA's forests in climate regulation necessitates strengthening incentives for forest conservation and SFM. Positive trends, such as higher tree cover gain than loss, should be sustained by reinforcing successful conservation strategies. This could involve analysing successful interventions, scaling up effective programmes, and sharing best practices through OFAC. With the DRC responsible for more than half of net forest loss, targeted policies for reducing deforestation in the DRC are crucial, while maintaining efforts in other CA countries. This might involve stronger law enforcement against illegal logging, promoting sustainable agricultural practices to reduce forest encroachment, and developing alternative energy sources to reduce fuelwood reliance. The underutilization of funding opportunities by some CA countries highlights the need for capacity building and better access to funds.

4.3 Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations emanating from the study findings include:

1. Policymakers should engage with donors to prioritize increasing total FEODA to CA, building on the positive trend observed from 2008 to 2022, and to maintain the stability of the donor landscape while encouraging new donors to participate. To this end, there is a need for policies that enhance regional cooperation and increase CA's profile in global environmental funding initiatives. This could involve strengthening existing regional bodies like COMIFAC and OFAC, developing a unified CA environmental strategy, and jointly participating in global climate and biodiversity negotiations to increase the region's collective bargaining power.
2. COMIFAC should employ efforts to address the imbalance in funding distribution to ensure more even-handed allocation among all CA countries.
3. Given the emphasis on biodiversity and environmental policy and administrative management, these areas should continue to be prioritized. However, COMIFAC and OFAC should also explore ways to diversify funding across underfunded subsectors within forestry.
4. The influence of global environmental agreements on funding trends suggests that COMIFAC member countries should align national and regional policies more closely with international commitments to attract more FEODA.
5. OFAC should assist COMIFAC member countries to develop strategies for engaging a wider range of donors in less-funded countries to address the variation in donor presence among CA countries.
6. Recognizing the crucial role of CA forests in carbon sequestration, COMIFAC member countries should strengthen policies that incentivize forest conservation and sustainable management practices.
7. COMIFAC and OFAC should assist member countries to build capacity and improve access to existing funding opportunities, particularly for countries that have underutilized available funds.
8. Considering the limited funding for environmental policy and administrative management, COMIFAC and OFAC should focus on strengthening this area to improve overall environmental governance in the region.

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About us

OFAC

The Central African Forest Observatory (OFAC) was established in 2007 as a specialized unit of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC). OFAC provides up-to-date and relevant data on the region's forests and ecosystems, with the goals of informing policy-making and promoting better governance and sustainable management of natural resources. OFAC enjoys support from RIOFAC, an EU-funded project.

COMIFAC

The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) is an international organization recognized for its role in subregional integration in the conservation and sustainable concerted management of forest ecosystems. COMIFAC is one of the global institutions working to promote the right of peoples to rely on forest resources to support their economic and social development efforts. It also acts on a daily basis to ensure that Central African countries develop and implement harmonized forest and environmental policies for the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources. COMIFAC is responsible for guiding, harmonizing and monitoring forest and environmental policies in Central Africa.

CIFOR-ICRAF

The Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) harnesses the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time – biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.

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Funded by the European Union, the RIOFAC project supports the Central Africa Forest Observatory (OFAC), which provides the sub-region and its partners with essential steering and knowledge-sharing tools for better governance and sustainable management of forest ecosystems.