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The Congo Basin Blue Fund: An Innovative Climate Finance Mechanism in Central Africa

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ABSTRACT: The Congo Basin is the world's second-largest tropical rainforest after the Amazon. It spans approximately 1.8 million km², accounting for nearly half of the total area of the river basin. This forested region is distributed across six Central African countries, namely Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic (Megevand et al., 2012).

This ecosystem plays a critical role in global climate regulation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation. However, it is increasingly exposed to anthropogenic pressures, including deforestation estimated at 0.3–0.5% per year, illegal logging, agricultural expansion, and the impacts of climate change (CICOS, 2021; FAO, 2020)..

The methodology relies on a mixed approach combining a systematic scientific literature review, documentary analysis of institutional reports (CBFC-CBBF, CAFC, DBCAS), and case studies of funded projects. Results indicate that the Blue Fund facilitates the mobilization of international financing and promotes **multi-stakeholder governance.** However, its effectiveness remains limited by institutional constraints, insufficient coordination, and still-low community participation. The study concludes that the Blue Fund constitutes a strategic lever for climate finance in Central Africa, while highlighting the need to strengthen governance, the implication of local communities, and the efficiency of financial instruments.

KEYWORDS: Blue Fund, Congo Basin, climate finance, governance, blue economy, sustainable development, Central Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Context

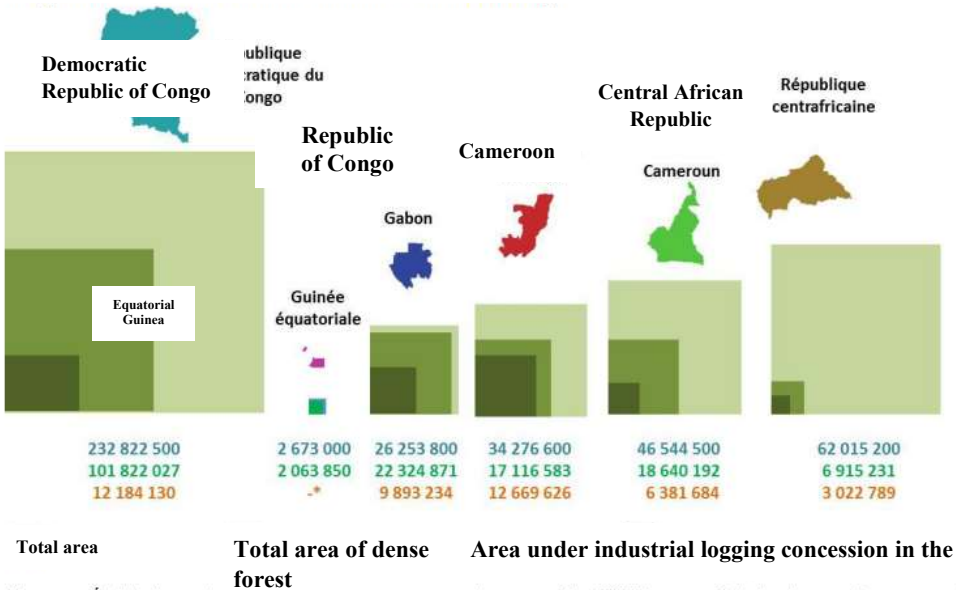
The Congo Basin represents the world's second-largest tropical forest massif after the Amazon and serves as an essential pillar of global climate regulation. Through its **carbon sequestration capacity**, it plays a decisive role in climate change mitigation while harboring exceptional biodiversity and supporting the livelihoods of millions in local populations (FAO, 2022; IPCC, 2023).

However, this strategic ecosystem faces growing pressures from anthropogenic activities. Deforestation, estimated at several hundred thousand hectares per year, is primarily caused by unsustainable logging, agricultural expansion, mining, and infrastructure development (Global Forest Watch, 2023). These dynamics contribute to ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and the weakening of the region's **climate resilience** (koumba**,** 2019).

From a geographical perspective, the Congo Basin is located in Central Africa and extends across six countries: Cameroon (11%), the Central African Republic (3.4%), the Republic of the Congo (12.4%), Equatorial Guinea (1.3%), Gabon (17.7%), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (54.2%) (Figure 1) (World Bank, 2012). It accounts for approximately 70% of Africa's forest cover. The Congo Basin covers a total area of about 530 million hectares, of which nearly 300 million hectares are forested, with forests composed almost entirely (99%) of primary or naturally regenerated stands (Megevand et al., 2012).

Furthermore, industrial logging covers about 44 million hectares and is a significant source of income and employment, despite being associated with significant environmental risks (Mbemba & Okou, 2021).

Diagram 1 – 2 : Total area, total area of dense forest and area under industrial logging concession in the Congo Basin



***Source*: Established using data from Wesseige and Coll. (2012), In Equatorial Guinea, all logging concessions were abolished in 2008.**

Map 1: Map of the Congo Basin with forest areas and Blue Fund projects

1.2 Problem Statement and Justification

In the face of these environmental and socio-economic stakes, mobilizing adapted financing constitutes a major challenge. Despite its global ecological importance, the Congo Basin remains insufficiently integrated into international climate finance flows. Mobilized resources remain significantly lower than the estimated needs to ensure ecosystem conservation and accompany the transition toward sustainable development (Ondo, 2022).

This shortfall is explained by several structural factors, especially:

(i) The complexity of mechanisms for accessing international financing.
(ii) Weak institutional capacities.
(iii) A deficit in regional coordination.
(iv) And insufficient structuring of **bankable projects.**

This results in a persistent gap between funding needs and resources actually mobilized, thus limiting the implementation of effective climate policies.

In this context, the development of innovative climate finance mechanisms appears as a strategic necessity. The Congo Basin Blue Fund is part of this dynamic, proposing an integrated approach to mobilizing resources on a large scale while addressing the socio-economic and environmental specificities of the region. Led by the Heads of State of the Congo Basin Climate Commission (CBCC), this mechanism aims to support the structural transformation of regional economies through the development of a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient blue economy.

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this article is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Blue Fund as a climate finance mechanism in Central Africa. More specifically, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- What financial mechanisms are used by the Blue Fund?
- How is its multi-stakeholder governance organized?
- What are the main challenges that stops its effectiveness?
- What is its potential for mobilizing international funding?

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

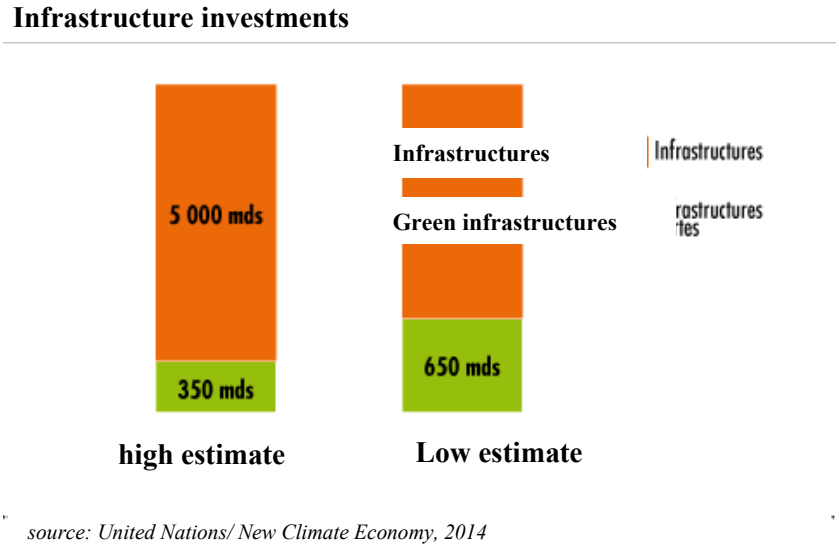
2.1 Literature review: climate finance and financial flows

The literature on climate finance highlights a gradual but still incomplete transformation of the financial sector's role in addressing the challenges of climate change. Until recently, international financial flows were only weakly directed towards renewable energy, largely due to the lack of robust tools for measuring the carbon footprint and climate risks associated with investments (United Nations Environment Program, 2011). This situation contributed to maintaining a capital allocation largely unfavorable to the ecological transition, concentrated in carbon-intensive sectors such as fossil fuels, real estate, and financial derivatives (Pascal Canfin and Olivier Grandjean, 2015).

However, since the 2010s, a significant shift has been observed due to the combined effect of rising climate risks

and pressure from civil society. Climate change is now understood as a systemic financial risk factor, directly affecting the profitability of investments and giving rise to the concept of the "tragedy of the horizon" (Mark Carney, 2015). In this context, climate finance refers to all public and private flows aimed at supporting mitigation and adaptation actions, although the definition remains open to interpretation, particularly with regard to the Paris Agreement and its Article 2.1(c), which aims to align financial flows with a low-carbon development pathway. This mechanism represents both an opportunity to transform the global financial system and a source of tension regarding equity, state sovereignty, and respect for international financial commitments (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015).

The issue of capital allocation is a central point. Data from 2013 indicate that only 7 to 13% of global infrastructure investments, out of a total of $5 trillion, were directed towards "green" activities, reflecting a "lack of compass" for the ecological transition (United Nations Environment Program, 2011; Pascal Canfin and Olivier Grandjean, 2015).



source: United Nations/ New Climate Economy, 2014

Figure 2: Investment in infrastructure

The work of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, particularly Stern and Calderón (2014), indicates that a marginal reallocation of around 5% of investments in energy, infrastructure, and land management could be sufficient to initiate a trajectory compatible with climate objectives. This growing awareness among financial actors is explained by the increasing integration of climate and carbon risks, including the issue of stranded assets, as well as by fossil fuel divestment campaigns led by civil society (Oxfam).

However, despite the development of green finance, green bonds, and incentive instruments, significant limitations remain: a lack of transparency, the risk of greenwashing, and the absence of binding measures hinder the effective redirection of capital. These tensions reflect the complexity of balancing economic, environmental, and social imperatives, and underscore the need for innovative mechanisms tailored to the contexts of developing countries, such as the Congo Basin Blue Fund, capable of reconciling climate finance, equity, and sustainable development.

2.2 Theoretical foundations surrounding the Blue Fund of the Congo Basin

2.3 Theory of change and the hydrographic network of the Congo Basin

The Theory of Change (ToC) applied to the Congo Basin Blue Fund provides a key strategic framework for understanding how funded interventions can generate a lasting impact on ecosystems and local communities. It clarifies the cause-and-effect relationships between resources mobilized, activities carried out, and expected results, while identifying assumptions, risks, and levers for change (Vogel, 2012; Mayne, 2015). This approach helps align stakeholders, riverfront states, donors, the private sector, and local communities around a shared vision of transitioning to a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive blue economy (Anderson, 2005; Taplin et al., 2013). In practice, the ToC guides project selection and eligibility, resource allocation according to measurable objectives, and monitoring and evaluation to foster adaptive learning (Rogers, 2014; UNDP, 2017).

Within the framework of the Blue Fund, the Theory of Change (ToC) is applied to the region's main river basins and coastal areas, ensuring that sustainable water management, fisheries, irrigation, mangrove, and renewable energy projects effectively contribute to biodiversity conservation, water security, and socio-economic development (Mbemba & Okou, 2021). The expertise of the Development Bank of Central African States (DBCAS), the development bank responsible for managing the Fund, strengthens the effectiveness of interventions through its in-depth knowledge

of the regional context and its skills in resource mobilization and project management.

The figure below illustrates the main river basins of the region covered by the Congo Basin Blue Fund, including the Congo River and its major tributaries (Ubangi, Sangha, Kasai), Lake Tanganyika, and other transboundary basins (Ogooué, Kouilou-Niari, Sanaga, Campo/Ntem, Mbini, Cuanza, Cunene). This map allows visualization of the scale and interconnectedness of the river systems that support biodiversity, hydropower, fisheries, agriculture, and navigation in the eleven countries concerned (Teugels and Guégan, 1994).

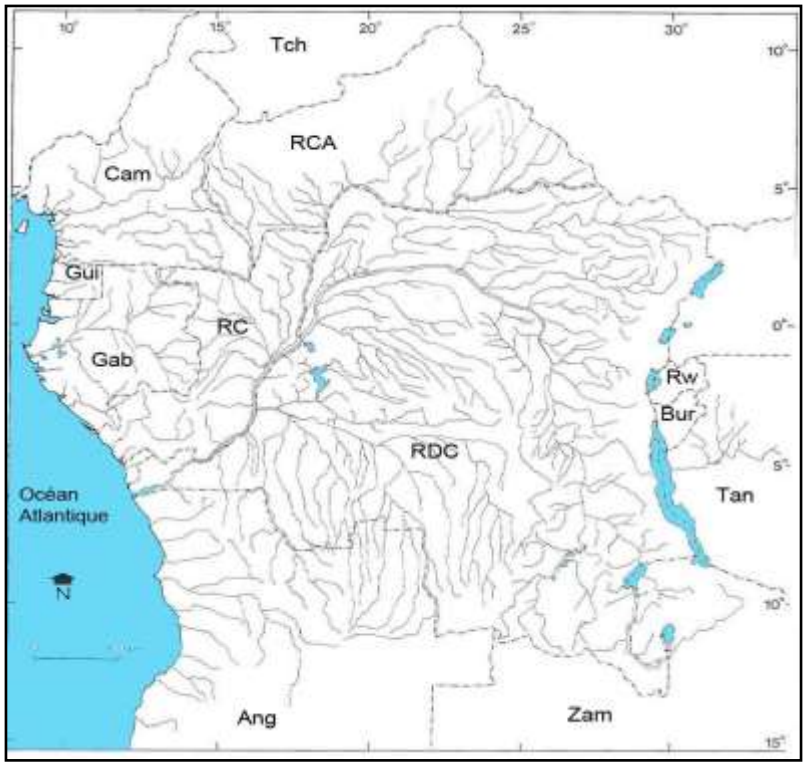


Figure 1: Map of the hydrographic network of the Congo basin (Source: Teugels and Guégan, 1994)
Ang: Angola, Bur: Burundi, Cam: Cameroon, Gab: Gabonese Republic, Gui: Equatorial Guinea, RC: Republic of the Congo, RCA: Central African Republic, DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rw: Rwanda, Tan: Tanzania, Zam: Zambia.

Financially, the Fund relies on voluntary contributions from Member States, donors, NGOs, and innovative mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services. This ecosystem-based and integrated approach is in line with international commitments to combat climate change, in accordance with the Paris Agreement (2015), and constitutes a strategic tool for the preservation of biodiversity, water security, and sustainable development in the region (Teugels and Guégan, 1994).

2.4 Theory of Change of the Congo Basin Blue Fund

The Theory of Change (ToC) applied to the Blue Fund makes it possible to formalize the cause-and-effect relationships between resources, activities, and expected impacts, thereby promoting adaptive learning and effective stakeholder coordination (Vogel, 2012; Mayne, 2015; Anderson, 2005). It is structured around four main axes:

2.4.1 A consensual and partnership-based approach

The Blue Fund adopts an integrated approach, based on thematic programming corresponding to the priorities defined by the CBCC member's states. Project structuring relies on technical and financial partnerships with regional and international actors, enabling:

(i) The large-scale deployment of the 24 sectoral programs validated by the Member's States;
(ii) Addressing the strategic gaps identified in member countries;
(iii) The concrete contribution to the climate objectives of the Paris Agreement (2015).

2.4.2 Financial resources and support mechanisms

The Blue Fund's investments are backed by diverse resources: public contributions, co-financing, blended finance mechanisms, and innovative instruments. This funding is accompanied by mechanisms that enhance effectiveness: project preparation and structuring, technical assistance, knowledge transfer, support for innovation, strengthening of regulatory frameworks, and improvement of local governance (Rogers, 2014; Taplin et al., 2013). Interventions follow a logic of territorial and social equity, inclusion,

community participation, transparency, and accountability (ESG).

2.4.3 Areas of intervention and target levels

The Blue Fund targets seven key areas identified by Member States:

1. Sustainable management of aquatic and coastal ecosystems;
2. Sustainable fishing and aquaculture;
3. Blue infrastructure (water, energy, sanitation);
4. Tourism and coastal economy;
5. Research and innovation;
6. Management of health and environmental risks;
7. Cross cutting programs: support for civil society, communication, awareness raising and diplomacy of the blue economy.

These interventions aim for a systemic dynamic, with measurable impacts on ecosystems, public policies, populations and markets (Mayne, 2015; UNDP, 2017).

3. EXPECTED IMPACTS AND TRANSFORMATION DYNAMICS

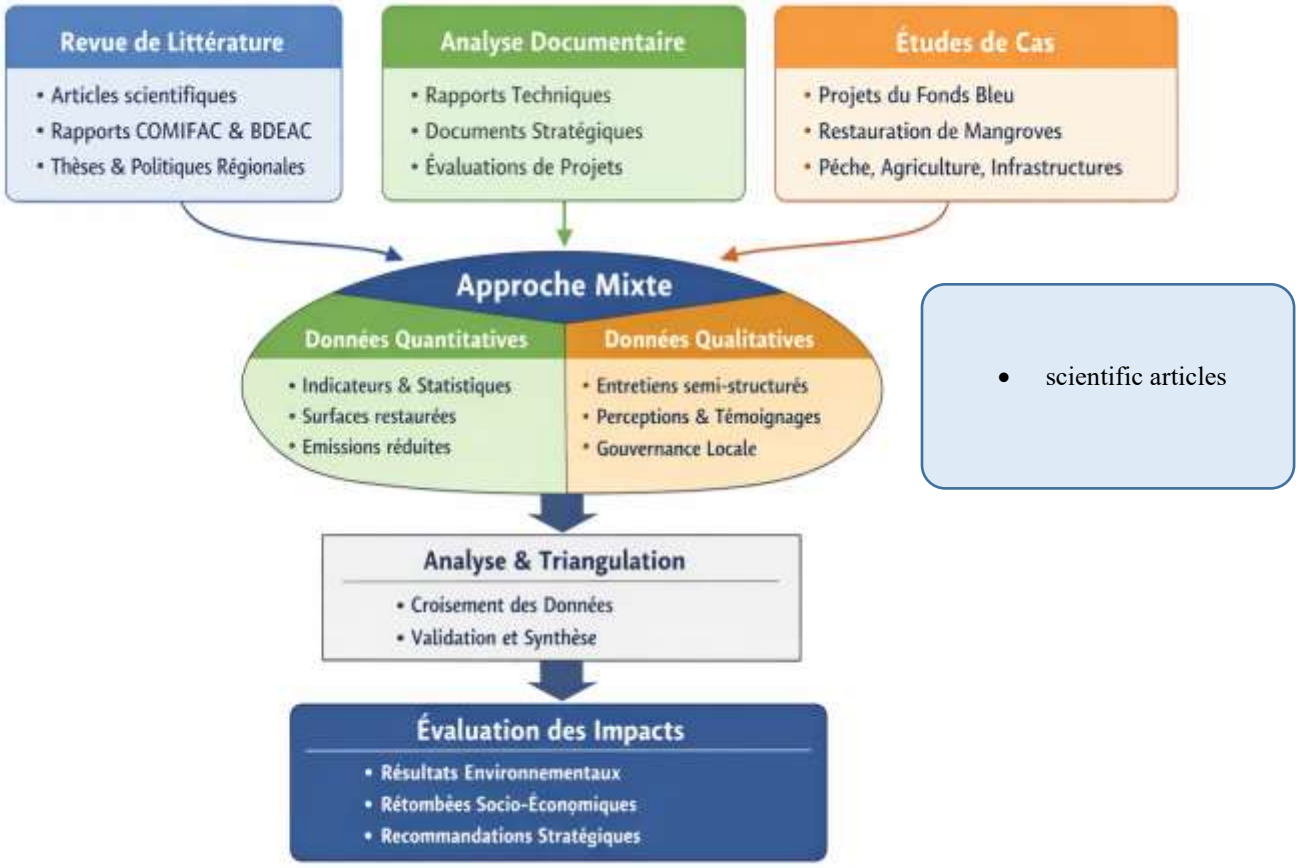
The actions of the Blue Fund aim to create an environment conducive to the sustainable transformation of territories by addressing several key challenges. These include the restoration and preservation of aquatic, forest and wetland ecosystems, thereby contributing to biodiversity and carbon sequestration, as well as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the fight against deforestation and the promotion of low-carbon practices.

The Blue Fund also supports national adaptation and mitigation efforts, in line with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), while strengthening community resilience to climate and health risks. Furthermore, it promotes the creation of sustainable and inclusive jobs, the structuring of local value chains, and support for entrepreneurship, particularly for young people and women. The Fund values Indigenous knowledge, combats socio-territorial inequalities, and promotes a just and inclusive transition. Finally, it encourages the emergence of innovative, replicable, and locally and regionally adapted solutions to environmental and socio-economic challenges.

In parallel, the Blue Fund acts as a facilitator and catalyst for diversified financing, fostering institutional dialogue, improving regulatory frameworks, strengthening local capacities, and promoting integrated planning. Pilot projects demonstrate the feasibility and concrete impact of interventions, encouraging their replication and the mobilization of additional funding (Vogel, 2012; UNDP, 2017; OECD, 2020).

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this article is based on a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) combining a systematic literature review, document analysis, and case studies of projects funded by the Blue Fund. This approach allows us to grasp both the quantifiable dimensions of the Blue Fund's effectiveness and the perceptions, experiences, and practices of local and institutional stakeholders. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework, linking financial flows, multi-stakeholder governance, and community participation.



Source: data summary

4.1 Systematic literature review

The literature review was structured according to six thematic sequences, corresponding to the research sub-questions (SQR1–SQR4). The sources used included peer-reviewed scientific articles, institutional reports from CAFC and DBCAS, publications from the United Nations Environment Program, as well as theses and regional policy documents. This review made it possible to identify innovative financial mechanisms, multi-stakeholder governance models, and their observed impacts on environmental and socio-economic sustainability.

4.2 Document analysis

The documentary analysis complements the literature review by drawing on technical reports, project evaluations, and strategic documents from the Blue Fund. This step allows for the identification of mobilized financial flows, monitoring and evaluation tools, and regional cooperation models. It also provides a reliable source for verifying quantitative project data and contextualizing initiatives within regional climate policies.

4.3 Case studies

The case studies analyzed focus on projects funded by the Blue Fund, selected for their sectoral diversity, geographic scope, and contribution to the priorities of the blue economy. They allow for a concrete assessment of the socio-economic and environmental impact of the interventions, as well as the dynamics of territorial transformation. Based on the project pipeline developed in 2020 by EY for all CBCC member countries, these studies have been updated to reflect the evolving maturity of the projects, the emergence of new needs, and their relevance to donors. These case studies are based on national projects, presented by country with their key information: code, title, sectoral program, maturity, and budget, and regional projects, reflecting cross-border cooperation dynamics and organized according to a similar logic.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation

The collected data were coded and analyzed using a thematic approach for qualitative information and descriptive and comparative statistics for quantitative data. This combination highlights success factors, structural obstacles, and the actual impacts of projects on environmental sustainability, community resilience, and socio-economic development.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results 1: Mapping of actors in the Congo Basin Blue Fund

Analysis of the Blue Fund's governance reveals a multi-level architecture, involving member states, regional institutions, development banks, NGOs, and local communities. At the decision-making level, the Fund is structured around the CBCC Heads of State Summit, the Executive Committee, and

the Permanent Secretariat, while the operational level comprises the Technical Committee, the Investment Committee, the Board of Directors, and the Assembly of Funders.

Member states define national and regional priorities and contribute financially, while regional institutions such as CAFC, ICCOSB, and others ensure the coordination and harmonization of cross-border projects. Development banks and financial partners provide resources, co-financing, and guarantees, while local communities and NGOs participate in the implementation, monitoring, and social ownership of interventions.

This mapping shows a sometimes fragmented coordination, with limited exchanges between institutional and community actors, which underlines the need to improve communication and synergy to strengthen the effectiveness of projects.

5.2 Results 2: Financial and institutional mechanisms (SQR1)

The results show that the Congo Basin Blue Fund implements a diverse range of financial mechanisms, including direct grants, concessional loans, and innovative instruments such as guarantee funds and blended finance. Documentary analyses and field studies indicate that the Fund facilitates access to international financing, but its effectiveness remains limited by administrative complexity, a lack of coordination, and fragmented governance.

In accordance with the Statutes, the Fund's resources come primarily from contributions from Member States and financial partners, supplemented by national, sub-regional, and international mechanisms, as well as innovative instruments such as payments for ecosystem services and carbon finance. Operations may be financed directly by Member States, by external donors, or through co-financing, with each approach requiring consistency and traceability of interventions.

The table below illustrates the issues and main findings regarding the financial and institutional mechanisms of the BFCB.

Authors	Theme / Sub-problem	Methodology	Main results	Recommendations / Research Needs
Nsona, P. (2022)	Financial and institutional mechanisms (SQR1)	Document analysis + case study	Access to international funding is facilitated, but mechanisms are limited.	Explore innovative mechanisms and simplify access funds
Mbemba, L. & Okou, J. (2021)	Governance and Regional Coordination (SQR2)	Review + interviews	Shared governance but insufficient coordination	Développer un modèle de gouvernance multi-acteurs intégré
Tchicaya, R. (2020)	Community participation (SQR2)	Qualitative field study	Limited community involvement	Strengthening inclusive and operational models
Ondo, A. (2022)	Financial mechanisms + governance (SQR1 & SQR2)	Documentary synthesis	Fragmented governance	Propose an integrated framework for regional governance
Hongoro, E. (2022)	International mobilization (SQR4)	Statistical analysis + review	International funds are available but difficult to access.	Strategies for accessing global climate finance.
Diaz, L. & Mumba, D. (2021)	Green financial instruments + challenges (SQR3 & SQR4)	Meta-analysis	Effective but underutilized green tools	Adapting international instruments to local contexts

Source: M. Badolo, supplemented by the author.

A review of the literature confirms these observations. Nsona (2022) emphasizes that, although access to international financing is facilitated, the mechanisms remain limited and require innovative solutions. Mbemba & Okou (2021) and Kamga & Yao (2023) show that multi-stakeholder governance is shared but insufficiently coordinated. Tchicaya (2020) highlights the low level of community participation, while Ondo (2022), Hongoro (2022), and Diaz & Mumba (2021) reveal that innovative financial instruments are still underutilized and difficult to access. Finally, Koumba (2019) indicates that the environmental impact of financing remains low, underscoring the need to better integrate environmental objectives.

These results confirm that the Blue Fund is a promising instrument for mobilizing climate finance in the region, but that its effectiveness depends on improving financial mechanisms, strengthening integrated regional governance, including local communities, and facilitating access to innovative instruments. This analysis justifies the study's mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data on financing with qualitative assessments of institutional and

participatory processes, to obtain a comprehensive view of the Fund's effectiveness.

5.3 Results 3; Bankable projects identified by the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin (BFCB)

The results of this study show the Congo Basin Blue Fund is structured through a progressive framework integrating key priorities related to the preservation of the Congo Basin, as well regional climate transition and economic transformation dynamics. This framework is based on four complementary pillars the investment plan integrating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and green and blue economy programs, the financial vehicle, the strategic and institutional gouvernance framework, and the operational implementation mechanism.

The findings highlight the identification of 242 sectoral programs, the development of a pipeline of 254 projects, and the selection of 15 priority bankable projets, reflecting a fradual structuring process of the project portfolio. The Blue Fund is therefore supported by an initial portfolio of approximately 254 projects, valued at around USD 10 billion, which was subsequently consolidated following technical missions and regional consultations into a priority portfolio of 54 projects valued at approximately USD 4.64 billion. This portfolio covers fifteen countries and five regional organizations and reflects shared priorities across the Congo Basin, including sustainable ecosystem management, protection of vulnerable populations, biodiversity conservation, development of green and blue value chains, and strengthening of climate resilience.

5.4 Financial framework and international mobilization

The results show that the Blue Fund has significant potential to mobilize international financing, but its effectiveness is hampered by the underutilization of innovative financial instruments and complex access to multilateral funds. Project promoters encounter administrative and informational obstacles, which limits the mobilization of external resources.

To address these challenges, the Blue Fund deploys a comprehensive range of instruments tailored to the diversity and maturity of projects, in order to achieve environmental, social, and climate objectives. These include grants for high-impact projects, repayable advances for project preparation and structuring, and loans under various terms (senior, subordinated, conditional, or concessional debt). Guarantees and credit enhancement instruments complement these mechanisms to reduce risks and improve the financial attractiveness of projects.

Grants and repayable advances can be used to finance opportunity and feasibility studies, environmental and social assessments, and institutional capacity building. These instruments are primarily aimed at projects with a high environmental, social, or climate impact, regional or cross-border initiatives, and projects promoting the economic integration of Member States.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that the Congo Basin Blue Fund (CBBF) is a strategic and innovative mechanism for climate finance in Central Africa. By mobilizing regional and international financial resources, the Fund facilitates access to the capital needed for ecosystem conservation, the promotion of the blue economy, and building community resilience to climate impacts. This approach is particularly relevant given that the Congo Basin, the world's second-largest tropical rainforest, is subject to increasing human pressure, marked by deforestation, illegal logging, agricultural expansion, and the effects of climate change.

Compared to existing literature, this study highlights several unique features of the Blue Fund. First, it combines institutional and community-based approaches, involving not only member states and regional institutions (CAFC, ICCOSB) but also local communities and civil society. This multi-level governance is a differentiating factor compared to traditional financial mechanisms, which are often centralized and not very inclusive. Second, the Fund deploys innovative financial mechanisms, ranging from grants and repayable advances to blended instruments and guarantees, allowing projects to be structured according to their maturity and their environmental or social impact. These instruments offer flexibility adapted to local contexts, while promoting the mobilization of international funding that is often difficult to access.

The Blue Fund's contribution therefore goes beyond mere financing. It acts as a catalyst for structural change, promoting a sustainable and inclusive blue economy. Its projects, which cover areas such as the sustainable management of aquatic and forest ecosystems, access to water and sanitation, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and the valorization of indigenous knowledge, contribute directly to climate objectives and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Furthermore, the Fund fosters the creation of sustainable jobs, the structuring of local value chains, and the social ownership of projects, thereby strengthening resilience and territorial equity in the region.

However, the study identifies significant limitations that hinder the effectiveness of the Blue Fund. Coordination among stakeholders remains fragmented at times, local community participation is insufficient, and access to innovative financial instruments is complex, thus limiting the full mobilization of international funding. These constraints underscore the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder governance, develop integrated and inclusive coordination models, and facilitate the participation of local populations in the decision-making process.

Thus, the Blue Fund constitutes a major lever for climate finance in Central Africa, combining financial innovation, multi-stakeholder governance, and the transition to a sustainable blue economy. Its scientific and practical contribution is demonstrated by showing that regional mechanisms can effectively address the challenges of climate change while promoting sustainable development and social inclusion. The study also opens up avenues for research to more systematically assess the socio-environmental impacts of funded projects and to adapt international financial instruments to the specific context of the Congo Basin.

7. CONCLUSION

The objective of this article was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Congo Basin Blue Fund (CBBF) as a climate finance and sustainable development mechanism in Central Africa. The results show that the Blue Fund is a strategic instrument capable of mobilizing national, regional, and international financial resources while promoting an integrated approach to a sustainable blue economy. The Fund's main strengths lie in its multi-stakeholder governance, its capacity to structure bankable projects with strong socio-environmental impact, and the implementation of innovative financial instruments such as grants, repayable advances, and blended finance mechanisms.

The study demonstrates that the Blue Fund facilitates access to international financing (answering the first research question on financial mechanisms), while involving a diverse range of actors, from member states and regional institutions to local communities and civil society organizations (answering the second question on governance). However, the Fund's effectiveness is limited by institutional challenges, still incomplete regional coordination, and insufficient community participation (answering the third question on key obstacles). Finally, the potential for international mobilization remains underutilized due to administrative complexity and limited access to innovative financial instruments (answering the fourth question on financing mobilization).

From a scientific perspective, this study provides a better understanding of the links between financial mechanisms, governance, and community participation in regional climate finance. It highlights the importance of adopting an integrated approach that combines institutional strategies, the inclusion of local populations, and financial innovation to strengthen the impact and sustainability of interventions.

For decision-making, the article offers concrete recommendations: strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination, facilitate access to innovative financial instruments, develop inclusive governance models, and promote greater ownership of projects by local communities. These measures will help maximize the effectiveness of the Blue Fund and strengthen the ecological, social, and economic resilience of the Congo Basin.

Finally, the identified research avenues include the systematic assessment of the socio-environmental impacts of funded projects, the adaptation of international financial instruments to the local context, and the exploration of participatory governance models that could serve as a benchmark for other regional climate finance mechanisms. The Blue Fund experience thus constitutes an innovative and replicable example for promoting effective and inclusive climate finance in Central Africa and beyond.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author is affiliated with the Development Bank of Central African States (BDEAC). However, this article constitutes independent research conducted on a personal basis. It has no institutional, operational, or decision-making link with BDEAC, nor with the author's former expert position at CICOS. This article is grounded in the existing literature on the Congo Basin and represents a scientific contribution to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

This study is carried out by the author in his capacity as a researcher, with a particular interest in the issues of the Congo Basin as well as innovative financing and governance mechanisms. It is based on bibliographic and documentary analysis, complemented by experiential insights. The analyses, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not, under any circumstances, reflect the official position of BDEAC or any other institution mentioned.

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