

# Assessment of Climate Change Financing Mechanisms in Cameroon: A Comprehensive Review.

## Abstract

Climate change is a development challenge, particularly for developing countries like Cameroon, characterised by heightened vulnerability due to socio-economic structures and reliance on climate-sensitive sectors. Mitigation and adaptation measures are imperative, making financing mechanisms a central focus of international cooperation. This review examines the intricate landscape of climate change financing in Cameroon, providing an in-depth understanding of existing mechanisms, their effectiveness, and the challenges hampering optimal implementation. The study scrutinizes diverse funding sources, encompassing international climate funds, bilateral agreements, and national budget allocations. Key challenges, including fragmented approaches, accessibility issues, and alignment with national development goals, are identified. The study underscores the critical importance of coordination, capacity building, and strategic alignment in navigating the complex climate financing landscape. By systematically addressing these challenges, Cameroon can enhance the utilization of climate finance, ensuring tangible benefits for local communities and substantial contributions to sustainable development goals.

**Keywords:** adaptation, cooperation, mitigation, vulnerability

## Introduction

Climate change stands as one of the most pressing challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with profound implications for ecosystems, economies, and the well-being of communities worldwide (IPCC, 2018). In the context of this global phenomenon, developing countries like Cameroon face sharp vulnerabilities due to their socio-economic structures and dependence on climate-sensitive sectors (World Bank, 2019). The impacts of climate change in Cameroon are multifaceted, affecting agriculture, water resources, public health, and overall socio-economic stability (Nkem *et al.*, 2017). In response to the urgent need for mitigation and adaptation measures, financing mechanisms have become a focal point for international cooperation (UNFCCC, 2015). The mobilization of climate finance is crucial for supporting developing nations in their efforts to build resilience and transition to low-carbon, sustainable development pathways (Buchner *et al.*, 2019). Cameroon, situated in Central Africa, has actively engaged in international initiatives, including the formulation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the ratification of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement (Government of Cameroon, 2018). Despite the growing prominence of climate financing in Cameroon, significant challenges persist, posing obstacles to the efficient and equitable implementation of climate change initiatives (AfDB, 2020). One key issue lies in the complex web of financing sources, including international climate funds, bilateral agreements, and national budget allocations. The multiplicity of sources often leads to a fragmented approach, hampering coordinated efforts and potentially resulting in suboptimal outcomes (UNDP, 2017).

Accessibility and disbursement of climate funds present another critical challenge. The effectiveness of climate finance hinges on its ability to reach local communities and vulnerable populations where its impact is most needed (Buchner *et al.*, 2019). Issues related

to bureaucratic hurdles, capacity limitations, and the intricate process of fund disbursement need careful examination to ensure that climate finance translates into tangible benefits on the ground (UNDP, 2017). The orientation between climate financing mechanisms and Cameroon's overarching development agenda is crucial (Nkem *et al.*, 2017). The effectiveness of climate finance is contingent on its integration into national development plans, ensuring that it addresses the unique vulnerabilities of different regions and contributes to broader sustainable development goals (Government of Cameroon, 2018). While various studies have explored aspects of climate financing in Cameroon, a comprehensive review is lacking. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of existing climate financing mechanisms, their alignment with national priorities, and their impact at the local level. The ultimate goal is to provide policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders with valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness of climate change financing in Cameroon.

Cameroon, located in Central Africa, is endowed with rich biodiversity and a diverse climate ranging from the humid rainforests of the south to the arid Sahelian regions in the north (World Bank, 2019). This geographical diversity, while contributing to the nation's ecological wealth, also exposes it to a wide array of climate risks, including erratic rainfall, temperature extremes, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events (Nkem *et al.*, 2017). The impacts of climate change extend beyond environmental concerns to include threats to food security, water resources, public health, and overall socio-economic stability. Recognizing the severity of these challenges, Cameroon has engaged in international efforts to address climate change, including the formulation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the ratification of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement (Government of Cameroon, 2018). Central to the realization of these commitments is the mobilization and effective utilization of climate finance.

Despite the increasing attention given to climate financing in Cameroon, several substantial challenges persist, impeding the efficient and equitable implementation of climate change initiatives. A primary challenge revolves around the intricate network of financing sources, encompassing international climate funds, bilateral agreements, and national budget allocations. The multitude of sources often results in a fragmented approach, hindering coordinated efforts and potentially leading to suboptimal outcomes (Ndi, 2016). Accessibility and disbursement of climate funds emerge as critical hurdles. The efficacy of climate finance relies on its capacity to reach local communities and vulnerable populations, where its impact is most crucial. Challenges related to bureaucratic obstacles, limited institutional capacity, and the complex process of fund disbursement need meticulous scrutiny to ensure that climate finance translates into tangible benefits on the ground (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, the alignment between climate financing mechanisms and Cameroon's overarching development agenda is of paramount importance. The effectiveness of climate finance is contingent on its seamless integration into national development plans, guaranteeing that it addresses the distinctive vulnerabilities of different regions and contributes to broader sustainable development goals (World Resources Institute, 2018). While several studies have explored specific aspects of climate financing in Cameroon, a comprehensive review that consolidates these fragmented insights is notably absent.

This study aims to fill this critical gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of existing climate financing mechanisms, evaluating their alignment with national priorities, and assessing their impact at the local level. The existing body of studies on climate financing in Cameroon

exhibits notable gaps, with most studies focusing on specific facets of the complex landscape rather than providing a holistic overview. Limited efforts have been made to consolidate these fragmented insights into a comprehensive framework that encompasses the diverse financing mechanisms at play. This seeks to address this critical gap by conducting an in-depth and systematic analysis that goes beyond the scope of individual studies. The lack of a consolidated review hampers a nuanced understanding of the overall effectiveness and challenges associated with climate financing in Cameroon. By bridging this gap, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive and integrated perspective, identifying overarching patterns, synergies, and potential areas for improvement. Furthermore, the study will delve into the practical implications of climate financing at the local level, assessing how these mechanisms translate into tangible benefits for communities and evaluating the extent to which they contribute to sustainable development goals. In essence, the study gap revolves around the need for a cohesive narrative that brings together diverse insights, allowing for a more informed and nuanced understanding of the climate financing landscape in Cameroon. This comprehensive review will not only contribute to academic knowledge but also offer valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in shaping the nation's climate resilience and sustainable development agenda.

### **Methodology**

The study used an extensive literature review to identify and analyze existing studies, reports, and academic articles related to climate financing in Cameroon. This was aimed at building a foundational understanding of the key themes, challenges, and opportunities in the current landscape. Subsequently, a systematic analysis of official documents, such as national climate policies, financial reports, and international agreements ratified by Cameroon, was undertaken to extract insights into the country's strategic approach to climate finance. To complement this, interviews with key stakeholders including government officials, representatives from international climate funds, NGOs, and local communities were conducted to gather qualitative data, providing real-world perspectives on the effectiveness and challenges of climate financing. Additionally, quantitative data on the disbursement and allocation of climate funds in Cameroon was collected and analyzed. This mixed-methods approach aimed to triangulate findings, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the climate financing landscape in Cameroon.

The current scenario in Cameroon reflects the complexity and challenges associated with its climate change financing mechanisms. The nation's reliance on a diverse array of financing sources, ranging from international climate funds to bilateral agreements and national budget allocations, has created a nuanced landscape for climate finance management.

### **Diversity of Financing Sources**

Cameroon's strategic engagement with international climate funds, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), underscores the nation's commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. The GCF, with its focus on climate resilience and adaptation, stands as a crucial player in shaping Cameroon's climate financing landscape. The tailored approach taken by the GCF ensures that projects seeking support align with the fund's emphasis on building resilience to climate impacts. This targeted strategy contributes to enhancing

Cameroon's adaptive capacity and fostering sustainable development, reflecting a nuanced and deliberate approach to securing funds for climate-related initiatives.

In addition to international funds, Cameroon actively participates in bilateral agreements, showcasing a proactive stance in confronting climate challenges. These agreements, negotiated with various nations, cover a spectrum of collaborative efforts, from technology transfer partnerships to joint study initiatives. The flexibility in the scope of these agreements allows Cameroon to tailor its engagements, fostering international cooperation and knowledge exchange. Crucially, the nation reinforces its commitment to environmental sustainability by allocating a portion of its national budget to climate change initiatives. This domestic financial commitment signals the government's acknowledgement of the importance of addressing environmental challenges within its borders, exemplifying a holistic approach that aligns climate-related expenditures with broader national development goals. While these engagements offer opportunities for resource mobilization, they also introduce challenges, necessitating careful planning to align external funding pursuits with national priorities and development plans.

### **Fragmented Approach and Coordination Challenges**

The landscape of climate financing in Cameroon is characterized by a diverse array of funding sources, including international climate funds, bilateral agreements, and national budget allocations. While this diversity brings forth opportunities, it also poses substantial challenges. One prominent challenge lies in the varied objectives and priorities of each funding source. International climate funds may emphasize distinct aspects such as adaptation, mitigation, or technology transfer, leading to potential desynchronization and disjointed efforts. Additionally, the differing timelines and approval processes associated with each source, ranging from the rigorous procedures of international climate funds to the more expedited processes of bilateral agreements, create coordination challenges and may impede timely project execution.

Coordination and governance challenges further complicate the climate financing landscape in Cameroon. The governance structures of various funding sources differ, requiring a robust national-level coordination mechanism to navigate these intricacies. Inadequate coordination may result in inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and missed opportunities for synergies. The risk of fragmented implementation looms large when projects funded by different sources are not seamlessly integrated into a unified strategy. This fragmentation could undermine the collective impact of climate initiatives, hindering the nation's ability to comprehensively address the challenges posed by climate change. To optimise outcomes, strategic alignment is paramount. Cameroon must align its national climate goals with the specific objectives of each funding source, fostering a cohesive contribution to the broader climate agenda. This strategic alignment demands a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced requirements and preferences of each funding entity. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort towards capacity building and technical assistance. Cameroon needs to invest in enhancing its technical capabilities for project design, proposal development, and compliance with various frameworks. Accessing technical assistance, especially for navigating complex international funds, can empower the nation to make informed decisions, navigate intricate processes, and optimize the utilization of available resources in the pursuit of climate resilience and sustainability.

In navigating the challenges posed by the multiplicity of funding sources, Cameroon can benefit from establishing a dedicated coordinating body or enhancing existing coordination mechanisms. This body would be responsible for ensuring strategic alignment, streamlining approval processes, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders involved in climate financing. Moreover, continuous capacity building and learning from international best practices can enhance Cameroon's ability to navigate the evolving landscape of climate finance effectively. For instance, Suppose Cameroon secures funding from both an international climate fund and a bilateral agreement for a specific adaptation project in a vulnerable region. The international fund may prioritize infrastructure resilience, while the bilateral agreement emphasizes community-based adaptation strategies. Without effective coordination, these projects may inadvertently overlap, creating redundancies or missing critical components that could enhance overall resilience. To overcome these challenges, Cameroon needs robust coordination mechanisms that align diverse funding sources with national climate priorities. Establishing a centralized climate finance coordination unit could serve as a conduit for streamlined communication and collaboration among different stakeholders. This unit could assess the requirements of each funding source, identify synergies, and ensure a coherent and strategic allocation of resources (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Example of current commitments for climate change from Global funds in Cameroon (US\$m)

Project	Fund	Amount	Disbursed	Theme
Reconciling the needs of the logging industry with those of forest-dependent people	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$1.94	\$0	Mitigation - REDD
Involving Bagyeli Indigenous peoples in the sustainable management of Campo Ma'an National Park	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$0.22	\$0	Mitigation – REDD

Table 2: Example of current commitments for climate change from Global funds in Cameroon (US\$m)

Project	Fund	Amount	Disbursed	Theme
Alternatives to mangrove destruction for women's livelihoods in Central Africa	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$0.38	\$0.38	Mitigation – REDD
Reforestation of degraded areas and promoting value addition for non-timber forest products in the Sanaga Maritime Region of Cameroon	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$0.40	\$0.40	Mitigation – REDD
Promoting community land tenure rights in the Congo Basin	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$0.73	\$0.73	Mitigation – REDD
Stabilising carbon emissions in the Sangha Tri-National Forest complex through sustainable financing and improved livelihoods	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$0.92	\$0.92	Mitigation – REDD
Achieving conservation and improving livelihoods through the sustainable management of community-based forest operations in Cameroon	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$1.72	\$1.72	Mitigation – REDD
Quantifying carbon stocks and emissions in the forests of Cameroon and the Republic of Congo	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$1.74	\$1.74	Mitigation - REDD
Partnership for the development of community forests	Congo Basin Forest Fund	\$1.79	\$1.79	Mitigation – REDD
Building foundations for success:	Congo Basin	\$2.03	\$2.03	Mitigation -

community participation is central to REDD	Forest Fund			REDD
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Source: [www.climatefundsupdate.com](http://www.climatefundsupdate.com)

At the national level, the Cameroonian government cannot currently systematically monitor the extent of external climate change financing entering the country. Several international tracking mechanisms offer insights into specific elements of support, such as those related to REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), but these mechanisms fall short of providing a comprehensive overview of the overall climate change funding flowing into Cameroon. In instances where external funding is integrated into the national budget, it is typically recorded at the project or program level, with a notable absence of disaggregation for climate change components within broader initiatives. Furthermore, a considerable portion of climate change funding is channeled directly to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by various donors, both domestic and international, particularly for initiatives spanning the wider Congo Basin. Regrettably, these funds remain outside the purview of government systems, contributing to a lack of comprehensive tracking and coordination.

### **Challenges in Climate Financing**

While Cameroon actively pursues diverse sources of climate financing, significant challenges persist, hindering the optimal and equitable implementation of climate change initiatives. A critical concern revolves around the accessibility and disbursement of climate funds, crucial factors determining the success of these initiatives. The effectiveness of climate finance lies not only in securing funds but also in ensuring that these financial resources effectively reach local communities and vulnerable populations, addressing the specific needs and challenges faced at the grassroots level.

One major hurdle is the bureaucratic complexities associated with the disbursement process. The intricate nature of fund allocation, often involving multiple stakeholders, leads to delays and inefficiencies. Bureaucratic hurdles include lengthy approval processes, cumbersome paperwork, and coordination challenges among various implementing agencies. These challenges necessitate a careful examination of the disbursement mechanisms to streamline processes and expedite the flow of funds to where they are most needed.

Capacity limitations within local institutions and organizations present another significant challenge. Effectively utilizing climate funds requires not only financial resources but also the expertise and capacity to plan, implement, and monitor projects. Strengthening the capacity of local institutions and fostering collaboration among stakeholders are imperative steps to overcome this challenge. Investing in training programs, knowledge transfer, and building local expertise enhances the ability of communities to harness the benefits of climate financing.

Furthermore, the intricate process of fund disbursement demands transparency, accountability, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Establishing mechanisms to track the flow of funds from their source to the implementation of climate projects is vital for ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and that intended outcomes are achieved. The creation of

transparent reporting frameworks and effective monitoring and evaluation systems becomes essential in addressing challenges related to fund disbursement.

Another critical aspect is the alignment of climate financing mechanisms with Cameroon's broader development agenda. For climate finance to be truly impactful, it must be integrated into national development plans, ensuring that it addresses the unique vulnerabilities of different regions and contributes to broader sustainable development goals. Achieving this alignment requires coordinated efforts among government agencies, development partners, and local communities to create synergies between climate initiatives and broader developmental objectives.

overcoming the challenges in climate financing requires a comprehensive approach that addresses issues related to fund accessibility, bureaucratic hurdles, capacity limitations, and alignment with national development goals. By carefully examining and addressing these challenges, Cameroon can unlock the full potential of climate financing, ensuring that it translates into tangible benefits for local communities, promotes sustainable development, and enhances resilience to climate change impacts.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Cameroon's pursuit of climate change financing is marked by a diverse array of funding sources, reflecting the complexity and challenges associated with managing climate finance. The multiplicity of sources, including international climate funds, bilateral agreements, and national budget allocations, brings both opportunities and challenges. The challenges identified, such as fragmented approaches, bureaucratic hurdles, capacity limitations, and alignment issues, underscore the need for a comprehensive strategy to overcome obstacles in the implementation of climate change initiatives.

The study highlights the importance of addressing the varied objectives and priorities of different funding sources to avoid desynchronization and disjointed efforts. It emphasizes the need for improved coordination mechanisms at the national level to streamline approval processes and foster collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of overcoming bureaucratic complexities in the disbursement process by implementing transparent reporting frameworks and effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Capacity building emerges as a critical component in enhancing the effectiveness of climate financing. Strengthening the capacity of local institutions and organizations is essential to ensure the efficient planning, implementation, and monitoring of climate projects. The study suggests investing in training programs, knowledge transfer, and building local expertise to empower communities to harness the benefits of climate financing fully.

Furthermore, the alignment of climate financing mechanisms with Cameroon's broader development agenda is imperative for impactful and sustainable outcomes. Integrating climate finance into national development plans ensures that it addresses the unique vulnerabilities of different regions and contributes to broader sustainable development goals. In overcoming these challenges, Cameroon has the potential to unlock the full benefits of climate financing, promoting sustainable development, enhancing resilience to climate change impacts, and contributing significantly to global climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. The findings of this comprehensive review provide valuable insights for policymakers,

practitioners, and stakeholders involved in shaping Cameroon's climate resilience and sustainable development agenda.

This review provides a robust foundation for guiding future actions and policies in the realm of climate resilience and sustainable development. The identified challenges underscore the need for strategic interventions to optimize the utilization of available funds and enhance the overall effectiveness of climate initiatives.

- Firstly, there is a clear imperative for Cameroon to establish a dedicated coordinating body or strengthen existing coordination mechanisms. This centralized unit should be tasked with aligning diverse funding sources with national climate priorities, streamlining approval processes, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Through strategic coordination, the nation can overcome the risks of fragmented implementation, ensuring that projects funded by different sources are seamlessly integrated into a unified strategy. Continuous capacity-building initiatives and learning from international best practices are essential components for effective coordination. Investment in enhancing technical capabilities, coupled with access to technical assistance, can empower Cameroon to navigate the intricate landscape of climate finance, make informed decisions, and optimize the utilization of available resources.
- Secondly, a concerted effort is needed to address the bureaucratic complexities associated with the disbursement process. Streamlining fund allocation procedures, reducing approval process timelines, and enhancing transparency can significantly expedite the flow of funds to where they are most needed. Establishing transparent reporting frameworks and effective monitoring and evaluation systems will contribute to ensuring that financial resources are utilized efficiently, and the intended outcomes of climate projects are achieved. Capacity building should not only focus on financial resources but also on fostering the expertise and capabilities of local institutions. Through these recommendations, Cameroon can overcome current challenges, unlock the full potential of climate financing, and further its commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience.

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