



# Sustainable funding of IFM CSOs in the Congo Basin. How to make it work?

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# Plan

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## Context

The global financial crisis has led to the shrinking of funding for civil society organisations, and even more so for environmental civil society organisations, as the priorities of donors are more oriented towards humanitarian aid and food security.

Strong dependence of CSOs in the Congo Basin on grants from foreign donors and partners (lack of/low non-dedicated funds). E.g. FODER where 96.81% of funds mobilised over the last 5 years comes from donor grants.

Need for environmental CSOs in the Congo Basin to develop or adapt their resource mobilisation strategies in order to be able to ensure their sustainability and the sustainability of their activities.

# Achievements with support from CV4C

Organisational development is one of the prerequisites for accessing funding.

CSOs are increasingly called upon to meet donor due diligence requirements

The CV4C project contributed directly to the organisational development of FODER and indirectly to the OD of 4 local CSOs, by:

- ✓ **Supporting the development of FODER's** financial sustainability strategic plan, which has helped develop the management tools that now help in negotiating budgets; thus mobilising more financial resources, and also increasing non-dedicated funds.
- ✓ **Building the capacities of FODER** staff in EU procedures, the new accounting system, communication including in English, development of project proposals in search of funding.
- ✓ **Training and coaching by FODER of 4 local CSOs (Ecodev, Papel, Cedla, Suhe)** on quality and financial procedures: **financial reporting and the quality of supporting documents are significantly improved; some of these CSOs were able to mobilise their first funding / new funding**

# Achievements with the support of CV4C

## Achievements in figures:

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- 38.78% increase in financial resources mobilised
- 3.19% increase in non-dedicated funds
- Contracts with 3 new financial partners
- 6 current FODER staff have improved their communication skills in English
- 3 current FODER staff have a better understanding of EU procedures
- 4 local CSOs have improved their financial management system and increased their access to funding

# Constraints

## → CV4C

Lack of follow-up after project set-up training

Difficulty mobilising resources entirely dedicated to fundraising. (Budget for the collection of basic data or to pay for the services of experts for proofreading the proposals, recruiting for a fundraiser, etc.)

Relatively long process of developing a Financial Sustainability strategy.

## → Generality

**Small budget allocated to organisational development or sometimes non-existent in project budgets. No budget for staff training, development/acquisition of management tools, support from specialised structures.**

**Poor consideration of country constraints in the procedures and donors requirements, which can tarnish the credibility of the organisation. (Example: Impossible to have receipts for certain types of expenses (urban transport, rental of motorcycles in the field, etc.)**

**Sometimes lack of objectivity in distribution of budgets between project partners.**

## **Increase its credibility vis-à-vis donors and financial partners:**

- Efficient management of the resources made available
- Quality of the results obtained → **visibility and capitalisation of results**
- Good communication with donors

## **Better structure the organisation:**

- Definition of roles and responsibilities,
- Establishment of an effective management system (accounting, financial monitoring, internal audit);
- Appropriate management tools (strategy document, procedures, policies, etc.)
- The involvement of project managers and other technical staff in the financial management of their project

## Lessons learned / success factors

### **Placing human resources at the heart of its development (high instability among staff within the organisations):**

- To increase the confidence and skills of its staff
- To develop teamwork
- To ensure the safety of its staff
- To help its staff find a good work-life balance
- To develop effective communication within the organisation (transparency and honesty)
- To set up an attractive remuneration policy

## Conclusion

- ❑ The organisational development of CSOs is a determining factor in terms of their credibility and hence of their access to available funding;
- ❑ The sustainability of IFM CSOs of the Congo Basin and the sustainability of their activities is strongly dependent on sustainable funding in the environment sector;
- ❑ Regular changes in donor priorities require IFM CSOs to adapt and constantly update their expertise, build partnerships as well as intersectoral, regional and international action networks (pooling of expertise, capitalisation of opportunities and mutual enrichment )



# Thank you for your attention

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