

**U.S. Position on the AfDB's Proposed Loan to the Graine Program Support  
Phase 1 Project in Gabon**

**November 29, 2017**

A project of this magnitude that involves the development of large agricultural plantations and cooperatives with accompanying public infrastructure, that includes road rehabilitations and drinking water expansion is likely to cause environmental and social impacts.

The United States does not agree with the AfDB's decision to rate this as a category B project for which it released an environmental and social impact framework (ESMF) but no site-specific assessment.

The United States believes the Bank should have provided some environmental assessment of the specific work in Ndendé in advance of the Board meeting. The United States also would have expected to see a cumulative impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment that would have examined the impact that such construction, combined with other economic development efforts in the region would have.

By not conducting a deeper environmental and social impact assessment nor building in environmental and social protections, the Bank has overlooked the broader impact of palm oil's associated impacts, including deforestation in potentially critical habitats, which is not considered best practice.

Furthermore, the proposed relationship between cooperative farmers and the Societe Gabonaise De Transformation Agricole (SOTRADER) has the potential to be exploitative and no details are provided with respect to mitigating those risks.

Additionally, the United States did not receive any detailed information on the possible resettlement impact from this project or information on whether it will impact indigenous people.

The conclusion is this operation is not consistent with U.S. legislation, and the United States wishes to vote no.