



Gabon

Gabon: Conclusion

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Chart 38: Policy recommendations

Recommendations

- Return to constitutional order within the announced timetable
- Strengthen governance and institutional capacity through anti-corruption measures, inclusive decision-making, and enhanced policy monitoring
- Optimise revenues, improve spending discipline and ensure fiscal sustainability
- Strengthen anti-corruption frameworks to address inefficiencies in resource management and ensure transparent use of revenues from crude oil and mining
- Diversify the economy by investing in manufacturing, agro-processing, and maximising opportunities under AfCFTA
- Enhance human capital development by increasing education spending, improve quality, reduce gender disparities, and promote science and engineering
- Build on past successes in reducing infant mortality and under-five mortality in line with the SDG targets
- Strengthen the health sector to address both the persistent communicable as well as the growing non-communicable disease burden
- Boost agricultural production to reduce food import dependence and increase food security
- Expand infrastructure development (roads, rail and ports) and invest in renewable energy production

Chart 38 summarises the policy recommendations for Gabon.

This report outlines Gabon's current governance and development challenges and presents opportunities how the country can do justice to its upper-middle-income status by fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The Current Path analysis reveals that Gabon is standing at a critical juncture to turn the tide on decades of poorly managed oil wealth, weak inclusion, falling incomes as well as stagnant human and social capital development. The return to constitutional rule via democratic elections announced for April 12, 2025 will set the foundation for a new government to engage in evidence-based planning and policy-making across sectors that can set Gabon on a path to shared prosperity.

Expected improvements on the Current Path are below Gabon's potential. Economic growth prospects are promising and by overcoming its structural constraints, the country can transition to a more diversified economy, inclusive growth and sustainable development. Focusing on improving governance, economic diversification and human capital development are key.

The priorities outlined as follows require targeted and coordinated actions.

Manage the democratic transition and ensure political stability

- Return to constitutional order within the announced timeframe to avoid compounding financing risks and to lay the foundations for attracting foreign direct investment by (re)building investor confidence
- Strengthen democratic institutions by establishing independent electoral bodies to enhance the credibility of the elections and mitigate the risk of post-election unrest

Improve governance

- Strengthen governance and institutional capacity through anti-corruption measures, inclusive decision-making and enhanced policy monitoring
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure policy effectiveness and adapt strategies to meet changing needs
- Promote youth engagement and political inclusion to leverage Gabon's demographic advantage for governance improvements and innovation

Improve macroeconomic governance

- Optimise revenues and improve spending discipline, efficiency and targeting to reinforce fiscal sustainability
- Broaden the tax-base to address high levels of inequality as well as informality

Improve natural resource governance

- Strengthen anti-corruption frameworks to address inefficiencies in resource management and ensure transparent use of revenues from crude oil and mining
- Continue to enhance transparency in the extractive sector in the framework of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which Gabon rejoined in 2021

Diversify the economy

- Prioritise economic diversification and invest in value-added processing industries to reduce Gabon's overreliance on oil, ensuring that Gabon captures more value from its natural resources and improve the economy's long-term economic resilience
- Initiate reforms to create jobs and local value-addition in sustainable forestry, mining, agriculture and fisheries
- Encourage the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through financial support, capacity-building programs and access to markets and the promotion of value chains by investing in adding value to raw materials to create more jobs and stimulate local industries
- Improve the business environment to attract FDI for both infrastructure projects as well as the manufacturing sector
- Invest in agriculture to reduce food import dependency and increase food security

Invest in human capital (education and health)

- Increase education and health expenditure and optimise resource allocation
- Invest in rural infrastructure to improve access to schools as well as healthcare services
- Reduce drop out and repetition rates through targeted interventions, such as strengthening early childhood education

and reduce gender disparities

- Improve quality and accessibility of science and technical education by equipping schools with modern laboratories and science teaching materials
- Promote a demographic dividend by expanding family planning services and access to contraceptives
- Build on past successes to reduce infant mortality and mortality for children under-five in line with the Sustainable Development Goal targets of 12 deaths per 1000 live births and 26 deaths by 2030, respectively
- Strengthen the healthcare system to address both the persistent burden of communicable as well as the growing burden of non-communicable diseases

Maximise opportunities under the AfCFTA and promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- Maximise opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) to enhance exports and integrate Gabon into regional and Africa-wide value chains
- Simplify trade procedures and facilitate access to regional markets to support greater integration and export growth within Africa
- Diversify into sustainable industries such as eco-tourism and sustainable forestry to ensure Gabon remains competitive in a low-carbon global economy and improves its long-term trade balance
- Improve the business environment to attract private sector investment, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and fostering innovation
- Support private sector-led initiatives in renewable energy, agro-processing and digital services to drive economic growth
- De-risk investments through public-private partnerships, streamlined regulatory frameworks and targeted incentives to encourage domestic and foreign investors

Expand infrastructure development:

- Expand infrastructure development (roads, rail and ports) and invest in renewable energy production
- Promote renewable energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels
- Scale up investments in hydro
- Encourage private investment in renewable energy projects through incentives, de-risking mechanisms and supportive regulatory frameworks

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Mustapha Jobarteh joined the ISS in January 2022 as a Senior Researcher in the African Futures and Innovation programme in Pretoria. Before joining ISS, Mustapha was a senior lecturer and Head of the Department of Economics and Finance at the University of the Gambia and a research fellow with the Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies. His interests include macroeconomics, international trade and econometric modelling. Mustapha has a PhD in economics from Istanbul Medeniyet University, Istanbul, Turkey.

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