AXIS as seen by President Sidi Ould Tah (3)

When doctrine becomes a demonstration

Blog post

What does AXIS tell us about NAFA?

For several months, discussions regarding the African Development Bank have centered on a key question: how can Africa better mobilize its own wealth to finance its development?

The first article in this series focused on the vision championed by President Sidi Ould Tah. The second demonstrated how that vision appeared to be finding its initial practical application in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the PRECAPE program and the integration of AXIS.

Now, a new question arises. What if the true significance of AXIS lies not merely in the project itself, but in the insight it offers into the New African Financial Architecture gradually taking shape within the AfDB?

Doctrine must engage with the reality on the ground.

Every doctrine ends up being confronted with a simple reality: does it work when it leaves the strategic documents to enter the territories? The issue is particularly important to NAFA.

The idea is known. Africa has no shortage of wealth. It often lacks mechanisms capable of transforming this wealth into financing capacity. Natural resources, environmental assets, local savings, community economic activities: a significant part of African potential still remains insufficiently mobilized.

But an idea only becomes transformative when it can be tested. Any new architecture needs its first demonstrators.

Why the DRC is attracting attention

From this perspective, the Democratic Republic of the Congo occupies a unique position today. Few countries combine such a concentration of natural resources, environmental assets of global significance, immense needs for territorial development, and institutions capable of implementing large-scale community-based programs.

In this regard, the presence of the FSRDC is a key factor. Its experience in local development provides an operational framework well-suited to accommodating new approaches. It is against this backdrop that the meeting on December 19, 2025, took place, bringing together teams from the AfDB and the FSRDC with the promoters of the AXIS program. In retrospect, that meeting stands out as a pivotal moment.

The PRECAPE signal

A few months later, on April 29, 2026, the African Development Bank approved $48.83 million in funding under PRECAPE. At first glance, the program appears to be a standard resilience and reconstruction operation. Yet, one detail stands out.

Project documents explicitly mention support for the deployment of AXIS. This decision is significant. For the first time, the program moves beyond the realm of mere conceptualization or experimentation; it now falls within the scope of an operation officially funded by the AfDB. The shift is subtle, but it marks a change in status.

Why AXIS resembles NAFA

The value of AXIS lies less in its tools than in the logic connecting them. The program seeks to identify community assets, then make them visible, and finally improve their governance, traceability, and capacity to generate economic value. In other words, AXIS applies a line of reasoning at the local level that closely mirrors the thinking behind the New African Financial Architecture (NAFA).

NAFA aims to better mobilize African wealth; AXIS aims to better mobilize community wealth. NAFA seeks to transform resources into economic assets; AXIS seeks to transform community assets into drivers of local development. The convergence is hard to ignore.

What is actually being tested

This experimentation is currently taking several forms. With GoldConnect, the goal is to improve the governance and traceability of artisanal gold. With the Community Carbon Market (MACC), the ambition is to better value the environmental services provided by local communities. In both cases, the underlying logic is the same.

How can we ensure that a larger share of the value created by local resources benefits the territories that produce, protect, or manage them? This question lies at the heart of AXIS. It is also central to the thinking currently being advanced by the AfDB.

An experiment now backed by institutions

Another key milestone occurs in June 2026. The financing agreements associated with the program are presented to the Congolese Senate by the Minister of Finance, Doudou Fwamba Likunde Li-Botayi. This step might appear purely administrative, but it is actually revealing.

The program is gradually ceasing to be merely an initiative monitored by the AfDB; it is also becoming a policy driven by Congolese institutions. The sequence of events is noteworthy: December 2025—presentation of the program; April 2026—financing of PRECAPE; June 2026—integration into the Congolese institutional process. In just a few months, the approach shifted from concept to implementation.

The real issue

Ultimately, the subject is perhaps neither AXIS nor even PRECAPE. The subject is broader. The ADB seems to be gradually exploring a new way of financing development. An approach based on the capacity of territories to identify their assets, to better govern them and to transform more local wealth into investment capacities.

This is precisely the ambition that appears behind the New African Financial Architecture. The real question then becomes this. Is the DRC becoming the first laboratory of this evolution? It is still too early to say with certainty.

But one thing already seems certain. Between December 2025 and June 2026, the reflection carried out by Sidi Ould Tah ceased to be solely a doctrine. It started to become an experiment.