PROJECT DOCUMENT

SECTION 1: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL

1.2 Project number: GFL/10298
PMS:

1.3 Project type: FSP

1.4 Trust Fund: **GEF**

1.5 Strategic objectives:

GEF strategic long-term objective: BD1, LD, CCM

Strategic programme for GEF IV:

1.6 UN Environment priority: Healthy and Productive Ecosystem; Ecosystem Governance

1.7 Geographical scope: National Republic of Congo

1.8 Mode of execution: External

1.9 Project executing organization: Ministry of Tourism and the Environment

1.10 Duration of project: 48 months
Commencing:
Completion:

1.11 Cost of project **US$**

6,111,055

Cofinancing Source	Cofinacing Partner	Cash/Nature	Investment	Indicative amount ($)
National Government	Ministry of Environment and Tourism	Cash	Investment mobilized	22,706,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-Kind	Recurrent expenditures	50,000
NGO	WCS	Cash	Investment mobilized	2,400,000
NGO	WWF	Cash	Investment	1,600,000

			Mobilized	
Multilateral Organisation	UNDP Rep of Congo	Cash	Investment mobilized	550,000
CSO	REPALEAC Rep of Congo	cash	Investment mobilized	15,000,000
Total				42,306,000

1.12 Project summary

The discovery of vast tropical peatlands in the Cuvette Centrale of the Congo Basin in 2017 has given impetus to the perennial problem of environmental degradation, loss of biological resources and the degradation of ecosystem services in this region. The Lac Tele Landscape and its surrounding areas are in the heart of both the tropical peatlands of the Republic of Congo, and are an important region associated with challenges to conserve and protect rich and endemic biological diversity and ecosystem services, as well as fragile peatlands. In response to the environmental challenges in this region, the Government of the Republic of Congo and other stakeholders are undertaking actions to ensure the protection of biological diversity, peatlands, and protected areas. This effort is an extension of initiatives in other parts of the country, with the aim of safeguarding Congo's rich natural resources and the services they provide.

Despite these measures and the global significance of the area, there exist a number of major threats to Lac Tele Landscape's biodiversity, peatlands and protected areas. These include conversion of forest to agriculture, poaching, the collection of non-timber forest products, and more recently tourism development, roads, mines, and other efforts designed to expand and diversify the local economy that in the absence of adequate safeguards, are contributing to additional pressures on the ecosystem. There is also concern over the threat of invasive alien species associated with uncontrolled land use practices, in combination with the potential growing vulnerability of the Lac Tele's forests, protected areas and peatlands to the effects of climate change though there are few data to assess the degree of threat from which to base informed decision-making leading to its mitigation.

The main constraints impeding present efforts to conserve biodiversity include: (i) absence of integrated planning and the challenges of incorporating the sustainable management of biodiversity and peatlands considerations into local development planning processes. (ii) Poor data and capacity to use what data there are to make more informed decisions in support of improved protected area management[1]. (iii) Inability at the local level to see biodiversity conservation as a priority. (iv) Absence of education among local people about the value of protecting wildlife. (v) Less than optimal transboundary collaboration in understanding and dealing with environmental challenges of the Congo Basin Region as a whole; and (vi) the limited local community participation in the management of natural resources.

The goal of this project is to enhance sustainable peatland management and avoid potential risk of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from peatlands in the Republic of Congo, while enhancing the health of biological diversity by taking measures against Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). The project objective is to promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the Republic of Congo's Lac Télé Landscape. This project will therefore contribute to promoting sustainable peatland management, securing carbon stocks, and conserving biodiversity while improving the living standards of local communities. This will be achieved by: (i) capacity building for sustainable peatland management; (ii) reducing peatland degradation and fires; and (iii) adopting best practices for integrated, sustainable management of peatlands at a landscape level through enhanced engagement of the private sector and local communities. These will be complemented with project management and monitoring & evaluation sub-components.

[1] According to the CBD definition in Article 2 of the Convention the Protected Area (PA) is defined as "a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives".

The main project outcomes will be: (i) An enabling local policy and national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and natural resources is developed. (ii) Integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems in the project area is established. (iii) Income-generating activities provide economic incentives for the participation of local communities in conservation. (iv) Private sector takes steps toward adopting sustainable peatland management practices; and (v) Generated knowledge and communication products are available for dissemination at different levels to promote transformation and adaptive management is ensured.

The associated Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) will include: conservation of the rich biodiversity of the Congo Basin Region, Sustainable management of peatlands and other productive lands, including forest resources in protected areas, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through enhanced peatland management. The project will contribute to 20,398,082 tCO_2eq Tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2eq) avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years. Supporting Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), and the conservation and protection of biological diversity and ecosystem services in the Lac Tele Landscape.

This four-year project will be financed to the tune of USD 6,111,055 of GEF grants, with confirmed co- financing of USD 22,756,000 from a range of national and international stakeholders, including from multilateral agencies, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and the private sector.

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS (BASELINE COURSE OF ACTION)

2.1. Background and context

The Republic of Congo covers a total area of 342 000 km^2. The country borders Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon (Figure 1). It straddles the Equator, and is one of the countries of the Congo Basin Region. The Congo Basin is home to the earth's second largest area of contiguous moist tropical forests, stretching from the Gulf of Guinea in the west to the Rift Valley in the east, and containing more than 2.87 million km^2 of both humid and dry forests. The Congo Basin rainforest extends over the territories of six countries namely (in alphabetical order) – Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo (RoC). One of the main environmental problems in the Congo Basin that has drawn a lot of attention from both citizens of the region and the international community is deforestation and forest degradation. In the Congo Basin Region, the immediate causes of deforestation and forest degradation mentioned by Geist and Lambin[2] are the extension of the infrastructure for transport (roads, railways, etc.), markets, population growth, as well as public services, such as the development of the electricity and water networks. It also includes the expansion of agriculture (permanent agriculture, itinerant agriculture, cattle ranching, colonization of land); the extraction of timber (commercial extraction, firewood, poles, production of charcoal; other factors, such as the environmental predispositions, biophysical factors and social factors.

The population of Congo was estimated at 3.5 million inhabitants in 2008, which corresponds to an average density of 11.98 inhabitants per km^2. With an annual average annual population growth rate is 3.2%, the current population stands at about 5,489,587 inhabitants[3]. Although the five major cities contain almost 60% of the population of the country, most of the rest of the populace are dependent on forests for their vital needs (food, energy, medicines, etc.)[4]. The economy of the Congo is mainly based on the exploitation of natural resources, particularly oil, which contributes to approximately 85% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)[5], while agriculture occupies 40% of the active population, but contributes only 6% to GDP[6]. Forests cover 60% of the country, and the forestry sector provides an estimated 11,000 direct jobs and 4% of export value[7]. Production forests cover 135,000 km^2. Congo also has large agricultural potential and the palm oil sector is being developed[8]. In 1960, agriculture constituted the most important sector of the economy of the Congo and agricultural production was the main source of income for 80% of the population. However, today, only 40% of the population derive their income from agriculture, whose contribution to the GDP has dropped by about two thirds, from nearly 20% in 1965 to 6.2% in 2005[9].

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[2] Geist HJ and Lambin EF. 2001. What Drives Tropical Deforestation? A meta-analysis of proximate and underlying causes of deforestation based on subnational case study evidence. pp. xiii + 116 pp. LUCC Report Series No. 4.

[3] UNO (2019). World Population Prospects 2019 - 2019 Revision. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Washington DC, USA. Accessed on 01-02-2020. https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/republic-of-the-congo-population/

[4] Tchatchou B, Sonwa DJ, Ifo S and Tiani AM. 2015. *Deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin: State of knowledge, current causes and perspectives.* Occasional Paper 144. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

[5] Republic of Congo. 2010a. Proposition pour la préparation à la REDD+ (RPP). République du Congo. Disponible sur le site http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/ PDF/Apr2011/R%20PP%20de%20 la%20Republique%20du%20Congo%20 Version%20finale_10%20Mars%202011.pdf.

[6] Tchatchou B, Sonwa DJ, Ifo S and Tiani AM. 2015. *Deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin: State of knowledge, current causes and perspectives.* Occasional Paper 144. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

[7] World Wildlife Fund (2020) WWF in the Republic of Congo. Accessed on 04-02-2020. http://www.wwf-congobasin.org/where_we_work/republic_of_congo/

[8] Ibid. World Wildlife Fund (2020).

[9] Republic of Congo. 2010b. Congo. Plan national de développement, Document de travail. Ministère de l'économie, du plan, de l'aménagement du territoire et de l'intégration. Brazzaville, Congo.

Figure 1. Map of the Republic of Congo, showing main administrative divisions, international boundaries and neighbouring countries.

The geographic position of Congo gives the country an equatorial climate characterized by constant and heavy rains due to the convergence of air masses pushed by the trade winds. This climate favours rich vegetation of moist tropical dense forests with remarkable floral diversity. About 22.5 million

hectares (65% of the country's area) is covered by forest (Figure 2), which plays a major ecological and socio-economic role for large local and indigenous populations in the Republic of Congo[10]. The national network of protected areas consists of 17 entities that cover a surface area of 4.5 million hectares (13% of the country). Several legal provisions set the frame for fauna and protected areas' governance in Republic of Congo[11]. With a low population density and a predominantly urban population, only a small proportion of land is currently cultivated.

The Congolese economy is mainly based on timber and oil exploitation while imports for food reach 75% of all food products and 90% of the country's cereal needs. The average annual increase in deforestation of 15 000 hectares between 2000 and 2010 is expected to increase to 25 000 hectares for the period 2020 to 2030.[12] The deforestation comes from shifting cultivation and the expansion of cassava, groundnut, oil palm and related fallow land[13]. Habitat loss constitutes one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss in the country. The story of deforestation in Congo is a sad one as it, together with its neighbours in the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Cong, and Equatorial Guinea) are home to some of the most biologically diverse landscapes in the world. Several missions over the years have undertaken efforts to assess and document the biological resources of Congo. The Republic of Congo is home to a remarkable diversity of rare species, including globally threatened large mammals; such as forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis)*, the lowland tropical dense humid forests gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) and chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*). The Republic of Congo alone is a stronghold for two species of Great Apes which are heavily dependent upon the presence of natural forests for their habitat: the Western Lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and the Central chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*). These include forest elephants, great apes (western lowland gorilla and chimpanzee), other large mammals (such as bongo, forest buffalo, leopard, hippo), three species of crocodile; birds (grey parrots, crowned eagles), etc. It is estimated that Congo is home to nearly 400 mammal species, 1,000 bird species, and approximately 10,000 plant species, of which 3,000 are endemic[14]. The fourth National Report on Biodiversity dated August 2009 reveals 200 species of terrestrial mammals ranging from primates, carnivores, rodents, and ptilodontids to ungulates. This biological diversity also includes 651 species of birds, 3 species of crocodiles, more than 10 species of turtles, and 39 amphibian species. The Hydrobiology Research Centre of Mossaka identified 134 fish species belonging to 26 families and 59 genera in the country fresh waters. These species also hold important potential for the development of ecotourism in the region.

[10] Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell (2017). The human cost of conservation in Republic of Congo Conkouati-Douli and Nouabaléndoki National Parks and their impact on the rights and livelihoods of forest communities. The Rainforest Foundation UK. London, UK.

[11] Ibid. Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell (2017).

[12] Mosnier, A., Mant, R., Pirker, J., Bodin, B., Ndinga, R., Tonga, P., Havlik, P., Bocqueho, G., Maukonen, P., Obersteiner, M., Kapos, V., Tadoum, M. (2016) *Modelling Land Use Change in the Republic of Congo 2000 – 2030.* A Report by the REDD-PAC project.

[13] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[14] USFWS (2014). Republic of Congo The Congo's northern forests are a stronghold for the critically endangered lowland gorilla and endangered forest elephant. United States Fish and Wildlife Service. https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/factsheet-congo.pdf

Figure 2. A gorilla family on the plains of Lac Tele[15].

Socio-economic context

The Congolese population currently stands at 5,489,587 persons, with a very high fertility rate at 5.1 children born per woman, with an even higher fertility rate of 6.5 in rural regions[16]. The Congolese population is mostly young (close to 74% of the population is under 35 years old) and is concentrated in the two main urban centres of the country (with 58% of the population in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire). The country's very young population is currently growing at a rate of nearly 3% per year. It is estimated that the annual rate of growth will decrease to 2.07% by 2050, bringing the population to about 7.3 million in 2030, and 11.5 million by 2050[17]. With 12 departments, the Republic of Congo's a strongly urbanised but sparsely populated country, its rural space is one of the least dense in Africa, with 16.13 inhabitants per km^2[18].

The country has been scarred by years of intermittent armed conflict, which affected the process of social and economic development. During the last 10 years, the Republic of Congo has gradually recovered from the effects of the war, thanks to peace-building and the oil boom. The GDP in Congo expanded 4.63 percent in 2019 from the previous year. GDP annual growth rate in Congo averaged 1.14 percent from 1960 until 2019, reaching an all-time high of 9.70 percent in 1970 and a record low of -26.10 percent in 1961[19]. Moreover, the business climate has remained disadvantageous for the development of the private sector. In 2019, the Republic of Congo ranks 185th out of 190 countries in the World Bank Doing Business rankings[20].

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[15] Théophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l'etude sur le developpement d'un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l'utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[16] UNO (2019). World Population Prospects 2019 - 2019 Revision. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Washington DC, USA. Accessed on 01-02-2020. https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/republic-of-the-congo-population/

[17] Ibid. UNO (2019).

[18] Ibid. UNO (2019).

[19] Trading Economics (2020). Congo GDP Annual Growth Rate. Accessed on 01-02-2020. https://tradingeconomics.com/congo/gdp-growth-annual

[20] The World Bank 2019. Doing Business - Measuring Business Regulations. https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings

Although almost two thirds of the population live in the country's five main towns, it remains largely dependent on forests for its vital needs (food, energy, pharmacopeia, etc.)[21]. The population of the Republic of Congo is amongst the most vulnerable, insofar as it disposes of a limited adaptation margin due to poverty and shortcomings in education. Forest ecosystems are essential –at varying but significant levels –for the entirety of the population, and are vital for indigenous people, in terms of food and socio-cultural subsistence, as well as monetary economy[22]. The continuation ecosystem services are crucial for future development, limiting the impact of climate change and offering adaptation possibilities to a part of these rural populations.

The Republic of Congo has made a commitment to diversify its economy, with a view on sustainable growth. It should be noted that, at this time, the economic growth of the Republic of Congo remains far below the 8.5% necessary to achieve the objectives fixed for 2025 as part of the 2012-2016 National Development Plan (NDP). Economic diversification is expected to be carried by the forestry, agricultural, agro-industrial, mining and tourism sectors, which have great potential for development. Indeed, despite important oil deposits, the country also possesses vast non-cultivated arable lands which make up for around a third of its total surface area, as well as abundant mining resources such as iron, gold, potash, etc. Although encouraging efforts have been made in terms of sustainable forest management, the development of mining and industrial agriculture represents a real danger for the preservation of forest ecosystems if not done in a reasonable and sustainable way.

Legal and policy context

The Government and peoples of the Republic of Congo are cognizant of the value of biological diversity for social and environmental welfare in the country and the Congo regional as a whole, and have undertaken several initiatives (legal, political, national, regional and international) to address some of the challenges of biodiversity conservation within its national borders. For example, the spatial planning law (Law n° 43-2014 on Guidance for Planning and Development of the Territory) provides an opportunity for RoC to share with other Congo Basin countries an example of a policy supportive of SFM, biodiversity conservation and local community livelihoods. To support the conservation and sustainable management of its biodiversity, a system of protected areas has been established, which at present covers a surface area of around 4,353,500 ha (13% of the national territory). The 2014-2025 Forest Policy includes, inter alia, the fight against poverty, the participatory management of forest and wildlife resources and the integration of forestry into local development and the National Strategy to Combat Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wildlife Products (2017) are aligned to the Program's outcomes of safeguarding forest resources, mitigate Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) emissions and sequestering carbon and reduce the loss of biodiversity. A National Strategy and Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism of Republic of Congo has been developed – sustainable tourism directly responds to the mentioned environmental benefits of the program. The country has also aligned itself to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which affirms that indigenous peoples have the right to internal self-determination, that they cannot be expelled from their lands and are entitled to the natural resources located on their lands[23].

[21] Chris Sandbrook and Dilys Roe (2010) Linking Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: the case of Great Apes - An overview of current policy and practice in Africa. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, UK. https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02770.pdf

[22] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[23] Ibid. Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020).

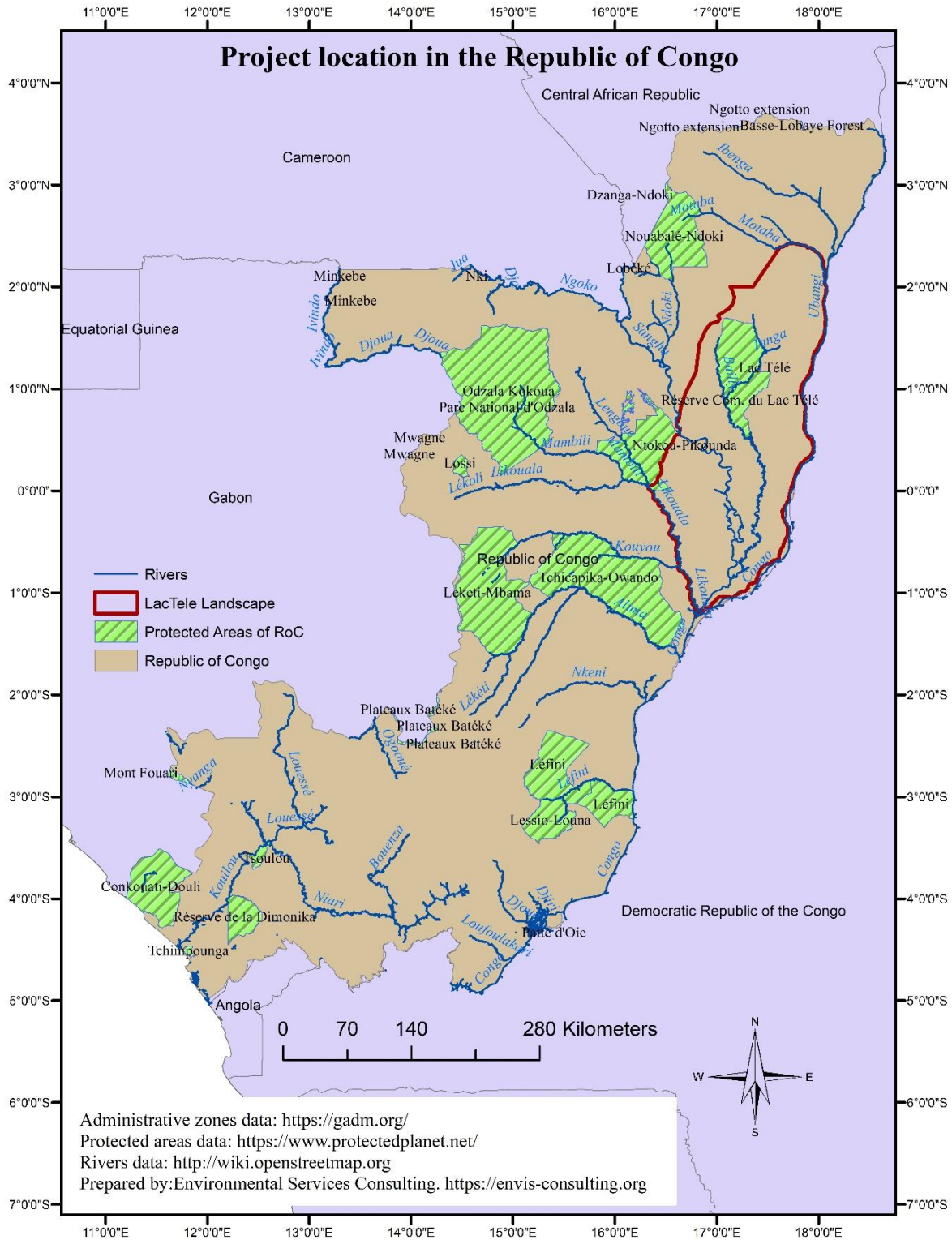

Figure 3. Protected areas and rivers of the Republic of Congo – showing the project area and related resources.

On the side-lines of Third Partners Meeting of *Global Peatlands Initiative* in Brazzaville in 2018, the RoC, DRC and Indonesia jointly signed the Brazzaville Declaration. The Brazzaville Declaration aims to implement coordination and cooperation between different government sectors to protect the benefits provided by peatland ecosystems (Figure 4 & 9). The agreement is the beginning of a deep collaboration between Indonesia - covered by vast expanses of peatlands - and the Congo Basin. At the sub-regional level, there is the Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC). COMIFAC is an intergovernmental organization established between several Central African Countries. Its goal is to sustainably manage the forests of Central Africa and to protect the rights of people that rely on those forest resources. By establishing this inter-governmental body, COMIFAC governments are trying to increase awareness of the important ecological role forests play in the region. In 2005, COMIFAC developed a Convergence Plan for Central African countries to reach these conservation management goals. The Plan was revised and a New Convergence Plan 2015 – 2025 was approved in 2014[24]. The Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation world's largest tropical peatlands - *Cuvette Centrale region* in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation[25].

Notwithstanding these efforts, substantial challenges remain in achieving the sustainable management of wild biological resources (including the elimination of illegal wildlife trade – IWT - see Supplement 1), the conservation of protected areas, the sustainable management of landscapes of important national and global environmental value (such as peatlands), and dealing with uncontrolled and rapid land use and land cover changes that are not compatible with the country's development aspirations.

[24] http://pfbc-cbfp.org/actualites/items/COMIFAC-PC-fr.html

[25] Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'ecotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

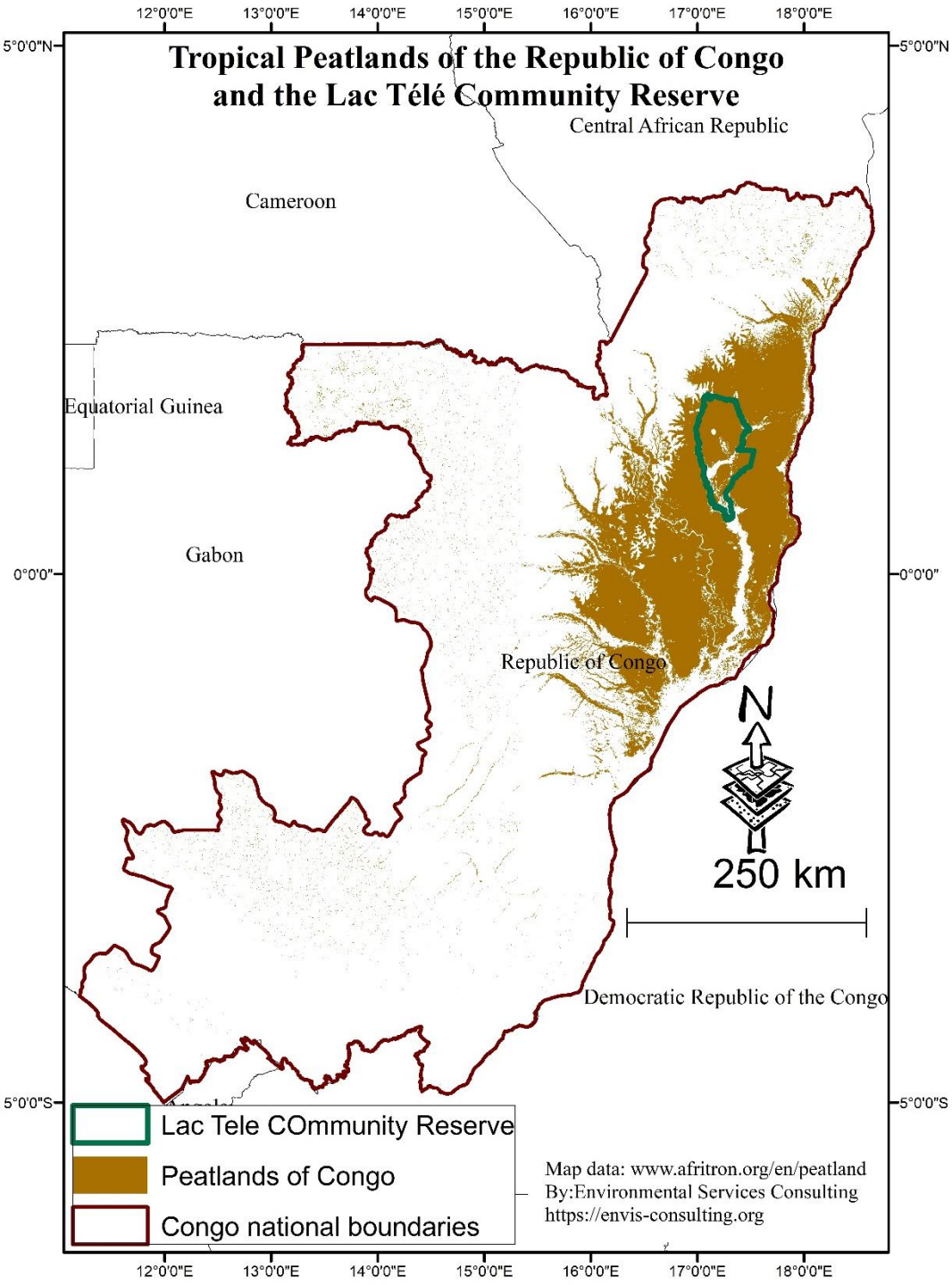

Figure 4. Peatland areas of the Republic of the Congo, showing the location and extent of the Lac Télé Community Reserve (the project area). The map data is derived from Xu et al. 2017[26].

Lac Télé – the project area

[26] Xu, Jiren and Morris, Paul J. and Liu, Junguo and Holden, Joseph (2017) PEATMAP: Refining estimates of global peatland distribution based on a meta-analysis. University of Leeds. [Dataset] https://doi.org/10.5518/252

The project area is the Lac Télé Landscape in the northeast of the Republic of Congo (Figure 5). The landscape of Lac Télé covers an area estimated at 45,688 kilometres square. This area is part of the Lac Télé – Lac Toumba landscape shared by the DRC and the RoC. It covers a surface area of 126 440 km², with the DRC holding 72 439 km² in the eastern section, and the RoC holding 54 001 km² in the western section. This landscape forms one of the largest seasonally flooded forests on the planet, the largest transboundary RAMSAR site worldwide[27], and has recently been found to contain the single largest tropical peatlands on the planet (Cuvette Centrale), which is estimated to hold the carbon equivalent of 20 years of GHG emissions from the USA. It is also one of the priority landscapes identified by the region's inter-agency environment body, COMIFAC. It includes a vast tract of contiguous forest that extends to the west of the Lac Télé landscape encompassing the entire north of the country [48,500 km^2]. This area is constituted of a vast network of 4 protected areas (Lac Télé Community Reserve, Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, Odzala-Kokoua National Park, and Ntokou-Pikounda National Park) interspersed with production forests and large expanses of inaccessible swamp forest. Logging concessions here constitute the largest surface area of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified forests in the Congo Basin region. The area is suitable for tourism as it still hosts impressive tree species and vegetation, with possibilities of viewing great apes, elephants, other large and small mammals such as small monkeys and a diversity of bird species[28]. Together, the Lac Télé landscape and the contiguous forest to the west of it hold almost a quarter of the remaining forest elephants and the single largest population of gorillas and chimpanzees in Africa (60% of all the world's gorillas are found here). One of the current challenges of tourism development in the area is the Coronavirus Disease, 2019 (COVID-19) Epidemic, and global environmental challenges such as climate change and land degradation.

The Lac Télé Community Reserve is situated in the north of the River Congo, between the Sangha and Oubangui rivers, and covers an area of 4,400km^2, making it the second largest protected area in RoC. Created in 2001, RoC's only community reserve forms part of a unique landscape spanning two countries, the Lac Télé - Lac Tumba Congo Basin Forest Partnership Priority Landscape[29]. The establishment of the Lac Télé Community Reserve in May 2001 points to efforts by government and other local and international stakeholders in preserving the rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystem services of the Lac Télé Landscape. Lac Télé Community Reserve has a seasonal flood that flood the area's swamp-forest, grassland and floating prairies; and pump water into the area's lakes, ponds and tributaries. The swamp forest in 90% of Lac Télé Landscape is extensive – the largest wetland in Africa, with a huge hydrological value for communities and biodiversity. It is of strategic importance for electricity generation, high fish biodiversity and contain three species of great apes at high density – unique in the world[30]. An 'island' of *terra firma* lies at the heart of the reserve, forming key habitat for gorillas.

[27] Ibid. Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020).

[28] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[29] Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'ecotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[30] Chris Sandbrook and Dilys Roe (2010) Linking Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: the case of Great Apes - An overview of current policy and practice in Africa. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, UK. https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02770.pdf

Although Lac Télé is considered a 'Community Reserve' – the only one of its kind in the Republic of Congo – activities are supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)[31]. The WCS also provides strategic oversight of the Reserve, in close cooperation with national and local stakeholders. Lac Télé Community Reserve contains one of the highest densities of western lowland gorillas in the region[32]. It is also home to forest elephants, chimpanzee, leopards, buffalos and more than 250 species of birds[33]. The government of the RoC and international stakeholders have been working together to develop community-based management of the reserve. Lac Télé contains a unique wetland ecosystem containing flooded forest and is part of a larger Ndoki-Likouala landscape management program supported by WCS which also includes the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and the surrounding buffer zones of logging concessions.

[31] UICN – Programme Afrique Centrale et Occidentale (PACO) (2012. Parcs et réserves du Congo Evaluation de l'efficacité de la gestion des aires protégées. https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2012-089.pdf.

[32] Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) 2019. Lac Télé Community Reserve. https://programs.wcs.org/congo/Wild-Places/Lac-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9-Community-Reserve.aspx. Consulted on 12/01/2020.

[33] The Program on African Protected areas & Conservation - PAPACO (2011) Reserve Communautaire du Lac Télé. https://papaco.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/METT-Reserve-communautaire-Lac-Tele.pdf: Consulted on 12/01/2020

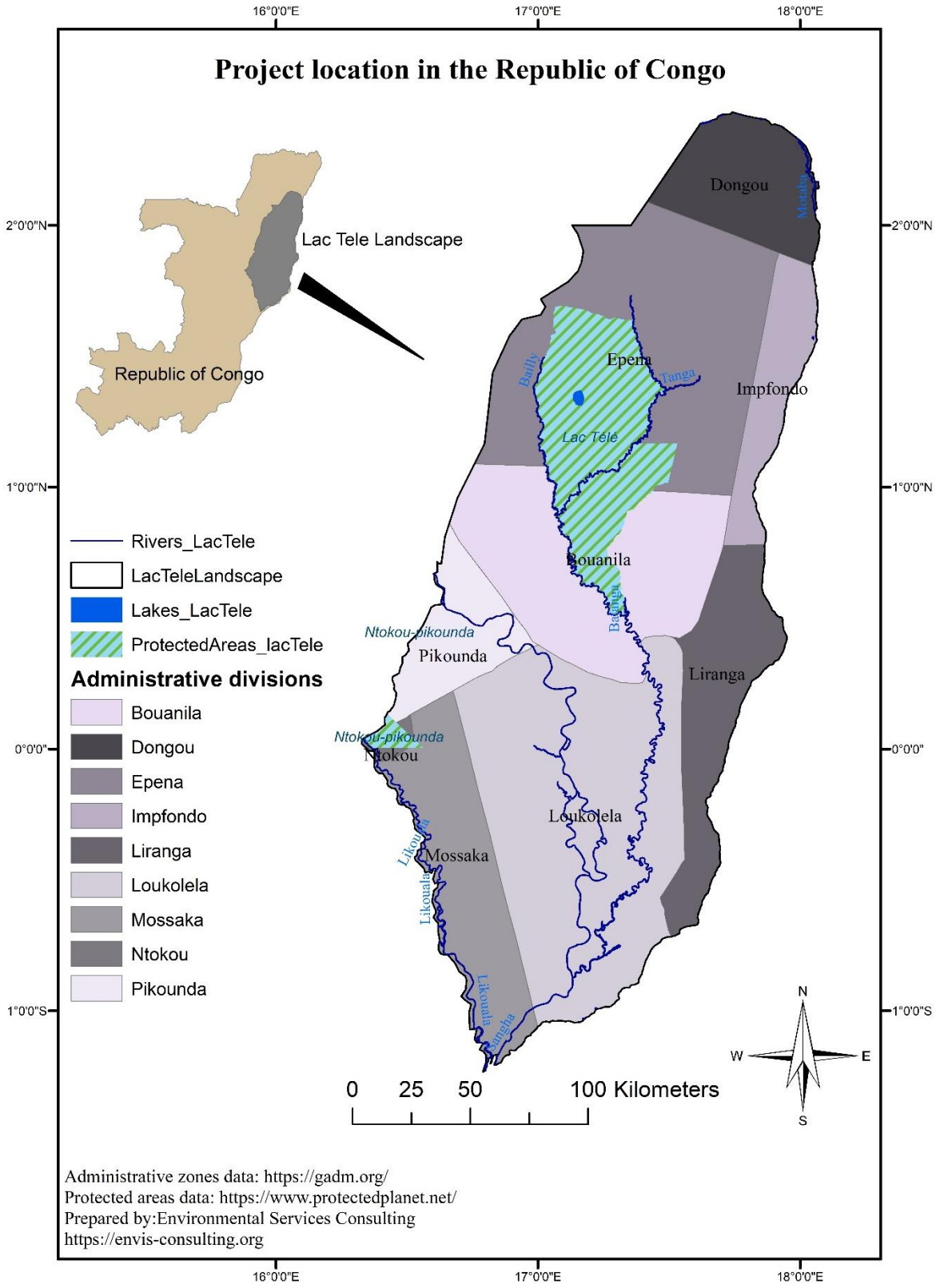

Figure 5. Location of the project area (Lac Tele Landscape)

Roughly 90,000 people live within the Lac Tele Landscape. The majority of these communities are highly dependent on forest resources for income and sustenance and have retained much of their original social structure and cohesion (Figure 8). The core of the target geography is the Lac Télé Community Reserve, a protected area covering 4,600 km^2, of which 3,500km^2 is peatland. Building on the World Bank project, the current project will also include the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park (4,400 km^2) which covers 3,000 km^2 of peatland. Within the Lac Tele Reserve itself (meaning excluding the areas around it) the population is estimated to be about 20,000 inhabitants, grouped into 27 villages[34]. Although population density is relatively low compared to many other regions and protected areas in the Congo Basin, these communities depend heavily on the reserve's natural resources for fish, agriculture, construction materials, canoes, and medicines. See Table 1 for the amount of days per week spent by households in collecting vital livelihood supplies from the forest in the project area[35]. As the main stakeholders in this conservation area, the people of the region play an important role in managing the natural resources of the reserve.

Table 1.Days per week households spend collecting natural resources per village in Lac Télé (Source: CARPE - WCS Open Data).

Village	Bushmeat	Firewood	Fish	Fruits	Gnetum	Honey	Liana
Botongo	0.39	3.8	3.66	0.1	3.68	0.2	0.54
Bouanela	0.49	2.05	2.72	0.15	2.41	0.21	0.31
Moungouma_Bailly	0.03	3.97	4.2	0.14	3.89	0.09	0.63
Boha	0.08	3.15	5.1	1.51	1.26	0	0.95
Bokatola	0.26	2.32	5.58	0.68	0.42	0.05	1.05
Dzeke	0.42	3.39	3.58	0.92	2.14	0.06	0.56
Epena	0.62	3.26	5.29	0.15	1.68	0.15	0.23
Mboukou	0	4.67	7	0	4.56	0.56	1.89
Mobangui	0.42	5.26	2.1	1.39	5.03	2.65	1.23
Mokengui	0.66	3.03	5.09	2.03	0.22	0.16	0.72

The main challenges in the targeted area are (i) the future threat of deforestation due to the expansion of agricultural commodities, (ii) the increased risk that man-made bushfires pose under climate change; (iii) commercial wildlife hunting, which is increasing in response to demand from urban areas[36]; accessibility to the rest of the country as the region is lacking roads and other transport infrastructure (Figure 6).

Project action in the Lac Tele Landscape can be viewed more as geared towards mitigating anticipatory change rather than addressing large-scale observed degradation. In the development of this project document, discussions with partners operating in the Lac Tele Landscape revealed that there is no large-scale deforestation or forest degradation taking place in the region. This is confirmed by data analysis based on best-practice guidance elucidated by Simms et al (2019)[37] and whose

[34] Ben Evans (2019. Wild Places - Lac Télé Community Reserve. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Congo Program. Accessed on 12-02-2019. https://congo.wcs.org/Wild-Places/Lac-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9-Community-Reserve.aspx

[35] Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'ecotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[36] Ibid. Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020).

[37] Sims, N., C. Green, G. Newnham, J. England, A. Held, M. Wulder, M. Herold, S. Cox, A. Huete and L. Kumar (2017). Good Practice Guidance, SDG Indicator 15.3. 1 Proportion of Land That is Degraded Over Total Land Area, Version 1.

methodology is implemented by Conservation International[38]. An analysis of the trend in land health for the Lac Tele regions reveals that from 2001 to 2018, an area of about 1,039 sq. km suffered degradation, representing about 2,34% of the Lac Tele Landscape (land) area. Most of the degradation occurred in the south of the project region, with small patches in the northeast (see Figure 6). In terms of trends in the productivity of the land, areas of declining productivity are found mainly in the south of the project region. These represent about 772 sq. km (1.74%) of the surface area (Figure 7).

[38] http://trends.earth/docs/en/

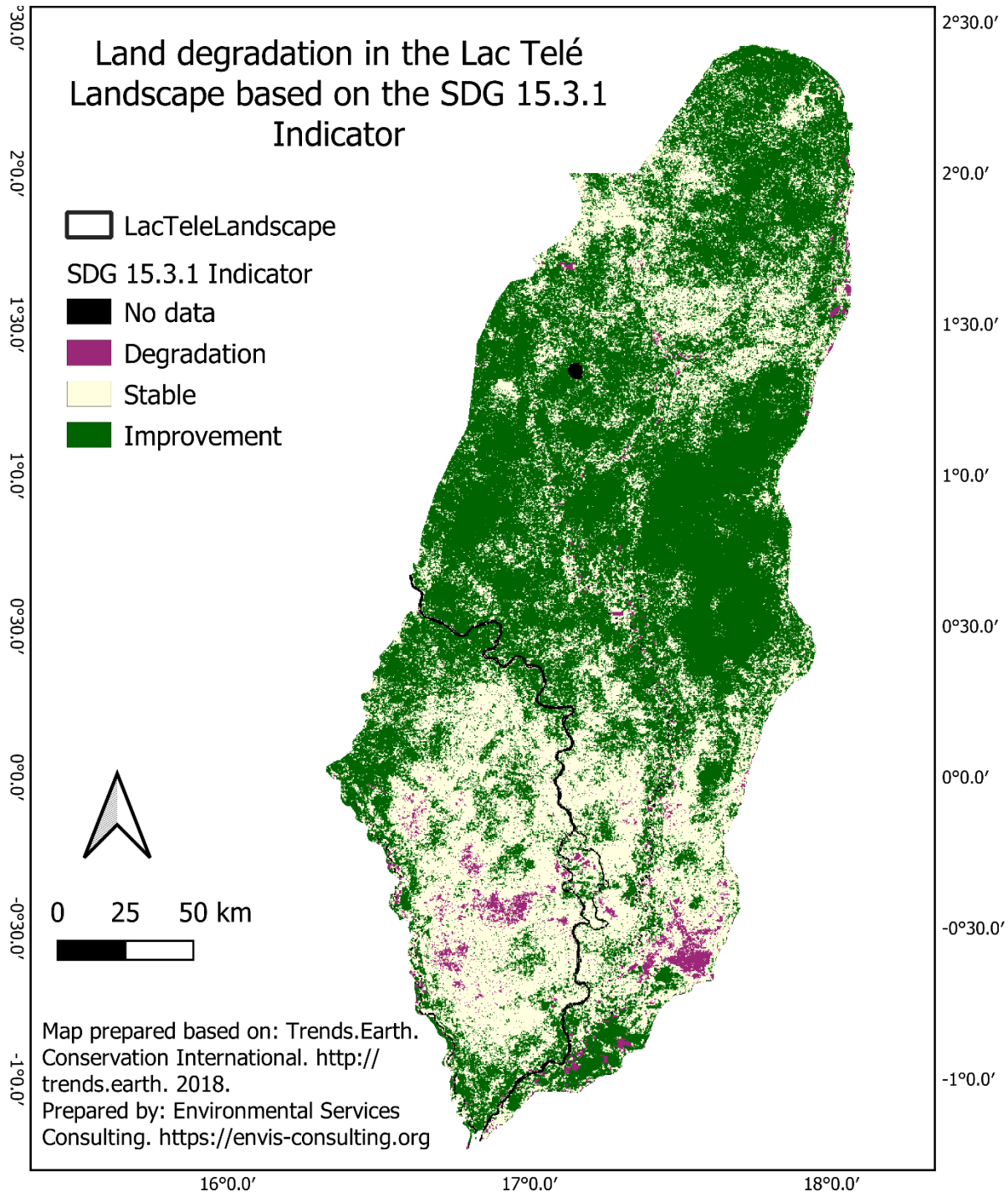

Figure 6. Most of the land degradation in the Lac Tele Landscape is occurring the southern section of the region. Source: Environmental Services Consulting, https://www.envis-consulting.org.

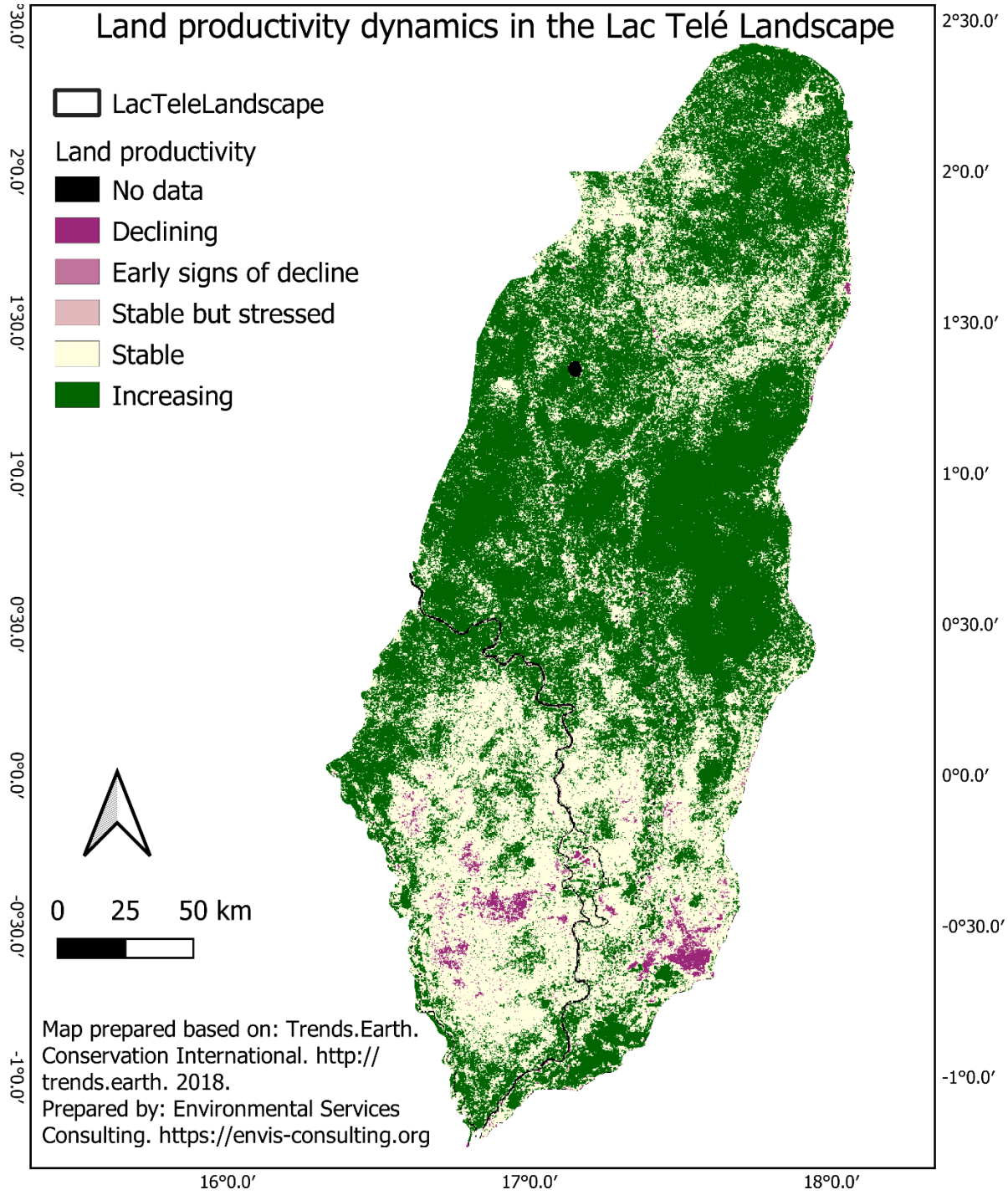

Figure 7. As with land degradation, most of the declining productivity in the Lac Tele Landscape is occurring the southern section of the region. Source: Environmental Services Consulting, https://www.envis-consulting.org.

With regard to the Lac Tele Community Reserve, the main challenge to its protection and sustainable management is the lack of an appropriate national legal framework for formal community-based governance of forests and natural resources (including the protected area). The lack of formal involvement of local communities in decision-making invariably leads to open-access management of

resources such as fish and wild meat, a situation causing high and sometimes unsustainable levels of harvesting.

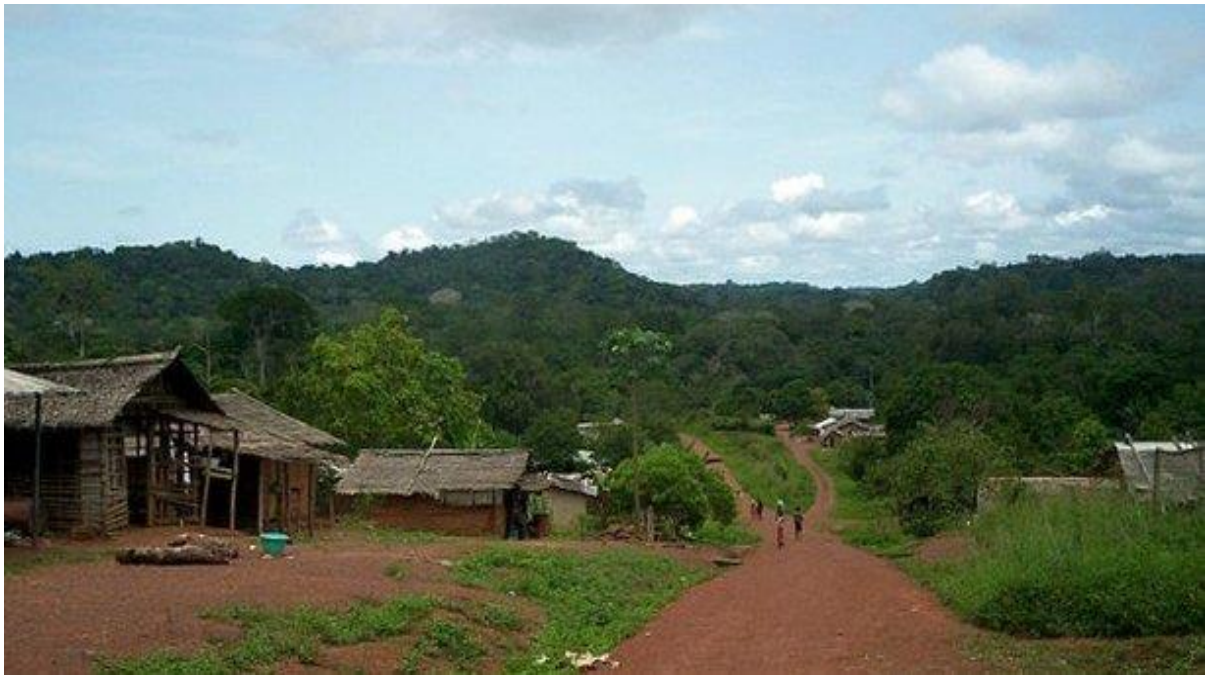

Figure 8. Villages on a main road in the Lac Tele Landscape[39].

Three main challenges are immediately evident with regards to the sustainable management of natural resources in the Lac Télé Landscape in general and the Community Reserve in particular:

1. *Overfishing, Commercial hunting, overfishing and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT):* With such a large number of people living within its borders, there is inevitably a growing demand for bushmeat which is threatening the many wildlife species in Lac Télé Community Reserve, including species such as duikers, which are important sources of protein for local people (see Supplement 1). The problem is further compounded by the fact that bushmeat is no longer consumed locally alone, but also transported away from the area to supply an increasing demand in urban areas as far away as Kinshasa. Recent surveys suggest that the water bodies of the region are becoming depleted due to overfishing, again to supply urban markets further afield. Illegal wildlife trade of live animals threatens several species such as African Grey Parrots and African Fish Eagles. Elephants are specifically targeted for their ivory, while several other mammal species are hunted for the commercial bushmeat market. Automatic weapons are increasingly available and used for hunting, while unrestricted access to fisheries is reducing densities of fish, many species of which are poorly known. In an attempt to mitigate these problems, WCS and government project staff are helping these villagers develop sustainable resource-use programs. One such program being developed is the establishment of community management of traditional hunting and fishing

[39] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

territories. Local village hunting territories have been mapped by WCS-Congo staff, and local people are now able to restrict hunting in a village territory to people from that village, using these traditional measures to try and ensure the sustainable management of their natural resources in the long term.

2. *Deforestation:* Deforestation is concentrated along the rivers and in the *terra firma* areas of the landscape. Although forest clearing is currently small scale, mostly for slash and burn agriculture and firewood collection, the overall impact is detrimental and can be expected to increase as road networks in the area expand, bringing more people into the region[40]. An increasing frequency of bushfires, particularly given future climate change, coupled with drier forests, could threaten the Reserve's enormous peat reserves.

To effectively manage Lac Télé Landscape in general and the Community Reserve in particular there is need to integrate three key approaches towards human-nature interactions within this important area for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and sustainable development goals for the RoC: (i) The implementation of an improved management plan aimed at strengthening protected area management capacity and law enforcement; (ii) Working with local governance groups to ensure sustainable, locally-based decision making can provide a genuine contribution to safeguarding local resources for the people of the reserve; and (iii) Promoting sustainable artisanal use of natural resources, particularly fish, and ensuring livelihoods can provide sufficient benefits to improve wellbeing of populations in and around the Lac Télé Landscape (including special attention to the needs of the under-privileged).

The transboundary landscape context of the current project

The Congo Basin, the second largest expanse of tropical forest after the Amazon, contains twelve (12) Landscapes, namely: Monte-Alen-Monts de Cristal; Gamba-Mavumba-Conkouati; Lope -Chailu-Louesse, Dja-Odzala-Minkebe; Sangha Tri-National; Econi-Bateke-Lefini ; Lake-Tele-Lake-Tumba; Selonga-Lukenie-Sankuru, Maringa-Lapori-Wamba; Maiko-Tayna-Kahuzi-Biega; Ituri-Epulu-Aru; Virunga. Together, the landscapes span roughly 680,300 km², spread across several countries, including Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. This area is home to an impressive wealth of flora and fauna, ranging from individual species (elephant, rhino, hippopotamus, giraffe and gorilla) to endemic habitats (hot spots). The growing interest in protecting the environment in general and ecosystems in particular has led several African States to create protected areas on their territory. The transnational nature of these landscapes calls for novel more inclusive management approaches of its resources and socioeconomic systems. The landscape approach to biodiversity conservation increasingly promotes regional integration. In fact, most ecological landscapes extend beyond international borders, highlighting the need for regional cooperation in implementing conservation measures. The landscape approach to biodiversity conservation aligns well with the transboundary landscape model of management as landscape ecologies do not respect national borders. The transboundary landscape model was developed using a planning approach that focuses on the ecoregion as the unit of conservation, whereby policies and conservation practices are harmonized to ensure effective management of representative assemblages of genes and species within a particular ecosystem. One of the main challenges of implementing the transboundary landscape approach is that of the sovereignty of nations. Coordination of transboundary programmes has to be regulated by agreements signed by member countries; they are endorsed by national parliaments of member countries and thus legally recognized.

[40] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

The current project builds on a history of transboundary initiatives (see the description of baseline projects that the current project intends to build on and to collaborate with). The Lac Tele landscape harbours one of the largest seasonally flooded forests on the planet, the largest transboundary RAMSAR site worldwide[41]. In this light, the importance of the current project in addressing transboundary management of landscapes is quite apparent, based both on the ecological harmony of the Lac Tele and Lac Tumba Landscapes, and the regional nature of the Congo IP to which the current project is an element. The current project is fully in line with this Congo IP Component, as well as the overall vision of the program which aims to "incorporate environmental management principles in forest management through integrated approaches at different levels (local, national, and transboundary)".

Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP

The current project is strongly tied with another child project within the Congo IP. This is the project titled: Community-based management of land and forests in the Grand Kivu and Lac Télé-Tumba landscapes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In this DRC project, one of the geographical components is in the Lac Tumba Landscape, while the other in Grand Kivu. The Lac Tumba in the DRC side is a continuation of the Lac Tele Landscape in the RoC side of the border, forming a near seamless ecoregion with substantial environmental significance for both countries. Together with Lac Tumba Landscape in the DRC side, the landscape is mostly humid forest – it is the second largest area of humid forest in the world, consisting of approximately 70 percent of swampy, seasonally flooded forest. The remaining 30 percent consists of dry land and savannah. The landscape plays an essential role in the climate and hydrology of the Congo Basin, as well as in the management of water resources in Africa and the rest of the world[42]. Studies have discovered that this landscape is in the midst of the world's largest tropical peatland estimated to store the equivalent of three years' worth of the world's total fossil fuel emissions[43].

[41] Ibid. Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020).

[42] Boyzibu Ekhassa and Pierre Oyo, 2012. Lac Télé – Lac Tumba Landscape. Climate Change and Forests in the Congo Basin: Synergies between Adaptation and Mitigation. Center for International Forestry Research. http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/cobambrief/3929-cobambrief.pdf

[43] Dargie, G. C., et al. (2017). "Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex." Nature **542**(7639): 86.

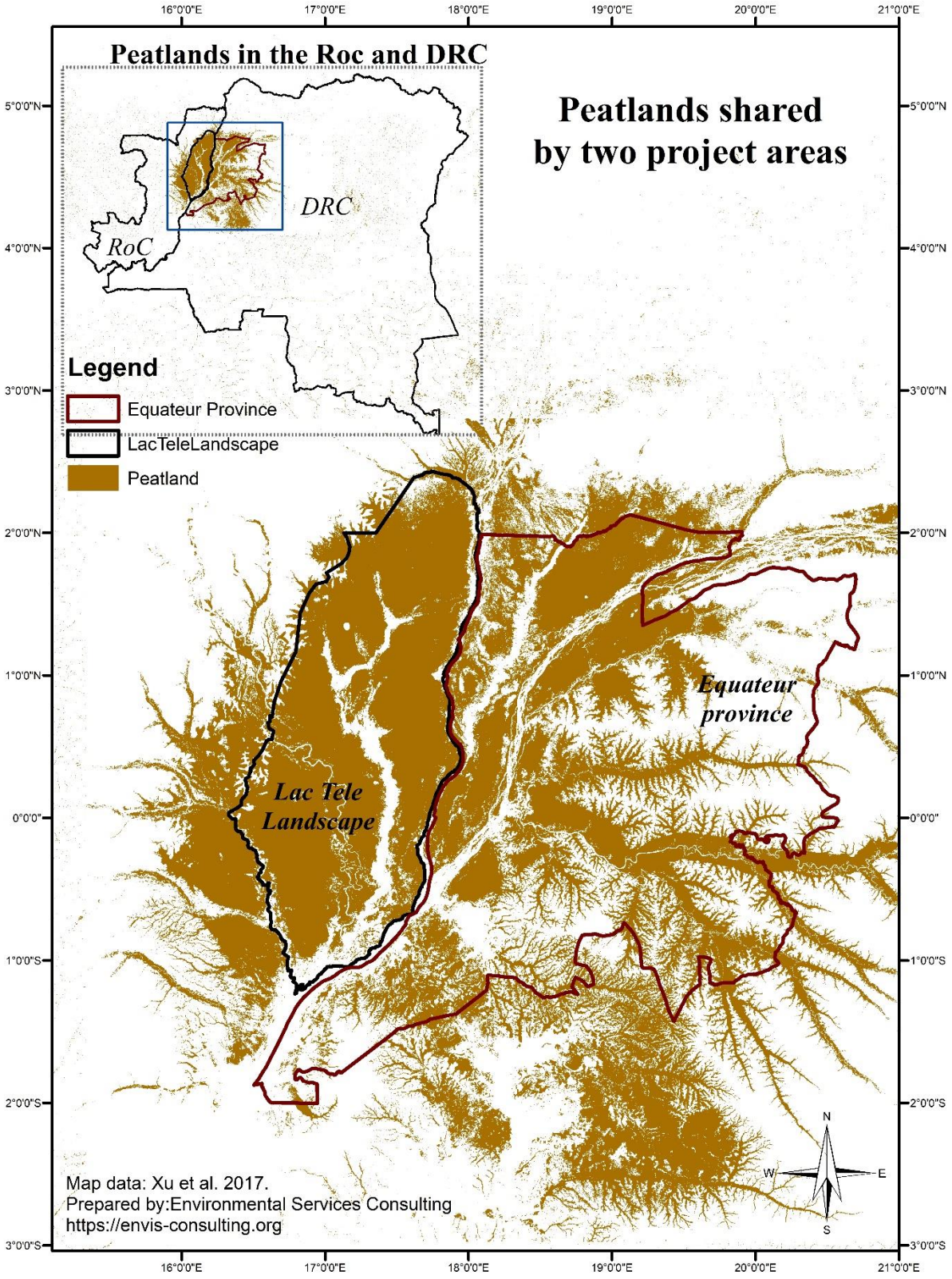

Figure 9. Shared peatlands showing project locations in both RoC and DRC.

The peatlands cover 145,500 km^2 – an area larger than England[44], and extend as a continuous formation from Lac Tele Landscape into the Lac Tumba Landscape in the DRC. The swamps could lock in 30bn tons of carbon, making the region one of the most carbon-rich ecosystems on Earth[45].

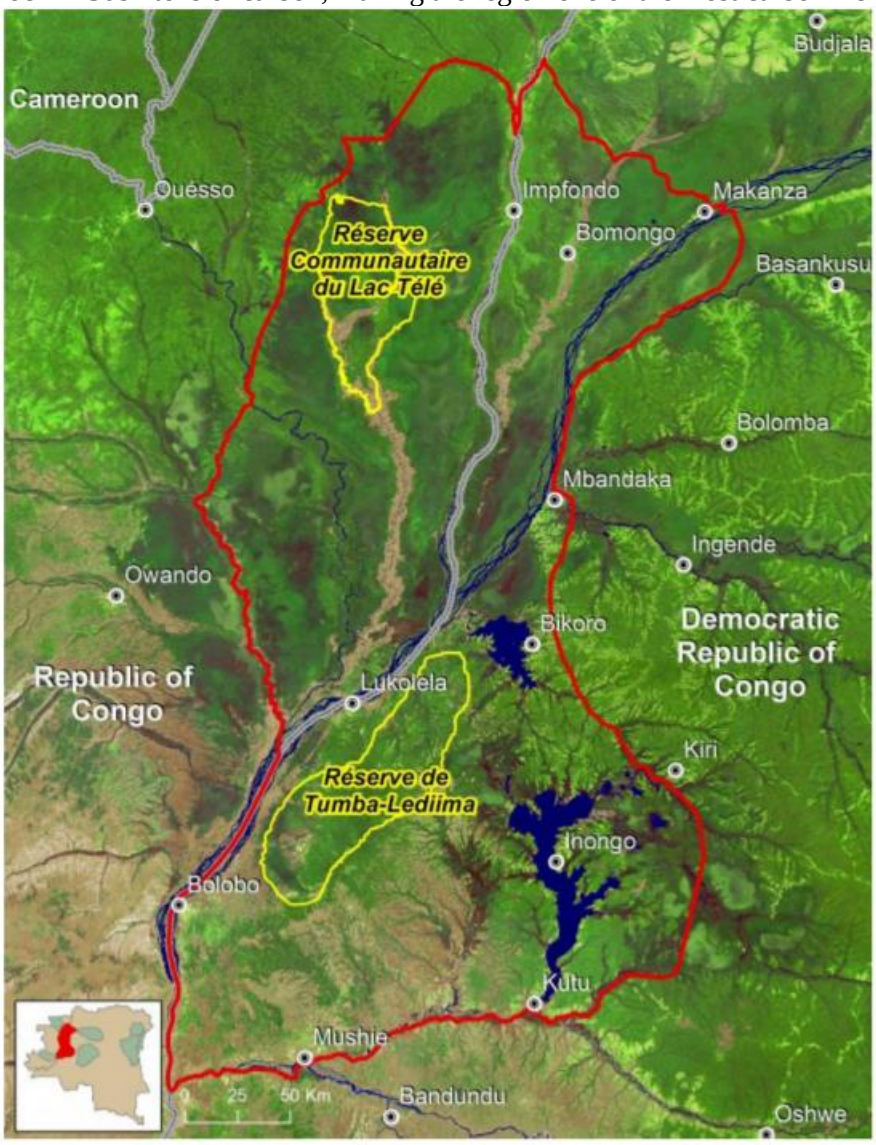

Figure 10. The Lac Tele and Lac Tumba Landscapes are one - located in different national territories (Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic respectively), but share relatively the same geographical, biological, and ecological characteristics. This includes their being home to significant portions of the Congo Basin peatland system[46].

Efforts of conservation of these landscapes for both countries can be evidenced through the existence of protected areas on both sides of the border – the Lac Tele Community Reserve in the RoC, and the Tumba-Lediima Reserve in the DRC (Figure 10). It can further evidenced through past and

[44] Dargie, G. C., et al. (2017). "Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex." Nature **542**(7639): 86.

[45] Fatoyinbo, L. (2017). "Ecology: Vast peatlands found in the Congo Basin." Nature **542**(7639): 38.

[46] USAID (2016). Lac Télé-Lac Tumba Landscape. Washington D.C. USA, United States Agency for International Development (USAID). https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/CAFEC_Lac_Tele-_Lac_Tumba_Fact_Sheet.pdf

ongoing regional collaborative efforts that include not only treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements, which will further tied the RoC landscape segment with the DRC landscape segment. In particular,

1. The bi national trans-border agreement signed in 2010 between DRC and RoC focusing on Lac Tele Lac Tumba Landscape: of note Articles 9-15;

2. The strategy document for the conservation and sustainable management of Lac Tele Lac Tumba landscape validated in 2016 by landscape stakeholders as well as the authorities of the two countries;

3. The Regional Action Plan adopted in August 2017 in accordance with the provisions of article 16 of the bi national trans-border agreement signed in 2010.

4. The Brazzaville Declaration on peatlands signed oi March 2018 which call for putting in place national multisector and multidisciplinary frameworks to ensure the management of peatlands in the Central Cuvette of the Congo Basin.

This project will be further linked with and contribute to the rest of the Program as follows: The Regional project through its support to REPALEAC will engage with the RoC Child project to build synergies and ensure that GEF investments are complementing and adding value to existing work, as detailed further below

Component 3 of the regional project, as well as Components 2 & 3 of this project to strengthen a people centered approach to conservation with emphasizes on IPLCs, and will support the IPLCs engagement and strengthen their role on conservation, wildlife management and sustainable natural resource management.

Component 1 of the regional project will support Child project in design of ILUMP methodology and training, as well as on the work to promote and facilitate transboundary dialogue and the development of cross-border synergies on transboundary ILUMPs which will help address issues of connectivity between PAs. In addition, the Regional Child Project in collaboration with the RoC Child project will provide support to REPALEAC to contribute to the ILUMP processes under this component by conducting an assessment of the land tenure arrangements occupied by IPLCs in the targeted RoC landscape. As indicated in the brief ILUMPs methodology statement (Appendix 21) of the regional project, one of the key steps will be to integrate local community and civil society input – and notably from women and forest dependent peoples - into national and regional ILUMP processes, including the need for ongoing overlay of customary land mapping, and establishing roadmaps for explicit and meaningful IPLC participation in all national and transboundary planning processes.

Component 5 of this project will be developed in coordination with the Regional Project, which will develop a Knowledge component for the overall Congo Basin Impact Program building on the following principles:

• Empowering project countries to implement effective KM and learning activities at national level that respond to their needs;

• Providing regional KM instruments in support of project countries and incentivise regional sharing and learning to foster synergies (coherence), reduce overlaps (efficiency), and facilitate knowledge uptake, innovation and scaling (effectiveness);

• Harnessing knowledge and achievements of project countries to raise the visibility of the program and knowledge outreach at global level to contribute to global goods and support the sustainable use and management of environmental resources.

2.2. Global significance

In 2017, the Cuvette Centrale peatlands in the central Congo Basin were mapped, revealing that they cover 145,500 sq. km – an area larger than England[47]. This study revealed that carbon has been building up in the Congo basin's peat for nearly 11,000 years. According to Dargie et al (2017), this makes the Cuvette Centrale—spanning both the Republic of Congo (ROC) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—the single largest peatland complex known in the tropics[48]. The peat covers only 4% of the whole Congo basin, but stores the same amount of carbon below ground as that stored above ground in the trees covering the other 96%[49]. The swamps could lock in 30bn tons of carbon that was previously not known to exist, making the region one of the most carbon-rich ecosystems on Earth. The Congo basin peatlands store the equivalent of nearly 30% of the world's tropical peatland carbon - that's about 20 years of the fossil fuel emissions of the United States of America[50].

Peat is an organic wetland soil made from part-decomposed plant debris, more commonly found in cool environments, such as northern Russia, Europe and Canada. Healthy peatlands act as carbon sinks, removing carbon from the atmosphere through plant growth. Further decomposition of the peat is prevented by its waterlogged environment, locking up carbon[51]. Year-round waterlogging is needed for peat to form in the tropics. If peatlands dry out, either through changes in land use such as drainage for agriculture or reduced rainfall, further decomposition resumes, releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In the tropical peatlands of the Congo Basin (including those of the project area) contributing factors to the potential drying up of these peatlands include forest fires, deforestation and future potential for drainage for agricultural plantations, as is happening in Indonesia.

The peat may also be vulnerable to the effects of climate change – increased evaporation due to rising temperatures or reduced rainfall could cause it to dry out and begin to release its carbon to the atmosphere. The discovery of the Cuvette Centrale peatlands could have a large impact on the climate and conservation policies of the Congo[52]. With so many of the world's tropical peatlands under threat from land development and the need to reduce carbon emissions to zero over the coming decades, it is essential that the Congo basin peatlands remain intact[53]. The maintenance and protection of the peatlands of the Congo Basin, through initiatives such as those of the current project, alongside protecting our forests, could be central to Africa's great contribution to the global climate change problem.

In addition to their status as a globally important region for carbon storage, the Congo basin swamps are refuges for endangered species including lowland gorillas and forest elephants, as well as other large forest mammals that are threatened by developments in the surrounding landscape. Beyond local benefits, more efficient management will also contribute to global benefits in terms of GHG emissions reductions (estimated to reach 20,398,082 tCO_2eq). This target will be achieved through a combination

[47] Dargie, G. C., et al. (2017). "Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex." Nature **542**(7639): 86.
[48] Dargie GC, Lewis SL, Lawson IT, Mitchard ETA, Page SE, Bocko YE, Ifo SA (2017) Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex. Nature 542(7639):86–90. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature21048
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Fatoyinbo, L. (2017). "Ecology: Vast peatlands found in the Congo Basin." Nature **542**(7639): 38.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

of support to best management practices in the wildlife, agricultural and fire prevention and control on peatland landscapes (see Appendix 10).

The objective of the six-year Congo Basin Sustainable Landscape Impact Program (Congo IP) is to catalyse transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through partnership with the private sector. This program will address the drivers of forest loss, biodiversity management, land degradation and issues of the sustainable management of forests and peatland resources in the six countries from the heart of the Congo Basin—Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Republic of Congo. The program will work to create a better enabling environment for forest governance, support land use planning, strengthen the management and financing of protected areas, and decrease the impacts of natural resource use by local communities and the private sector. Activities of the Congo IP will go a long way to providing the necessary institutional, policy, scientific and community support relevant for understanding, managing and sustainable conservation of forests and peatlands of the Congo Basin region.

The proposed project is fully in line with this Congo IP Component, as well as the overall vision of the program which aims to "incorporate environmental management principles in forest management through integrated approaches at different levels (local, national, and transboundary)". This project will develop an integrated approach for peatland management through a community-focused and locally-relevant governance model that can be scaled to other areas in the Congo Basin region, such as community development zones within forestry concessions. The Congo IP will collaborate and co-finance knowledge and best practice exchanges between stakeholders of the project and the national and regional community. This can include conference, analytical papers, technical workshops and study tours to support capacity building of the project's stakeholders.

2.3. Threats, root causes and barrier analysis

Protected areas and esosystems of significant local, national and global value face a number of threats in the RoC, as is the case with other countries in the Congo Basin region, and indeed almost all of sub-Saharan Africa. The underlying causes of these threats are many, and attempts at finding solutions to deal with these threats face a number of barriers.

Threats

Limited transboundary cooperation on peatland management, the protection of biodiversity, and IWT control: National IWT framework should be supported by international agreements between Congo, Cameroon, Gabon, and Central African Republic to strengthen international cooperation to tackle IWT in the region. Overall, Congo has important trans-boundary conservation areas, such as the Sangha River Tri-National Protected Area with a total area of 2.8 million ha at the border of Congo, Central African Republic, and Cameroon and Tri-national Dja-Odzala- Minkebe transboundary protected area complex at the borders of Congo, Cameroon, and Gabon. These transboundary areas are homes to globally significant populations of forest elephants and gorillas. Despite the region's highest elephant densities, these areas still do not have properly secured biological corridors for wildlife seasonal migration and joint transboundary law enforcement patrols. Recently the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17) encouraged Parties to make full use of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) indicator framework that should be facilitated and supported by effective transboundary cooperation to control IWT.

Unsustainable levels of urban demand for wild meat from peatland areas threatens their ecological integrity: Bush meat hunting is widespread in the Republic of Congo. Although forest dwelling peoples have relied and continue to rely on animal protein as part of their diet, commercial trade of

wildlife species takes a significant toll on wildlife populations and overall ecological integrity of North Congo rainforest ecosystems[54]. The most commonly hunted species in North Congo forests are small ungulates (duikers, a type of antelope), monkeys, and rodents (porcupines), usually trapped with wire and snares. However, new hunters with guns increasingly target large species such as forest elephants and apes leading to rapid population declines[55]. The overall extraction of bush-meat is very high, due to the high market demand from Congo's big cities[56]. The levels of awareness on the impact of bushmeat consumption on biodiversity, ecosystem health and the provision of ecosystem services is low among local populations and even some decision-makers.

Peatland degradation

Peat is an organic wetland soil made from part-decomposed plant debris, more commonly found in cool environments, such as northern Russia, Europe and Canada. Healthy peatlands act as carbon sinks, removing carbon from the atmosphere through plant growth. Further decomposition of the peat is prevented by its waterlogged environment, locking up carbon[57]. Year-round waterlogging is needed for peat to form in the tropics. If peatlands dry out, either through changes in land use such as drainage for agriculture or reduced rainfall, further decomposition resumes, releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In the tropical peatlands of the Congo Basin (including those of the project area) contributing man-made factors to the potential drying up of these peatlands could include forest fires, deforestation and drainage for agricultural plantations, particularly for palm oil, as is happening in Indonesia. The peat may also be vulnerable to the effects of climate change – increased evaporation due to rising temperatures or reduced rainfall could cause it to dry out and begin to release its carbon to the atmosphere. The discovery of these tropical peatlands could have a huge impact on the climate if released, and hence have serious implications for conservation policies and practices of the DRC and the Republic of Congo[58]. With so many of the world's tropical peatlands under threat from land development and the need to reduce carbon emissions to zero over the coming decades, it is essential that the Congo basin peatlands remain intact[59]. The maintenance and protection of the peatlands of the Congo Basin, through initiatives such as those of the current project, alongside protecting our forests, could be central Africa's great contribution to the global climate change problem. This project will contribute to 20,398,082 tCO_2eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years.

Root causes

Root causes of the issues with sustainable peatland management, enhanced protection and conservation of protected areas, as well as elimination of IWT include the following:

Urban population growth and demand for environmental resources: While the population in the immediate vicinity of the Lac Tele region has not grown much, urban population growth outside of the project area is one of the major underlying factors for land use and land cover changes in many parts

[54] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[55] Evan Jones-Bowen and Stephanie Pendry (2009) The threat to primates and other mammals from the bushmeat trade in Africa, and how this threat could be diminished. Cambridge University Press. Volume 33, Issue 3, pp. 233-246. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-3008.1999.00066.

[56] Chausson, A.M., Rowcliffe, J.M., Escouflaire, L. et al. (2019). Understanding the Sociocultural Drivers of Urban Bushmeat Consumption for Behavior Change Interventions in Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo. Hum Ecol 47, 179–191. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-019-0061-z.

[57] Ibid. Fatoyinbo, L. (2017).

[58] Ibid. Fatoyinbo, L. (2017).

[59] Ibid. Fatoyinbo, L. (2017).

of Congo. The majority of the population in the Lac Tele Landscape for example is local people including some indigenous groups – specifically the Pygmies (see more on indigenous peoples of Congo in Supplement 1). This population growth in neighbouring urban areas has fuelled increased demand for land (for farming, habitation, etc.), together with increased in forest-based resources (timber, thatch, bushmeat, etc.)[60]. A vast majority of the local population continues to rely on the forest and other environmental resources to support their livelihoods through very basic and meagre means[61]. The main livelihood of the people is mostly from farming and fishing. A vast majority of the population are still dependent on the forest for food, medicine, housing, and wood for boat construction[62].

Trade in bushmeat and wildlife: Poaching and bushmeat trade is another root cause of environmental degradation in the RoC in general, and the project location in particular. The over-exploitation of wildlife for commercial purposes—commonly referred to as bushmeat trade—is considered the most imminent threat to forests and biodiversity in the Congo Basin and RoC. Overharvesting of biodiversity contribute to a reduction in the quantity and quality of ecosystem services provided and supported by environment. The ivory trade for example is contributing to a substantial increase in threats on iconic species such as elephants in many areas of the Congo Basin. Recent studies under the auspices of CITES indicate that even in the most highly protected circumstances of national parks, elephants are on the decline. Current levels of bushmeat trade are both substantial and unsustainable. Trade in bushmeat and wildlife threatens not only local wildlife, but also the livelihood of traditional forest peoples dependent on wild meat for their subsistence.

Logging (forest exploitation): Commercial logging, both legal and illegal, in the Congo Basin is selective, only harvesting a limited number of high-value timber species. In most areas, however, this exploitation is generally not done in an ecologically sustainable way. During the preparation of this project, it was established that there are currently six major forest concessions operating in the Lac Tele Landscape. Such logging is also generally not socially equitable, in terms of benefits accrued to local communities or national governments. An added impact of commercial logging is that it opens up the forests for hunting and agriculture, tends to bring in large populations of workers and job seekers that place demands on the local resource base, and facilitates unsustainable bushmeat trade by providing access and markets (see "Forest concessions and Protected areas on the outskirts of the Lac Télé Landscape" in Outcome 4.1).

Unsustainable mining practices: During the project preparation, it was established that three major mining companies are operating at the Lac Tele Landscape (see "Mining companies on the outskirts of the Lac Télé Landscape" under Outcome 4.1). The key minerals mined are diamonds and gold in the districts of Ekouye, Lobo, and Liouesso. Mining for diamonds and gold is also quite common in the Congo Basin, and often resulting in environmental degradation. Digging for diamonds and panning for gold, which takes place in small streams, can destroy these fragile ecosystems. The direct impact is

[60] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[61] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[62] Boyzibu Ekhassa and Pierre Oyo (2012) Lac Télé – Lac Tumba Landscape: Climate Change and Forests in the Congo Basin: Synergies between Adaptation and Mitigation. Analysing local people's resilience to climate change and REDD+ opportunities to recommend synergies between adaptation and mitigation initiatives in the Congo Basin. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Bangor, Indonesia.

mostly localized, but indirect impacts such as sedimentation, pollution, and poaching can be quite widespread.

Oil and gas exploitation: The oil and gas industry is prominent in the Gulf of Guinea and inland in the coastal forests. The economies of Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo in particular are closely linked to oil. In the Gamba-Mayumba-Conkouati Landscape the industry is a major player, and there have been substantial adverse impacts on the environment. In the Lac Tele Landscape, oil exploitation is being carried out in the districts of Lokolelé and Mossaka. Besides the real risk of major spills, general pollution remains an issue. Improper decommissioning of drilling sites and pipelines, as well as indirect impacts such as poaching resulting from the opening up of new areas of forest, also threaten the region. A lack of ecological and socially acceptable best practices continues to pose a significant challenge to long-term sustainable development.

The direct and indirect impact of climate change: Forests are essentially the lungs of our planet. All plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. Trees are able to convert more carbon dioxide than a regular plant, though. Forest loss is often caused by climate change. Tropical rainforests are extremely humid due to the water vapor released along with the oxygen. But when a forest is cut down, the humidity levels decrease and causes the remaining plants to dry out. For example, drying out our tropical rainforests increases fire damage. Fires can be both accidental and intentional but destroy forests quickly. The impact of climate change is important when considering the Equateur Province of the project implementation. The peatlands of this province are of vital environmental value vis-à-vis climate change as their preservation can avoid substantial emissions from being released from these landscapes. With a warming climate, the impact of bush fires and other land use practices that may affect the health and productivity of forests and peatland landscapes could be further amplified in scale and frequency.

Barriers

For effective conservation of peatlands, reduction of poaching and IWT and reverse habitat degradation, the following barriers must be removed.

Barrier 1: Lack of land use planning at the local level and insufficient coordination among sectoral development institutions in achieving effective land use planning: The traditional land-use rights of local communities and indigenous people are currently only recognized in reserves, national parks and private concessions if they are included in the relevant management plans. However, at the local level, there is limited availability of these land use plans in the RoC. In cases where these land use plans exist (such as in some parts of northern RoC – developed through the CARPE Program), the legal recognition of these plans, and their incorporation into existing policy frameworks has stalled.

A lack of policy level and field-level coordination among key government institutions has meant interventions related to the sustainable management of some natural resources (including peatlands, forests, biodiversity, and others) to be inefficient and sporadic[63]. Some crucial changes are necessary in the national legislation to provide a robust legal framework for effective prosecution of poachers and illegal wildlife traders (currently no more than 5% of arrested poachers and traders are prosecuted in the country). Successful conservation of biodiversity in the RoC's protected areas needs increased level of punishment for illegal activities on the one hand and much more wide involvement of local communities in the park management and CBNRM on the other hand (see Supplement 1 for a more detailed look at these issues). It also requires a revision of what activities are classed as illegal, as you

[63] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

may have people 'punished' for activities which are economically necessary and irreplaceable. These regulations need to be supported by relevant legislative changes of protected area regulations.

Barrier 2: Limited community participation in the management of natural resources: A lack of community participation in the management of wildlife and other biological resources is a common phenomenon in this part of the country[64]. In Congo, traditional governance of biological resources (up to the middle of 20th century) used to allow for informal community-based ownership rights of forest and wildlife resources for each local community, with these rights known and accepted by other communities. But during the last half-century, the vast majority of the forest in Congo has been allocated as logging concessions, as strictly protected areas or has moved under state ownership. Thus, today 74% of all RoC forests are under logging concessions (often managed by foreign logging companies), 20.5% are covered by Protected Areas, and none are formally allocated to local communities[65 and 66]. As a result of this change of ownership from communities to the state and corporations, communities started an abandon the local rules and regulations and consequently led to widespread illegal logging, and poaching. Vast majority of protected areas in the RoC were established without taking into account the customary rights to land or the historical, cultural or socio-economic realities that have shaped these areas and ecosystems over millennia of habitation and use by indigenous forest peoples. Several protected areas are reported to aggravate conflictual situations related to forest resource use, particularly between Bantu farmers and indigenous hunter-gatherers, as restrictions to access create further pressure on the surrounding areas. Many communities also report abuse and human rights violations, particularly by the park rangers. Indigenous communities feel marginalized by the protected and conserved areas[67] (also see more on indigenous peoples of Congo and their relationships to natural resources in Supplement 1). They have limited rights over the lands they depend on and have virtually no means of political representation, voice, or participation in the NRM. Their subsistence way of living and using forest resources has contributed to forest protection (and possibly even enrichment) for centuries, but now it is increasingly difficult to maintain this livelihood[68]. However, local people can become owners of private forests if they are located on land owned by them, or owners of private forest plantations if these forests were planted on land owned by the State (cf. art. 33 34, 35 16-2000 of 20 November 2000 on the Forest Code). In addition, Article 31 of Law No. 10-2004 of 26 March 2004 laying down the general principles applicable to federal land and plan proclaims the recognition of customary land rights for people occupying the land for 30 years. Unfortunately, this recognition is subjected to timely and costly fiscal and technical conditions. These conditions can rarely be met by local communities or members of indigenous people without capacity building or external support.

Barrier 3: Limited alternative and income generating and livelihood choices: According to Wright et al. (2016), livelihood-focused interventions can be grouped into 3 broad and overlapping categories: alternatives, compensation, and incentives. Alternatives partially or completely substitute for the benefits (monetary and nonmonetary) that would normally be obtained from the exploitation of

[64] Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell (2017). The human cost of conservation in Republic of Congo Conkouati-Douli and Nouabaléndoki National Parks and their impact on the rights and livelihoods of forest communities. The Rainforest Foundation UK. London, UK.

[65] Rainforest Foundation (2020). Republic of Congo. Accessed on 03-03-2020. https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/republic-of-congo

[66] Ibid. Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell (2017).

[67] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[68] Ibid. Inès Ayari and Simon Counsell (2017).

particular natural resources[69]. The assumption often underlying this approach is that pressure on natural resources is primarily caused by poverty and a lack of options. There are 3 categories of alternatives[70]: those that provide an alternative resource to the one being exploited, for example promoting imported animal protein as an alternative to locally hunted bushmeat; those that provide an alternative occupation so as to reduce the need to exploit natural resources for income, for example promoting butterfly farming as a substitute for expanding agriculture; and those that encourage an alternative method of exploiting a resource that has a lower impact than the original method, for example promoting fuel-efficient stoves to reduce the need to fell trees for firewood or changing marketing strategy to increase incomes from the sale of wild coffee, thus reducing the need to convert more forest into farmland. Limited alternative and income generating activities restrict the ability of local communities to adopt sustainable livelihoods and practices, and diversify their sources of livelihood support in the Lac Tele Landscape. Local communities (including indigenous peoples) mainly rely on natural resources harvested from the forests around them to meet the needs of their households. These include among many others, forest trees for fuelwood and subsistence and in some cases commerce, non-timber forest products for food, medicine, and fiber, as well as agricultural and pastoral land for subsistence and to generate income. Increased population pressure and poor management of the existing natural resource base in some cases is contributing to overexploitation of these resources and environmental degradation.

Barrier 4: Lack of policies to handle conflicting vested interests in forest resources conservation, use and management: Besides development of petroleum resources in recent years, the recovery of the timber sector is probably the most significant change that affects Congolese forests in the post-conflict period compared to previous decades. The economic value of industrial timber seems to be far below that of other forest products, but it is where the risk of misappropriation and plundering of public resources is the highest. To some extent, this restarting is inescapable. It does not depend on sector reforms. It is driven by security, infrastructures and markets. This industry has the potential to bring benefits to local people and to the country, but these benefits will not come automatically. They will materialise only if adequate policies are properly enforced. The timber exploitation contracts for the most part are being concluded without consultation with local people, consideration for other possible forest uses, or equitable return for the country. This is not a specific phenomenon of timber exploitation, but is also common with other sectors such as oil and gas, as well as agro-industrial sectors in the RoC. Often overlapping with villages, farmland and biodiversity hotspots, these concessions carried the seeds of new conflicts, and made it difficult to extend protected areas and to develop non-extractive forest uses. Forests were seized by logging interests and there was little space left for other forest uses. The outcome of such practices is the potential for conflict between private sector operators and local communities that depend on the forest resources in which timber is being exploited. Lack of consultation with local communities also reduce the potential for local populations and private investors to agree on beneficial and sustainable collaboration, through the implementation of initiatives within corporate social responsibility programmes. This project will support collaboration between government entities, local communities and private sector land users (including in the timber, oil and gas, as well as agro-industrial sectors) in defining common solutions towards sustainable forest use and support for locally-relevant socio-economic development programmes through development of Land Use Plans.

In the same vein, interest in the importance of peatlands, their conservation and management as well as community engagement in the conservation of peatland resources is a relatively recent development

[69] Wright JH, Hill NA, Roe D, Rowcliffe JM, Kümpel NF, Day M, Booker F, Milner-Gulland EJ. Reframing the concept of alternative livelihoods. Conserv Biol. 2016 Feb;30(1):7-13. doi: 10.1111/cobi.12607. Epub 2015 Nov 2. PMID: 26310510; PMCID: PMC4982097.

[70] Roe D, et al. 2014. Are alternative livelihood projects effective at reducing local threats to specified elements of biodiversity and/or improving or maintaining the conservation status of those elements? A systematic review protocol. Environmental Evidence 3:1–8.

in the Congo Basin Region and the RoC in particular. Hence, the development of a viable legal and legislative framework for dealing with challenges of sustainable peatland management are still in their infancy. Also, currently a National IWT Strategy to consider wildlife crime as a serious national threat and set up main goals, objectives, means and plans to fight poaching and illegal wildlife trade is missing in Congo. Currently, there is a lack of specific policies and guidelines related to sustainable peatland management in the RoC. Existing policies and guidelines do not provide proper guidance, which further contributes to the unsustainable use and degradation of peatlands and their resources.

Barrier 5: Inadequate information on peatland management - There is inadequate information available on sustainable peatland management methods and practices. This is due in part to limited information sharing by the respective government agencies, departments and ministries related to peatlands and their resources, as well as between countries in the sub-region. An illustration of how the lack of information is leading to poor land use management is in the case of the use of peatlands for agriculture or forestry. One of the prominent natural characteristics of peatlands is their high-water table. This naturally occurring high-water table is an important factor in their formation and stability. Over-drainage of peatlands can have detrimental effects on the ecosystem. Agricultural and forestry practices may involve poor water management practices in peatlands, which significantly lower the water table and lead to the drying and breakdown of peat soils, i.e. peat subsidence. This in turn affects the floral and faunal biodiversity. In severe cases of over-drainage, subsidence of up to 5 m have been recorded over a period of 40 years[71]. Such negative impacts tend to be exacerbated during the dry season or periods of drought.

2.4. Institutional, sectoral and policy context

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment which is mandated to execute the National Policy on Tourism and Environment (Decree No 2017 of 10 October 2017), the Ministry of Forest Economy in charge of Protected Areas; the Congolese Agency of Wildlife and Protected Areas in charge of the implementation of the national policy on management of wildlife and Protected Areas and the Poaching and Surveillance Units. The Committee of Community Management and Development was established by decree n°2013-280 of 25th June 2013. It acts as a body to promote community-based participation in development and should be implicated in strengthening local community participation and monitoring of activities in the Lac Télé – Lac Tumba Binational Strategy. National administration and public institutions in charge of land use include: Ministry of Land Affairs and Public Land; Ministry of Tourism and Environment; and Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development. In carrying out their missions, these ministries are supported by ministries in charge of agriculture and livestock; interior and decentralization; economy, industry, and public portfolio; justice, human rights, and promotion of indigenous population; promotion of women; finance and budget; professional associations; and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). All these entities have been consulted during project development for their full collaboration and support. In RoC, there are well represented, and experienced NGOs known for their important work, experience and results achieved in the targeted landscape. These NGOs have been consulted during the PPG and together with the Government, the role they can play in the project execution has been discussed and agreed upon. These institutions include the WCS, African Parks, related to Odzala National Park. In the Lac Télé Community Reserve specifically, the Wildlife Conservation Society has been the long-term partners supporting governmental partners to support the implementation of the reserve management, including research, community led activities, anti-poaching and anti-trafficking, for over 15 years. Beyond their expertise of working in this specific zone, these institutions have developed broader experiences in community based natural resources management and fighting Illegal Wildlife Trade across the country, the region and the globe. Working closely with these organizations will ensure

[71] (i) Such as in Southwest Johor State. (see Wösten J H, Ismail A B and van Wijk A L M) 1997 Peat subsidence and its practical implications: a case study in Malaysia *Geoderma* 78 25–36; (ii) Hooijer A et al 2012 Subsidence and carbon loss in drained tropical peatlands *Biogeosciences* 910 53–71).

their experience can be capitalized upon, ensuring applicable models can be replicated in the landscape.

2.5. Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Stakeholder engagement is an important feature of the project covering site-based arrangements for landscape and seascape resources management, the development of strategic and relevant knowledge products, bringing together stakeholders to foster mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in land and seascapes, and working with in a multi-stakeholder context to achieve project goals. The preparation of this project has included a number of consultation and information sharing activities with various actors that have a key stake in the proposed project (Table 2, and also see Supplement 2). These activities and the stakeholders involved are summarized below.

Table 2. An analysis and mapping of stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Interest, mandate, and resources available	Potential role in Project
Ministry of Tourism and the Environment	In charge of development and implementation of national policies in environment management and Tourism sub-sectors	▪ Coordinate the project and stakeholders' involvement ▪ Ensure consistency with the national priority and strategy on Protected Areas creation Will be member of the project steering committee
Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD)	▪ Responsible party and primary decision maker for land-use and forest and wildlife management and law enforcement in the country. ▪ The National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection under MEFDDE has the mandate, budgets and human resources for wildlife crime enforcement.	▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee; ▪ Participation in the implementation of Outputs 4.1.1 and 4.1.3
Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD) - National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection	The National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection under MEFDDE has the mandate, budgets and human resources for wildlife crime enforcement.	▪ Facilitate coordination with protected area related activities. ▪ Will be member of the project steering committee
Ministry of Petroleum Products	In charge of national policies, strategies and Programme development and implementation in area Petroleum Products	▪ Will guide and advice on issues related to mining activities in the area. ▪ Will be part of steering committee.
Ministry of Mining	Mining ministry has authority to manage and regulate mining operations in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe project zone. It has expertise on the mining development in the project zone	▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)	The Ministry, which is responsible for agricultural development and promoting production technologies that reduce land degradation, will take part in policy review and development of land use plans as they related to	▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project

	agricultural activities, support awareness raising and advocacy for agricultural development that reduces deforestation and mainstreams biodiversity conservation, and will be a member of the PSC.	Steering Committee
Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC)	The key agency in charge of meteorological data collection – a key ingredient required in modeling studies for understanding the influence of climate change on peatlands of the Congo.	▪ Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data ▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
United Nations System and other bilateral/multilateral donors	United Nations (UN) System agencies, such as United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank (WB), and other bilateral/multilateral donors, such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AfDB) will primarily provide assistance for social and infrastructural sectors and otherwise provide co-financing and direct investment of environment activities under the project framework. The UNDP will be part of the PSC	▪ Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data ▪ Project funding and co-funding; ▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee in line with current practice in the country.
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	WCS and the Ministry of Forestry have formalized this partnership by signing 5 protocols. The protected area protocols include Nouabale Ndoki National Park, Lac Tele Community Reserve, and Conkouati-Douli National Park. WCS and MEF have also partnered with the private sector in logging concessions adjacent to Nouabale Ndoki and Odzala-Kokua National Parks in an effort to reduce the impact of exploitation on wildlife	▪ Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data ▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee; ▪ Participation in the implementation of Outputs 1.1.4; 1.1.5; and 3.1.2
Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)	Works on land and regional planning; sustainable management of land and natural resources; and the strengthening of forest governance	▪ Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data ▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC)	Represents over 200 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' organizations of eight countries from both the sub-regional and the national levels. Aims to promote the critical role played by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in sustainable forest management.	▪ Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
Université Marien Ngouabi (UMN)	Has been undertaking research related to the discovery of the Congo Basin peatlands;	▪ Coordination and collaboration with other

Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Agronomie et de Foresterie	assessment of their extent; assessment of threats and challenges associated with their conservation and human-nature interactions	conservation efforts in Congo ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee; ▪ Will form and head a Scientific and Technical Committee[72]. ▪ Participation in the implementation of Outputs 1.1.3; 2.1.3 and 4.1.2
Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities *[Bantu; Baka groups; and others]*	▪ Indigenous people are key users of wildlife and other nature resources in the project area, often involved in poaching. ▪ Together with pygmies, they have traditional rights and knowledge of natural resources in the project area.	▪ Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project. ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
Local opinion leaders (people from project zone resident in the nation's capital) *[From Mossaka; Sangha -Liranga; Bomongo-Lubengo; Bolombo-Losombo; Bobangi; Imese-Boboke; Dongou; Impfondo; Tanga; Bouanela; etc.]*	Local opinion leaders may have political power and influence on local communities in the project area.	▪ Key resource persons in the implementation of the project. ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management
Local communities, women and vulnerable groups *[From Mossaka; Sangha -Liranga; Bomongo-Lubengo; Bolombo-Losombo; Bobangi; Imese-Boboke; Dongou; Impfondo; Tanga; Bouanela; etc.]*	Project implementation works such as labor for conservation works; local institutional arrangements for project implementation; identification, demarcation, and management of indigenous conservation areas as relevant; participate in other land use planning for project implementation.	▪ Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project. ▪ IPLC Plan will be prepare at the project inception with the participation the IPLC representatives ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management
Indigenous population *[Communities of the Mono; Batwa; and Pygmies]*	Indigenous people are key users of wildlife and other nature resources in the project area, often involved in poaching. Together with pygmies, they have traditional rights and knowledge of natural resources in the project area.	▪ Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project. ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management
Private sector *[Examples: Société Petroleum; Société SEFYD; CIB OLAM – Congolaise*	Have economic and political power, knowledge of local resources and some power of influence on local populations. A core target group for sustainable business model in the protection of the natural resources of the Lac Télé Landscape will be the promotion of public-private	▪ Leverage investments in greener livelihood alternatives ▪ Adopt green certification standards ▪ Support the revision and implementation of operational

[72] This Committee among others will be made up of hydrologists, hydrobiologists, conservationists, socio-economists, sociologists, botanists, ecologists, climatologists, and other relevant expertise necessary to support the scientific and technical needs of the project.

Industrielle de Bois; ECO – OIL ENERGIE S.A; Société THANRY Congo; etc.]	partnerships that support investments in environmentally friendly socio-economic initiatives; awareness-raising; capacity development and knowledge exchange.	modalities of logging and mineral extraction that contribute to biodiversity protection and sustainable peatland management ▪ Provide additional funds for community-based initiatives ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management ▪ Participation in the Project Steering Committee
Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Involved in the national consensus building processes for both policy processes and the development of broad-based partnerships for implementation, as well as awareness raising and training activities. CBOs will be the local executing partners and will be actively involved in the consultation process to develop integrated land use management plans, as well as being actively engaged in the implementation of those plans	▪ Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project. ▪ Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management

The various stakeholders have been consulted through a variety of processes. Ministerial stakeholders were consulted through high level meetings between the concerned ministries. National agencies such as the Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC), regional agencies like the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), and international bodies and multilateral agencies such as Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the World Bank, World Resources Institute, the country offices of the United Nations System, and others were consulted through several rounds of meetings in their premises. Many of these donors and agencies also contributed with inputs into the project documents during the preparation. Several meetings were help with the Université Marien Ngouabi (UMN), Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Agronomie et de Foresterie, both at the university premises and locations outside of the campus. The university (like other stakeholders) also contributed with information and inputs into the project document as well as with revisions. The Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC) and other sectors of indigenous populations *[Bantu; Baka groups; and others]* were consulted through direct communications, as well as through a one-week long workshop organized by the World Bank in Brazzaville – Congo from the 5th – 8th February, 2020. Local communities, women and vulnerable groups and community-based organizations were consulted through their representatives in their local communities by regional and district officials of the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, as well as through their representatives at the national level. Most of the private sector was consulted through a high-level meeting organized by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, and chaired by the Minister in charge in Brazzaville on the 4th June, 2020.

An analysis of key interest groups for the Lac Tele Landscape

Decisions made by different people concerning their participation in a project depend on their interests, and objectives, and their understanding of how the project will impact them. To ensure achievement of desired impacts and to reduce future conflict in a project, the major project related groups with differing views or agendas have been identified and their interests considered. The most important agendas of key project actors and their likely influence on the project have been examined during the project preparation. This project recognizes that it is important that people recognize clearly that differing agendas can produce serious conflict situations that can divert the project from stated

goals, and part of the role of the thematic studies and engagements with different stakeholders during the preparation of this project was aimed at achieving this. This initial appreciation of influences and potential conflicts laid the groundwork for some of the explicit discussions of how to resolve them with potential stakeholders. This project sees the obtaining this understanding can be a major achievement - particularly the recognition that much development work has strong political implications at both macro and micro levels. In addition to identifying groups and their concerns, every effort has been made to involve representatives of the groups in the design of assessments so the results likely to be used effectively.

The current project has come very special characteristics when looking at specific interest groups related to the forest and peatland landscapes of the Lac Tele. This is because this project has the potential to change in the use of a natural forest and peatland resources of the region. Based on this, a special characterization can be made which identifies at least four groups that have distinct views on potential impacts and values gained or lost. These include:

1. *Groups with commercial interests in specific parts or aspects of the forest.* These groups are interested in the market values associated with use of certain parts of the forest (including private sector investors of local and foreign origin).

2. *Local forest dwellers with their interest in livelihood/survival values (many of them indigenous populations).* These groups are interested in the forest as their living environment and as a source of sustenance and livelihood.

3. *Environmental advocacy groups.* These groups are interested in *all* the goods and environmental services that are and can be contributed on a sustainable basis by the forest including the educational and spiritual values associated with forest preservation. They are interested in the forest in a holistic, non-consumptive sense.

4. *Slash and burn agriculturalists and other land users with an interest in the land underlying the forest and peatland landscapes.* This group assigns a negative value to the forest itself, i.e., they would like to see it cleared and gone. To these groups, the forest is nothing but a nuisance: letting it stand involves a cost; it harbors dangerous animals; it is the home for animals and insects that attack adjacent agricultural crops; it hinders travel and road construction; it is in the way of progress in agriculture and ranching. From the point of view of these groups, the forest that is grown on the underlying land they want has a negative value at least equal to the cost of clearing it. Having said the above, we also should point out that in fact the forest has a positive value to the slash and burn farmer practicing shifting cultivation with forest fallows where the forest renews the nutrients in the soil for the farmer. We come back to these types of "hidden" values later on.

2.6. Baseline analysis and gaps

The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) (65 million USD): The CAFI, officially launched in September 2015, is a multi-stakeholder trust fund hosted by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office of UNDP and destined to support the funding of sustainable management and forest conservation in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo. The Republic of Congo signed the CAFI Joint Declaration in 2015. The trust fund is implemented through participating UN organisations, the World Bank, and international development agencies. Norway, France and the European Union contribute 45 million USD to the agreement, plus 20 million from the French Development Agency (AFD), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the German Federal Ministry of the Environment (BMU). To gain access to this fund, countries must submit a national investment framework, a letter of intent and the program documents. Republic of Congo, received a preparatory grant of 620 000 USD to support, amongst other things, the development of the current Investment

Plan. This project has been designed to harness synergies with CAFI, promote collaboration in areas of common interests, and avoid overlaps in the implementation of activities.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF): The GCF is a funding mechanism dedicated to funding climate change mitigation and adaptation. In the area of mitigation, the GCF supports, amongst others, initiatives for the sustainable management of lands and forests. The Republic of Congo has obtained a preparatory subvention of 300 000 USD to operationalise its national structure for the GCF, and will benefit from a second subvention in order to finalise its readiness phase. Within this framework, the GCF focal point is working with FAO and AFD to submit a first mitigation project for the implementation of the Republic of Congo's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in the Land use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) sector (2018-2025). In parallel to this, a project appeal was launched with the aim to suggest other projects and programs to the GCF in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. The GCF Focal Point has already received 8 project proposals from international organisations, including UNDP, local NGOs and governmental institutions. Included amongst these are projects for the improvement of energy efficiency, electricity production and distribution, drinking water distribution, etc. The program for the implementation of Congo's INDC in the LULUCF sector (2018-2025). This project will be in good alignment with the objectives of the RoC with regards to its INDC obligations. This is because sustainable forest and peatland management reduces potential carbon emissions and the country's drive towards meeting these obligations. It has been estimated that by implementing this project, emissions to the amount of 20,398,082 tCO_2eq will be avoided (see details in Supplement 3).

Projects of the International Climate Initiative (IKI). IKI of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) has been financing climate and biodiversity projects in developing and newly industrialising countries since 2008. IKI has been very active in the Congo, supporting the securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin Peatlands by enabling evidence based decision making and good governance. *Assessing, Measuring and Preserving Peat Carbon (2019-2022)* is a Global Peatlands Initiative project funded by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI). This project aims at ensuring that effective policies, improved methods, data and tools to support sustainable peatland management are increasingly available globally and initiatives toward protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use are well coordinated and implemented by key actors in the pilot countries of Republic of Indonesia, Peru, Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo with results extended to other countries. It promotes innovation and South-South cooperation. Total Budget: €2 million. *Securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin peatlands through informed decision-making*, is a project under consideration by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI). The objective of this project, managed by UN Environment Programme and the FAO, is to support sustainable land-use planning in the Cuvette Centrale peatlands. To protect the invaluable natural diversity and carbon sinks, this program, which may run until 2026, aims to support the RoC and DRC in climate and biodiversity-friendly development planning through informed cross-sectoral policy-making and ecological analysis and monitoring, including early warning system and spatial land-use planning tools. A participatory governance mechanism will include all stakeholders, such as local communities, NGOs, private sector and academia. Options for low-impact drainage-free land-uses and alternative community-based livelihoods, such as community-based ecotourism, sustainable fishing or wet agriculture, will be explored. A key pillar of the project is to build capacity of civil society and government institutions to support integrated long-term environmental management.

The U.S. Forest Service: In the areas surrounding the Léfini and Lésio Louna Reserves on the Batéké Plateau, the U.S. Forest Service has been working with a group of community representatives, protected area managers, technical partners, and ministry officials to develop participatory fire management plans. Developing a comprehensive fire management plan requires identifying how land is being used, how different interest groups would like to use the land, and how fire can be used to

achieve land use management objectives. The aims are to use this experience to inform the adoption of fire management planning at the national level, eventually integrating the approach into national forest policy guidelines. As part of a larger effort to strengthen the capacity of the Republic of the Congo's National Protected Areas Agency (ACFAP), the U.S. Forest Service is also using ongoing work in the Léfini Reserve as an opportunity to train Agency staff about how to involve communities in the planning processes. The U.S. Forest Service is also seeking to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the Ministry of Forest Economy, focusing on forest inventory and monitoring, fire management, sustainable ecotourism development, and institutional capacity development. With activities at the national level as well as in the field, the U.S. Forest Service collaborates with a range of local and international NGOs and universities. To support the implementation of the Republic of the Congo's National Forest Monitoring System, the U.S. Forest Service, through the U.S. Department of State's Climate Fellow program has embedded a technical advisor in the Ministry of Forest Economy who is specifically working on the development of a Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) Measurement, Reporting, and Verification System.

German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) on-going initiative "Ready for Climate Finance" in Central Africa: The approach outlines key elements of climate finance readiness, describes capacity development options and summarizes GIZ experiences. The updated version takes account of recent developments in international climate finance, particularly in the context of GCF and practical experience gained in GIZ's climate finance projects. Collaboration and exchange of experience for implementation of the current project will be in the areas of transboundary cooperation in the management of natural resources among frontline communities. This project will also benefit from the GIZ's rich experience in the application of community-based co-management models of environmental resources in other parts of the Congo Basin and in sub-Saharan Africa generally.

Sangha-Likouala Emission Reduction Program (PRE-SL) 2020-2024: It is funded by the World Bank to the tune of United States Dollars (USD) 85.13 million. The Republic of the Congo Emission Reductions Program is a jurisdictional-scale REDD+ program developed in collaboration between Terra Global and the Congo National Coordination body (CN-REDD) and the World Bank under its Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The program focuses on the Departments of Likouala and Sangha which represent some of the most remote regions of the Republic of Congo – if not all of Central Africa. The goal of the programme is to support sustainable development and a green economy to empower businesses active in the region, rural communities and the government of Congo to combat climate change and improve the rural livelihoods. The Emission Reduction (ER) Program is designed to mitigate a host of direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the program area including logging exploitation, agro-industrial production (palm oil), slash-and-burn agriculture and mining as an emerging driver. Activities will also seek to address underlying causes of deforestation including weak governance, lack of policy coordination and land use planning, poverty and insufficient enabling conditions for sustainable economic activities, population growth and infrastructure development. Still in preparation, the missing documents to start negotiations for the Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ER-PA) are the Benefit Sharing Plan (PPB) and the calculation of the uncertainty around the Reference Emission Level (NERF). The Benefit Sharing Plan (PPB) will be prepared by CN-REDD. The goal is to achieve results-based carbon credit payments with a potential of 9,013,440 tCO2e over 5 years (2020-2024), or about $ 50 million.

National initiatives

Congo's National Development Plan (NDP) is a common roadmap for moving Congo forward and to integrate multilayer and multi-sectorial strategic planning framework that gives life to the President's vision, embodied in the "Future Path". Its primary objective is to expedite the modernization of society and industrialization of Congo, with a view to creating greater prosperity and thus set the stage for Congo's emergence in the global economy. It is recognized that protection of the environment and the

sustainable management of natural resources are an integral part of this plan. The main purpose of the NDP is to translate the vision and program of the "Future Path" into a medium-term strategic framework for the 2012-2016 period, coupled with action programs, consistent fiscal objectives, strategic priorities, and an improved mechanism for taking action, monitoring outcomes, and assessing the impact on development. To that end, as shown in Figure 1, the NDP includes the Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP), the programming and budgeting documents (PAP-MTEF), and the document for monitoring and assessing the country's development strategy. It also includes the forward-looking document "Congo Vision 2025".

The Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP) is one of the key components of the NDP. It is a new-generation PRSP, expanded into a five-year plan. The environment also pays a central role I n the 2012-2016 DSCERP. This is because the RoC is a country whose development is still tightly coupled with the exploitation of natural resources (petroleum, minerals, the land, water resources, etc.). The DSCERP provides an integrated framework of macroeconomic and sectoral strategies that Congo intends to combine to diversify and accelerate growth, create jobs, and develop the social sector in line with (i) the Millennium Development Goals (MDG); (ii) Congo's dreams of emergence, (iii) sustainable development goals, and (iv) the aspirations of the Congolese people.

The "Forestry and Wood Industries" Cluster of the NDP is another very important dimension with direct implications on the current project. The second most productive sector in the country, forestry contributes 5.6 percent to GDP formation and accounts for 10 percent of the country's foreign trade, with nearly 11,000 direct jobs and approximately 5,000 induced jobs[73]. Nevertheless, the country still does not earn enough revenue from its forests, owing to deficient processing rates, little control of the value chain, and inadequate taxation. Moreover, the production of non-wood products is still an informal activity. Congo's sectoral strategy is set out in the "Wood and Forestry" plan, which aims at better governance of forests, dissemination of the principles of sustainable forestry management to all forestry operations, and the adoption of a genuine industrial strategy organized around the forestry cluster. The main programs include: (i) for the sustainable management and development of forestry and wildlife resources: development of production forests (9,519,690 hectares); economic development of the wood subsector (second- and third-degree processing) and of non-wood forestry products (production of resins and oils); reforestation and regeneration of forestry resources (600,000 hectares of plantations out of the projected one million in ten years); and development of parks and protected areas (3,680,424 hectares of protected areas); (ii) for sustainable development: strengthening of the legislative framework through the definition of a sustainable development strategy, including standards and indicators, and the creation of a National Sustainable Development Commission; (iii) for environmental protection: protection of the environment and preservation of biodiversity through the establishment of an environmental education program, the promulgation and dissemination of the law on the environment, and the management of wetlands.

On-going private sector activities in the project area

The private sector is an important group of stakeholders in the project region. In recognition of this fact, a high-level meeting was organized between the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment (the Executing Agency of this project) and private sector actors present in the Lac Télé landscape area (the project location) in Brazzaville on June 4th 2020. The aim was to have a conversation with investment managers and business leaders of the private sector concerned about the UNEP-GEF project preparation, and to call for their involvement in the efforts of the Government of the Republic of

[73] IMF 2012. Republic of Congo: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. International Monetary Fund. Washington DC. USA.

Congo for the effective conservation of peatlands and natural resources in the project area. The meeting achieved the following: (i) Awareness was built on the project, its objectives, goals, expected results, and activities for private sector operating in the project area; (ii) Initiatives and visions of the Government of the Republic of Congo in the Lac Télé area for community-based conservation of peatland ecosystems were articulated; (iii) Potential areas of collaboration with the private sector in the achievement of some of the project goals were articulated and discussed; (iv) Opinions and observations the private sector on the objectives of the project in relation to their involvement were gathered (see the Table 3 below); and (v) Various levels of commitments on effective participation of the private sector were received.

Table 3. On-going private sector activities in the project area and expectations from the current project.

Company Name	**Activities**	**Sustainable management policy**	**Public participation**	**Expectations of the UNEP-GEF project**
Société Petroleum	Oil exploration - Hydrocarbon (Holder of the Ngoki permit which covers 9,392 km2)	As defined in the contract with the State and the requirement of an environmental impact study is required at each stage of the activity: Exploration; construction, operation, dismantling. Petroleum also applies international standards	Defined in the contract with the State, but the company carries out social actions for the benefit of the populations (construction of schools	The Petroleum Company has expressed the wish to collaborate with the project for the implementation of corporate social responsibility
Société SEFYD Located in Sangha	Logging and wood processing (on site)	The company has a management plan which is adopted and implemented in accordance with state requirements. The company is currently developing an environmental impact study	Various social actions for the benefit of the populations are carried out	SEFYD wishes support from the UNEP-GEF project for capacity building in terms of social responsibility and remains open to proposals from the project team to collaborate.
CIB OLAM – Congolaise Industrielle de Bois Location : Likouala et la Sangha	Wood exploitation with processing factories	The company works on the basis of concessions obtained from the State and works according to the specifications of its concessions. A development plan is adopted with the participation of local populations and authorities. As required by the procedure, any development plan is transmitted to the Council of Ministers for validation and then submitted to the National Assembly for adoption. After adoption of the development plan by force of law and compulsory execution	CIB OLAM has often been attacked for its actions by some NGOs such as Greenpeace. The company has set up since 2006 a community development fund managed in partnership with the populations. The fund receives 200 francs / m3 of marketable wood for the benefit of population development projects.	CIB OLAM would like to benefit from the project to strengthen its efforts to conserve biodiversity. CIB OLAM would also like to be supported in reforestation and regeneration activities. CIB OLAM would also like project support to ensure the functioning of the community development fund.
ECO – OIL	Agro-		The company has an	ECO-OIL ENERGIE

ENERGIE S.A Located in the departments of Sangha and Cuvette	industry and palm oil production.		eco-plus program which aims to provide seeds to local populations who in return sell the crops to the company.	S.A would like to benefit from capacity building support in the area of social responsibility.
Société THANRY Congo Located in Likouala	Logging			Collaboration for restoration and reforestation. Capacity building for the supervision and education of populations in the management of development funds set up by companies.

This project will support public-private-community partnerships through a broad range of initiatives (see Outcome 4.1). These will include participation in the identification of common objectives, overlapping challenges, opportunities for win-win-collaboration, training in key environmental welfare processes associated with the project implementation, etc. Besides support for understanding common issues, problems and challenges, this project will also support capacity-building for the private sector in understanding relevant sustainability standards, the role of corporate social responsibility in sustainable business practices, and strategies for community engagement when operating within the context of community-based natural resources management models.

2.7. Linkages with other GEF and non-GEF interventions

The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (Congo IP) is funded by the GEF to the tune of 57.2 million USD, with the objective to catalyse transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through partnership with the private sector. This project will contribute to the Congo IP's goal of sustainable management of environmental resources in the Congo Basin, and to its transformational change agenda in terms of land-use, SFM, biodiversity conservation. Components 1 and 2 contribute to building and supporting an enabling environment for SLM, SFM, and biodiversity conservation. Capacity building in achieving these goals and ensuring community-led strategies for sustainable natural resources management are addressed in Components 1, 2, 3 and 4. The involvement of key stakeholders including local communities, private sectors and government entities at all level will help to generate general ownership by stakeholders and global environment benefits of peatlands conservation also aligns with the inclusive agenda of resource management and change resonating with the Congo IP. In particular, this directly responds to the Congo IP objective for Component 3 - sustainable use of forests by local communities and forest dependent people through strengthening of rights and tenure, and sustainable management of production sector activities.

Forest and Economic Diversification Project (PFDE 2) (2018-2021) is funded by the World Bank for a total budget of USD 6.5 million. The Project Development Objective (ODP) is to strengthen the capacities of the Forest Administration, of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples (CLPAs) in participatory forest management. The project seeks to support the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the management of forest resources (USD 2.33 million): continuous

strengthening of capacities for the implementation of Simple Management Plans, while funding IGAs that reduce deforestation and degradation of forests. Current efforts are mainly focused on cocoa production, and this activity will be expanded, particularly in the areas surrounding the protected areas[74]. It will also support the development of national parks (2.85 million USD), with the aim to increase the protection of virgin forest areas in the Emission Reduction Program (ER-P) zone with a triple objective of supporting REDD + efforts, protect biodiversity and create income generation opportunities. The sub-component would have two main activities. The project will fund the development of a park management plan, the construction of infrastructure, hiring, training and equipment of staff, efforts to include the community in the management of the park and to provide drinking water and community management of the park. Targeted investments in tourism development will also be financed in order to support efforts aimed at the economic viability of this virgin protected area. Lastly, the project will support the implementation of the national strategy against poaching (1 million USD): implementation of priority recommendations resulting from the application of the analytical tool of the International Consortium to Combat Related Crime to wildlife (ICCWC), including the establishment of a criminal records management system, training in the conduct of regional wildlife crime investigations, legislative reviews and the creation of canine units in certain eco-guard units.

UNDP/GEF project "Conservation of Trans-boundary Biodiversity in the Minkébé-Odzala-Dja Inter-zone in Gabon, Congo, and Cameroon": The goal of this project is to maintain the ecological functions and connectivity of Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM), and ensure long-term conservation of its protected area system, through integrated, sustainable and participatory management in the interzone between the protected areas. The current project will collaborate with the TRIDOM project in the assessment of local community and private sector participation in effective protected area management, build on the on-the-ground experience of the TRIDOM project to draw on valuable lessons in the design and implementation of Land Use Management Plans (LUMPs), as well as on trans-boundary collaborations. The TRIDOM experiences as well as their investments on anti-poaching activities and related IWT activities will form an avenue to synergistic collaboration to avoid the duplication of efforts and coordinated on-the-ground activities and impact. Close collaboration in this vein will support the design of long term measures and a strategy to fight illegal hunting, IWT, and other related biodiversity conservation challenges.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Republic of Congo Office has been present in the landscape since the late 1990's will continue to be active throughout the landscape from Nouabale-Ndoki National Park and its periphery, supporting wildlife management in the three Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified forestry concessions Pokola, Loundoungou and Kabo via the Project for Ecosystem Management in the Periphery of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (PROGEPP) project, and across the Lac Tele landscape as the main government partner for the management of the Lac Tele Community Reserve. Across its program, WCS is carrying out high-impact research, systematic wildlife monitoring, research to understand both the biological and socio-economic factors contributing to forest and natural habitat degradation. WCS also focuses on building the capacity of Congolese citizens in both environmental research and project management. Ecotourism is being developed in Nouabale-Ndoki by WCS through the recent piloting of a tourism test phase at the park headquarters in the last years, and currently supporting the communities the development of community tourism in Bomassa and engaging with a private tourism company where discussions are well advanced.

[74] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Using these lessons learnt from other projects in the sub-region, WCS is now developing a strategy to evaluate and promote community-based tourism potential in Lac Tele starting in 2020. The Strategy will be revised to address the COVID 19 and climate change risk in order to assess the feasibility and viability of investing in tourism industry. The assessment will if necessary, provide alternative options for tourism development. WCS has also been successful in developing a framework for community-led sustainable natural resources management, so far focused on fisheries under implementation with local communities in both the Ndoki and Lac Tele landscape. WCS helps to lead a multi-partner program to support the development and implementation of community-led sustainable hunting practices in Northern Congo which can then be replicated to other sites (the Sustainable Wildlife Management project with FAO, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). WCS has provided long-term support to the government in legal reforms (wildlife related law, fisheries law, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)) and the development and implementation of national strategies such as the National Ivory and Elephant Action Plans. As a partner in the implementation of the current project, WCS will draw on its rich experience in the project area to support implementation of three Outputs: 1.1.4. Land–use management plans (LUMPs) developed for selected districts in Lac Télé landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism; 1.1.5. Investments in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography's protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation; 3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, protected areas and wildlife conservation.

UNEP/GEF Creation of Conkouati Dimonika Protected Area Complex and Development of Community Private Sector Participation Model to Enhance PA Management Effectiveness (CDC&CPSPM) (GEF Project ID: ***5537).*** The aim of this project to ensure biodiversity conservation and management effectiveness through the creation of a protected area complex and the implementation of a communities and private sector participation model. Three main outcomes are envisaged: (i) Establishment and enhanced connectivity of protected areas; (ii) Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation; and (iii) Good management practices adopted in the Conkouati – Dimonika – Tchimpounga PA landscape. These outcomes align with the overall vision and objectives of the current project and provide a basis for collaboration at different levels. The first outcome above aligns with the goal of supporting biodiversity conservation and preservation envisaged by this project, and is in line with the fight against IWT. Hence collaboration at the level of planning and strategy will be developed with the CDC&CPSPM. The second outcome aligns with this project's plans to identify, demarcate, develop LUMPs, as well as implement them for the sustainable management of peatlands of the Lac Télé Landscape. The current project will draw on lessons learned by the CDC&CPSPM in developing and implementing the said LUMPs. This project will also collaborate with the CDC&CPSPM in designing and implementing models for public private partnerships envisaged for sustainable investment and financing of environmentally friendly production activities, as well as biodiversity conservation in the Lac Télé Landscape.

GEF/UNDP: Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo (GEF ID number: 9159, from 2017-2023): The objective of the project is to strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in the basins of the Republic of Congo by improving biodiversity enforcement. The project is therefore designed to change the current situation of the unprecedented massacre of fauna of global importance and destruction of key habitats by building strong national capacity to fight IWT, and promote collaboration and cooperation between local communities and protected areas in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe transboundary area.

The current project will collaborate with the "Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo" in the field of designing and incorporating enforcement procedures for IWT control, as well as in the establishment of collaborative relationships with trans-boundary partners. Strong synergies with the current project exist in the areas' biodiversity conservation, monitoring and management; as well as in combatting IWT.

UNEP/GEF: Marine Protected Area Creation for Turtle Conservation in Loungo Bay, Congo (GEF Project ID: 5806): The main objective of this project was to ensure that conservation of marine biodiversity through participative protection of the marine turtles' habitat. The current project will draw on lessons learned during the implementation of this project. The geography of the "Creation of Loungo Bay Marine Protected Area to support Turtles Conservation in Congo" project and the types of economic activities carried out by local populations (marine protected areas with important biodiversity significance) bears similarities with the reality of the Lac Télé Landscape, and can therefore offer important lessons on how to approach the current project.

Integrated management of mangrove and associated wetlands and coastal forests ecosystems of the Republic of Congo - CBSP (GEF Project ID: 4083): This project is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The goal of this project was to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity and reduce degradation in Congo's mangrove ecosystems through: (i) strengthening the legal and institutional framework; (ii) increasing the knowledge and availability of information on trends, status and threats to the mangrove ecosystems in order to inform decision-making; and (iii) building capacity for sustainable management of mangrove resources at the community level. The current project can build on many of the efforts laid down by the CBSP, including building on the institutional and legal framework for biodiversity conservation for revisions to reflect the conservation of sensitive ecosystems and peatlands of the Lac Télé Landscape. It will also identify gaps at the community, district and national level in capacities for environmental management beyond mangroves which would need to be enhanced in its capacity-building activities.

The *Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)* is a 20 year regional initiative funded by USAID that began in 1995. The program was created to increase knowledge of Central African forests and biodiversity and build institutional and human resources capacity in the region. The overall goal for the ongoing second phase of CARPE is to help establish sustainable natural resource management practices throughout Central Africa, thereby promoting sustainable economic development and alleviating poverty for the benefit of the people of the region and the global community. CARPE activities also aim to address several cross-cutting themes, including monitoring and information sharing, gender-related issues, capacity building, and conflict mitigation at the local level.

WB/GEF project "Strengthening the management of wildlife and improving livelihoods in northern Republic of Congo" (2017-2021): The geographic focus of this project is the Ntokou-Pikounda protected area and surrounding area. The focus of this project is on sustainable forest management, strengthening anti-poaching capacity at national and local level, development of sustainable livelihood options for local communities in the Ntokou-Pikounda project area[75]. The components of this WB/GEF project aligns with the broad aims of the current project, and strong avenues for collaboration in knowledge sharing, joint approaches for community engagement, and alignment of strategic goals to cross-fertilize each other in IWT and livelihood development strategies will be forged. Collaboration with the current project will be established in capacity building and institutional strengthening regarding peatland management, the monitoring of hotspots of poaching and IWT, involvement of local communities and indigenous people in forest resource management; and habitat and biodiversity conservation.

[75] http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/136571492631977242/Rep-of-Congo-GWP-National-Project-Profile-WB-vF.pdf

Forest and Economic Diversification Project (PFDE 2) (2018-2021) is funded by GEF 6 for a total budget of USD 6.5 million. The Project Development Objective (ODP) is to strengthen the capacities of the Forest Administration, of the CLPAs in participatory forest management. The project seeks to support the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the management of forest resources (USD 2.33 million): continuous strengthening of capacities for the implementation of Simple Management Plans, while funding IGAs that reduce deforestation and degradation of forests. Current efforts are mainly focused on cocoa production, and this activity will be expanded, particularly in the areas surrounding the protected areas[76]. It will also support the development of national parks (2.85 million USD), with the aim to increase the protection of virgin forest areas in the ER-P zone with a triple objective of supporting REDD + efforts, protect biodiversity and create income generation opportunities. The sub-component would have two main activities. The project will fund the development of a park management plan, the construction of infrastructure, hiring, training and equipment of staff, efforts to include the community in the management of the park and to provide drinking water and community management of the park. Targeted investments in tourism development will also be financed in order to support efforts aimed at the economic viability of this virgin protected area. Lastly, the project will support the implementation of the national strategy against poaching (1 million USD): implementation of priority recommendations resulting from the application of the analytical tool of the International Consortium to Combat Related Crime to wildlife (ICCWC), including the establishment of a criminal records management system, training in the conduct of regional wildlife crime investigations, legislative reviews and the creation of canine units in certain eco-guard units.

Projects of the International Climate Initiative (IKI). Two of the ongoing initiatives by IKI are of direct relevance to the current project. These include (1) Protected area categories V and VI as landscape mechanisms for enhancing biodiversity in agricultural land, ecological connectivity and REDD+ implementation, and (2) The Global Peatlands Initiative. The goal of "PA categories V and VI as landscape mechanisms for enhancing biodiversity in agricultural land, ecological connectivity and REDD+ implementation" is to demonstrate conservation and development benefits in four targeted landscapes in Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This demonstration is being done through better use of the Protected Area categories "Protected Landscape/ Seascape" and "Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources". Conservation benefits of landscapes is one of the major goals of the current project and will greatly benefit from the knowledge and experience of IKI. The Global Peatlands Initiative has been analysing the state of moorland habitats worldwide and the role they play in the global carbon cycle. The project will improve and support access to the current body of knowledge while creating a hotspot atlas and a platform on moor degradation. This initiative is identifying gaps that that will help global and national strategies, as well as project partners to develop strategies and approaches to counter peatland losses more effectively. The project also facilitates networking among researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders. The Global Peatlands Initiative has contributed data and materials to the development of this project document. Through further collaboration, project activities in the Lac Tele - Lac Tumba Landscapes will further benefit from the resources of this Initiative. Examples of such benefits could come through resources from IKI's Small Grants scheme which support grants directly relevant to activities implemented by this project. Their focus areas include: (i) Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; (ii) Adapting to the impacts of climate change. (iii) Conserving natural carbon sinks / forestry; and (iv) Conserving biological diversity.

[76] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Lessons learned from previous projects

In the course of developing the current project, deliberate efforts have been made to catalogue previous projects implemented at the local, national and regional levels with potential synergies to the current project and collate lessons learned from their implementation. This project intends to build on these lessons to ensure success in its own implementation. Below are some of the key lessons learned:

• The involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the project, while strengthening their technical capacities, enabled the communities to engage in constructive collaboration and the appropriation of numerous activities.

• Local and traditional administrative authorities should be involved in the design and implementation phase of all activities. The results of all activities should also be shared.

• With appropriate technical advice and support, communities can develop activities that also meet environmental standards.

• Working with communities requires patience and adaptive management skills due to the often limited local capacity and education and local concerns regarding the objectives of implementing partners.

• Timely Specific, Measurable, Ambitious and Feasible over Time (SMART) reports allow management teams to make more informed and effective management decisions, such as the frequency and distribution of ecological patrol patrols.

• The community monitoring approach contributes to the protection of biodiversity in protected areas,

• Local management committees can be effective if they are sufficiently representative, have a clear mandate and have adequate technical, financial and logistical support.

• The active involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the project while providing them with technical support facilitates collaboration and allows them to take ownership of the activities.

• Adequate capacity building and supervision increase community capacity and allow beneficiaries to independently develop and maintain conservation and development actions for income-generating activities.

• The involvement of active household members (men, women and children) in integrated production systems is an appropriate approach to make the management of pilot farms sustainable and efficient. Capacity building gives men, women and children an equal opportunity to take ownership of this approach.

• Local capacity building and community awareness are essential to increase community participation in climate change actions.

In summary, this Child project is an important lever in the participatory management of land and forests, and it constitutes an approach well adapted to the current context of biodiversity management in general, and land and forests in particular. However, it is necessary to target more the sensitivities of the populations and the leaders of the environment who are able to pack the maximum of the latter in achieving the objectives of the project. In addition, community actors must be continuously trained to intervene in the context of the targeted project. In addition, appropriate measures must be taken to stop the destruction and loss of habitats caused by itinerant subsistence agriculture on burns. Measures to combat unsustainable logging by charcoal and firewood must be taken. Also tackle the high level of poverty and illiteracy of local populations with a view to better involving them in the sustainable management of land and forests. Measures must also be taken to counter the disorderly population growth that is driving the increase in food needs and exacerbating pressures and threats to natural resources. The movement of people to protected areas must also be restricted by appropriate mechanisms.

Anchor with the four Components of the Congo IP

The current project is also well anchored with all for components of the Congo IP. This anchor is well illustrated through the project Outputs that are connected to Congo IP program Components, as see in the table below.

Table 4. Links between the current project and the Congo IP.

CBSL Program components	RoC Project Outputs addressing Congo IP Components
1. Enabling framework for countries in targeted transboundary landscapes to plan, monitor and adapt land management and leverage local, national and international investments for SLM/SFM	▪ National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption (Output 1.1.1) ▪ Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Tele landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism and made available for adoption (Output 1.1.4) ▪ Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years (Output 2.1.1) ▪ Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level (Output 2.1.3)
2. Long-term viability of forest providing important habitat to endangered species and critical ecosystem services	▪ Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc. (Output 1.1.2) ▪ Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website. (Output 1.1.3)
3. Reduced community and production sector impacts on important services of forests in landscapes	▪ Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site (Output 3.1.2) ▪ Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (Output 4.1.1)
4. Capacity building, knowledge management, and regional cooperation	▪ Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and

	transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc. (Output 1.1.2) ▪ Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production (Output 2.1.2) Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation. (Output 3.1.3) ▪ Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption (Output 4.1.2) ▪ Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation (Output 5.1.1)

Outstanding gaps and remaining challenges

While impressive, the existing baseline initiatives suffer from some gaps. One of the main reasons for existing gaps is because of the novelty of knowledge regarding the existence and extent of the tropical peatlands in the Congo Basin. To understand the vulnerabilities that peatlands face, information is needed – the need for relevant scientific investigations, data and analysis to shed light on the situation of peatlands, the challenges they face, opportunities for sustainable management, opportunities for the engagement of local communities, and so on. Existing initiatives are also not sufficiently coordinated and do not specifically take the specific concerns of peatland conservation and management into account. Many sectoral initiatives have a narrow focus: for instance, forestry activities focus solely on increasing tree cover, without addressing peatland management as would be needed under a landscape-wide SLM strategy. Moreover, they do not necessarily use indigenous trees, nor take into account the effect of tree monocultures on biodiversity or for that matter the impact of hydrological changes in the evolution of peatland landscapes. The lack of an integrated approach also means that the human dimension is not sufficiently addressed in an assimilated manner. By failing to address livelihood concerns such as food crop production, the demand for animal protein, livestock husbandry, and other livelihood demands, these projects can undercut their own success. In the same vein, agriculture sector investments are focused on enhancing food security by increasing agricultural production with limited attention to the effects of agricultural production on the surrounding environment, or the role of ecosystem services in successful and sustainable agriculture.

Legal, regulatory and administrative gaps including (i) Weaknesses in the implementation of policies based on the sustainable management of peatland ecosystems at several institutional levels. In spite of the commitment of the states to this approach, institutions are not well prepared. There are gaps in existing sectoral policies, and the failure to incorporate environmental and social considerations into the decision-making process, and an absence of effective mechanisms for information sharing, integrated planning and collaboration among agencies and stakeholders. (ii) The private sector has been motivated by short-term considerations. As a consequence, the public-private partnerships necessary to sustain biodiversity are limited. Existing models of development in Congo and in the project location have not sufficiently engaged the private sector in the search for sustaianable alternatives to current natural resources and landscape management practices. (iii) At the policy level,

there is high institutional fragmentation and lack of adequate human resources. (iv) Many of the causes of peatland degradation and vulnerability also fall on the medium and large-scale farmers who historically received incentives from rural policies to prioritize mono-cropping and extensive cattle-raising. In and arround the project location, large-scale oil palm cultivation is present and growing. (v) Absence of sufficient data and systematized information, and consequently, an almost complete absence of monitoring and evaluation processes. This lack hinders decision-making process and has impeded ecosystem considerations to be mainstreamed into public policies for productive activities.

Knowledge gaps including: (i) Although there are low-cost solutions to promote sustainable peatland management, there is insufficient dissemination that would detain and restore peatland degradation, address issues of IWT, and conserve biodiversity. (ii) Lack of incentives to encourage the use of sustainable, productive technologies, including those targeted at the private sector, as well as the pursuit of tested sustainable approaches to land management. (iii) Technical assistance and management schemes frequently fail to reach the poor, limiting the tools, resources, and guidance needed by ölocal populations to engage in sustainable livelihood alternatives. (iv) Lack of awareness among key stakeholders – not only among the poor but also the publics sector and the private sector – of the economic benefits of peatland conservation, biodiversity conservation, as well as the deleterious impact of IWT on local ecosystems. (v) Community participation has been restricted and, when existing, because of extreme poverty levels, it often contradicts with the protection and conservation of the environment.

There is also an urgent need for embracing comprehensive and cross-sectoral interventions, in particular, an integrated ecosystem management approach that would restore, conserve, and protect peatlands of the Congo, while concurrently improving the livelihood of its inhabitants on and around these sensitive ecosystems.

SECTION 3: INTERVENTION STRATEGY (ALTERNATIVE)

3.1. Project rationale, policy conformity and expected global environmental benefits

Project rationale: Given the increasing anthropogenic pressures on the forests of the Republic of Congo, there are real indicators of emerging threats that could lead to its physical degradation as well as decline of the health of these sensitive ecosystems. Some of the key challenges being faced by the peatlands of the Republic of Congo include logging, drainage, and burning. At the macro level peatland degradation and decline in peatland health can be driven by: i) increasing demand for palm oil for food, industrial and biofuel sectors; ii) increasing demand for pulp and paper, and timber; iii) growing population and increased demand for agricultural land in peatland regions; iv) poor inter-agency coordination, weak governance and inadequate enforcement; and v) climate change. There is good reason to expect an increase in the current pressures on peatlands of the Republic of Congo based on drive to exploit the resources already identified in the area, including wildlife, timber, petroleum, minerals, and other non-timber forest products. The current project will contribute to climate change mitigation through reducing forest loss and increasing land cover (with a potential reduction of carbon emissions by about 20,398,082 tCO_2eq).

Experience from Indonesia and Malaysia (home to some of the world's tropical peatlands) shows that degradation of peatlands create negative impacts on the regulation and maintenance of hydrological balance in dry and wet seasons, which is critical to prevent flood and drought in surrounding areas. It also has negative impacts on biodiversity conservation of endemic flora, as well as a reduction in ecosystem services that contributes to a decline in nature-support for local livelihoods and health. One of the key forms of land clearance in peatlands is through the use of fire in burning vegetation, which can have direct impact on health through atmospheric pollutants released from the burning of peatland biomass.

Policy conformity: This project supports the achievement of broader objective of the Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (Congo IP) - catalysing transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest dependent people, and through partnerships with the private sector.

• *BD-1-1 - Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors.* The project will improve the effective management of the conserved area of the Lac Télé reserve by improving the capacity of local community groups to implement environmental projects, including the reforestation of gallery forests which are crucial for ecosystem services and fishery production (Component 2). It will also achieve this by promoting awareness of and compliance with voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) targeting existing concessions within the private sector (Component 4). Financial sustainability will be strengthened by developing and experimenting with the development of ecotourism, organic cocoa value chains and partnerships with public-private partnerships for sustainable environmental development. Management efficiency will be improved through the development, refinement and implementation of an integrated management plan for the Lac Télé landscape, including the peatland landscape. This site is a key habitat for endangered flora and fauna.

• *BD-1-3 - Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting.* This project undertakes natural capital assessment and accounting (Output 1.1.3) to support the valuing impacts and dependencies upon natural capital in the Lac Tele Landscape. This process will support a more efficient integration of the Landscape's natural capital into decision-making and so improve natural capital management. Among some of the assessments to be made would be an assessment of size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands; and an assessment of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in targeted peatlands. These assessments will form the foundation for the development of a peatland fire frequency, prediction and early warning system; development of Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires; building of capacity for peatland monitoring; and the development of information management and monitoring system.

• *BD-1-5 - Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through Inclusive conservation.* The project will work closely with local communities and indigenous populations to enhance sustainable livelihoods and support co-management of conservation areas and also mainstream biodiversity considerations into production (agriculture and forestry) landscapes. This follows several engagement initiatives during the project preparation phase to sensitive different local stakeholders on the aims, objectives and vision of the project, as well as elicit input from these stakeholders on project design and implementation arrangements on the ground. In the same spirit of inclusiveness and in improving local engagement in project implementation, the capacity for local community groups to implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for viable management of ecosystem services will be improved (Outcome 2). The project will work with private sector and local communities, to better manage and protect the peatlands and reduce conflicts among adjacent land uses in these landscapes. In this vein, it will promote knowledge on and adherence to Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), and collaborative processes between local populations and business actors targeting existing concessions within the private sector (Outcome 4).

• *CCM-2-7 - Demonstrate mitigation options with systemic impacts for sustainable forest management impact program.* The implementation of this project will promote conservation and enhancement of

carbon stocks in forest and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture. It will aim to reduce GHG emissions related to drainage and burning of peatland forest, plantation and agriculture systems in the targeted landscapes and at state and national levels through development and implementation of Action Plans on Peatlands and other related strategies, policies and action plans. It is calculated that this project will contribute to 20,398,082 tCO_2eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years (see details in Supplement 3).

• *LD-1-1 - Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM).* The project will support the increased application of sustainable land management practices by relevant government, local community and private sector actors. These areas will include land and waterscapes that have suffered from degradation especially within the forest reserves and protected areas. Engagement of private sector and local communities in the restoration of peat swamp forests will be enhanced through technical support and incentive mechanisms. The project will also promote sustainable peatland management at the local and national level through community-based processes, as well as supporting the development and promotion of guidelines on land use plans to guide the allocation of and management of land and their uses with potential to enhance sustainable peatland management.

• *LD-1-2 - Maintain or improve flow of ecosystem services, including sustaining livelihoods of forest-dependent people through Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).* To maintain and enhance the flow of ecosystem services, the project will focus on managing the human-biodiversity interface of the Lac Télé forest and peatland landscapes in line with GEF-7 priorities. Threats identified are mainly pressure of development whereby the production zones in the landscapes have been developed for agriculture, illegal wildlife trading, mining, and urban development leading to increased disruption of the natural processes of the landscape and its peatlands (including disturbances to the hydrological balance and increased fire risk). To achieve a broad adherence and adoption of sustainable forest management best practices, this project will develop alternative income generating and livelihood support activities for populations in the project area (Outcome 3). Alternative income generating sources and livelihood support choices will reduce the pressure on forest and other wildlife resources in protected areas of the project location.

• *BD-2-7 - Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and Improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate.* Financial sustainability will be enhanced through development and implementation of ecotourism development, organic cacao value chains, and partnership with public-private partnerships for sustainable environmental development. This will provide a sustainable base for the improvement of management effectiveness for the project landscape. Management effectiveness will be enhanced through development, refinement and implementation of an integrated management plan for the Lac Télé landscape, including the peatland landscape within it. This site is a key habitat for endangered flora and fauna.

Because Biodiversity post 2020 framework has not yet been adopted as result of COVID-19, the project contrition to Aichi targets are develop but this contribution will be amended to consider the post 2020 framework which will be adopted hopefully in 2021. The project will contribute to achievement of a range of Aichi targets (see Table 5)

Table 5. Aichi Targets and related Components/Outputs for which the current project stands to contribute.

Aichi Targets	Project Contribution
Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.	Output 1.1.1 Component 5
Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting system	Output 1.1.1 Output 1.1.3 Output 1.1.4
Target 4 : By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within ecological limits.	Component 4 and safe
Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all-natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.	Components 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.	Output 1.1.1 Component 5
Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.	Component 1, 2, 4, 5
Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.	Output 1.1.1 Component 2
Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.	Component 2
Target 18 : By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.	Component 5
Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.	Output 2.1.3

Conformity with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In a broad sense, the current project contributes to many sustainable development goals. Nonetheless, its contribution to four SDGs stands out. These include SDGs 5, 8, 13 and 15 (see the table below).

Key SDG Targets	Project contribution to SDG Goals
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	***Outcome 1.1*** • Gender mainstreamed into peatland management and biodiversity conservation activities in the Lac Tele Landscape • Indigenous populations empowered in decision-making on location and processes of INRM, as well as take responsibilities on co-management of protected areas to achieve sustainable outcomes.
SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work for all	***Outcome 3.1, Outcome 2.1*** • Participatory zoning, protection, and management of land resources in the Lac Tele Landscape that promotes the conservation, rehabilitation, and sustainable use of peatlands carried out with the participation of relevant land-based production sectors and local communities.
SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	***Outcome 2.1*** • Establishment of an integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems
SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss	***Outcome 1.1; Outcome 4.1; Outcome 2.1*** • Regulatory frameworks and national policies are enhanced to support SLM in peatlands of the RoC and BD management efforts, including policy revisions to support the conservation of biodiversity in peatlands and forests of the Lac Tele Landscape.

Conformity with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

This project is consistent with the commitments of the RoC to the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2017-2021) [77].

This project is consistent with the commitments of the Government of the Republic of the RoC within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)[78]. This framework outlines the strategic direction and results expected from cooperation between the RoC and the UN Country Team (UNCT) for the period 2017-2021. This cooperation is underpinned by the principles of "leaving no one behind" and on "sustainable development & resilience" while meeting the central objective of poverty reduction. The inclusive approach of this project to supporting the sustainable management and use of natural resources is therefore in line with and supports the vision of UNDAF. The Project Task Manager will liaise with the UN Environment Offices in the Congo IP countries to ensure that the project's contribution to UNDAF 2017 – 2021 is properly captured and reported.

[77] The United Nations System 2017. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021. https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2017-UNDAF_Guidance_01-May-2017.pdf

[78] The United Nations System 2017. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021. https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2017-UNDAF_Guidance_01-May-2017.pdf

The project is in line with the commitments and initiatives of the RoC in a gender balanced development – buttressed by the Women's Act of 2010, and its amendment of 2015. These pieces of legislation define the commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment not only as human rights but also because they are a pathway to achieving the project's goal of protecting and managing biodiversity and natural resources on a sustainable basis. Gender equality and women's empowerment will be mainstreamed into project activities, ensuring that women have a real voice in project governance as well as implementation. Women will participate equally with men in any dialogue or decision-making initiated by the project and will influence decisions that will determine the success of the project and ultimately the future of their families. UNDAF's Strategic Result 3, targets Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Resources, Environment, and Climate Change Management. This strategic result specifically calls for a gender-balanced approach in the management of natural resources and gender-responsive extension and research works to support value chain development. These aspirations have been reflected in the development of this project. In the sidelines of the inception workshop, a Women's Forum will be organized to specifically examine the challenges of women in natural resources management, access to information and training, issues of land and other natural resources rights, and how the project could contribute to addressing these gender imbalances.

Global environmental benefits:

Biodiversity conservation: The Lac Télé Landscape has an extensive swamp forest covering about 90% of Landscape. This is the largest wetland in Africa, with a huge hydrological value for communities and biodiversity. Besides being of strategic importance for electricity generation, it has high fish biodiversity and contain three species of great apes at high density – unique in the world[79]. An 'island' of terra firma lies at the heart of the reserve, forming key habitat for gorillas. The Lac Télé Community Reserve contains one of the highest densities of western lowland gorillas in the region[80]. It is also home to forest elephants, chimpanzee, leopards, buffalos and more than 250 species of birds[81].

In 2017, the Cuvette Centrale peatlands in the central Congo Basin were mapped, revealing that they cover 145,500 sq. km – an area larger than England[82]. This study revealed that carbon has been building up in the Congo basin's peat for nearly 11,000 years. According to Dargie et al (2017), this makes the Cuvette Centrale—spanning both the Republic of Congo (ROC) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—the single largest peatland complex known in the tropics[83]. Hence beyond local benefits, more efficient management of the forest and peatland landscapes of the project area will also contribute to global benefits in terms of GHG emissions reductions (estimated to reach 20,398,082 tCO_2eq). This target will be achieved through a combination of support to best management practices in the wildlife, agricultural and fire prevention and control on peatland landscapes (see Appendix 10).

To preserve this important natural heritage of global importance, the Republic of Congo has deployed considerable efforts resulting in particular in the development of 17 terrestrial and 1 Marine protected

[79] Chris Sandbrook and Dilys Roe (2010) Linking Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: the case of Great Apes - An overview of current policy and practice in Africa. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, UK. https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02770.pdf

[80] Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) 2019. Lac Télé Community Reserve. https://programs.wcs.org/congo/Wild-Places/Lac-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9-Community-Reserve.aspx. Consulted on 12/01/2020.

[81] The Program on African Protected areas & Conservation - PAPACO (2011) Reserve Communautaire du Lac Télé. https://papaco.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/METT-Reserve-communautaire-Lac-Tele.pdf: Consulted on 12/01/2020

[82] Dargie, G. C., et al. (2017). Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex. Nature **542**(7639): 86.

[83] Dargie GC, Lewis SL, Lawson IT, Mitchard ETA, Page SE, Bocko YE, Ifo SA (2017) Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex. Nature 542(7639):86–90. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature21048

areas covering a total area of 3,991,418 ha, or 13% of the national territory. This protected area network represents 70.6% in achieving of Aichi Target 11 for Congo (18% of national territory covered by protected areas). Internationally, particularly in the border areas, the Congo in cooperation with its neighbours – Cameroon and Gabon – makes remarkable efforts in strengthening the protection and conservation of biodiversity including several animals and plant species of global importance such as forest elephants, chimpanzees, western lowland gorillas, leopards, and bongo antelope.

The project will support ongoing governmental and non-governmental conservation efforts by contributing specifically to:

- Strengthening the system of protected areas in the Lac Télé Landscape. These will include the Lac Télé Community Reserve (438960 ha), Odzala -Kokoua National Park (1354600 ha), Nouabalé – Ndoki National Park (423870 ha) and the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park (427200 ha).
- Contribute to national and Congo Basin Region goals of wildlife preservation of some of the well-known iconic species in the area such as forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), the lowland tropical dense humid forests gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), and chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*).
- Contribute to protection of globally significant peat swamp forests – the central Congo peatlands occupy an area of about the central Congo peatlands cover 145,500 square kilometers[84].
- This set of comprehensive actions will not only increase the resilience of the Lac Télé Landscape, but also, consolidate the entire system of protected areas in one sustainable and much more resilient complex according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve model.

While arguably not a GEB, there is substantial opportunity for the Project to provide information and education on the biodiversity and ecosystem values of the Congo Basin Region to ecotourism visitors (fruits of the initiatives within the project to develop and improve ecotourism). This project will therefore be serving to promote increased public awareness of the significance of the area's biodiversity endowment and the role of nature reserve network in its conservation; an approach that should be highly cost-effective and build the support needed to make project outcomes sustainable.

Sustainable management of land and forest resources: The project will contribute to the protection of globally significant peatlands and associated carbon stocks and biodiversity. The project anticipates that at least four (4) municipal councils have management plans to guide restoration and conservation efforts. The key global environmental benefits will arise from the protection, rehabilitation and sustainable management of key peatland areas. Preventing the degradation of peatlands and encouraging rehabilitation, conserving globally important biodiversity and taking action to promote sustainable land and forest management as stated in the National Action Plan on Peatlands will reduce occurrences of fires on peatlands and land-use pressure, which are key threats to those species in the project areas. At least 200 persons trained in implementing management of forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management. The tropical peat swamp forests feature some of the highest freshwater biodiversity of any habitat in the world and are home to a range of threatened fauna. Likewise, there are various rare flora that are under threat. Rehabilitation and sustainable management of these globally important peatlands will enable them to support these species over the longer term. Preventing the degradation of peatlands and encouraging rehabilitation, conserving globally important biodiversity, and taking action to promote sustainable land and forest management will contribute

[84] Dargie, G., Lewis, S., Lawson, I. *et al.* Age, extent and carbon storage of the central Congo Basin peatland complex. *Nature* **542,** 86–90 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1038/nature21048

towards the fulfilment of The Republic of Congo's obligations under the CBD (Aichi targets), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (Land Degradation targets) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s (Emission Reduction targets). The project will ensure that at least 85% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area.

Reductions in GHG emissions: Enhanced management of peatlands through the project (through fire prevention, avoided mining, aquaculture and other developments on peat, and reduced forest and peatland degradation) will reduce net GHG emissions. The project will contribute to 20,398,082 tCO_2eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided through the implementation of various activities on forests and peatlands of the project area over a time horizon of 20 years. In order to be conservative, the project has only targeted direct emissions during the project period rather than direct/indirect emissions over a 20-year period. Without the project interventions, 20,398,082 tCO_2eq would be released into the atmosphere in the business-as-usual scenario from the areas described below (see details in Supplement 3).

3.2. Project goal and objective

The overall objective of the project is to improve the sustainable management of peatland ecosystems and reduce GHG emissions, while improving the health of biological diversity.

More specifically, it will promote a community-based integrated conservation model and apply the sustainable management of protected areas to peatland forest ecosystems in the Lac Télé Landscape of the Republic of Congo.

This project will therefore contribute to promoting the sustainable management of peatlands with the full involvement of local communities, securing carbon stocks and conserving biodiversity while improving the standard of living of local communities.

This objective will be achieved by: (i) strengthening the capacities for sustainable management of peatlands; (ii) reduction of degradation of peatlands from fires and other unsustainable use practices; and (iii) the adoption of best practices for integrated and sustainable management of peatlands at the landscape level thanks to increased commitment from the private sector and local communities.

3.3. Project components and expected results

This project is divided into five components: Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of Land Use Plans (LUPs) for the Republic of Congo (RoC) Lac Tele Landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement. Component 2: Community management of natural resources. Component 3: Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism. Component 4: Engaging the private sector in conservation; and Component 5: Communication, knowledge management and project monitoring and evaluation. These Components, Outcomes and Outputs come together in the theory of change elaborated below.

Theory of change

To achieve the ultimate goal of integrating community-based conservation and protected area management into peatland conservation and sustainable management, as well as for forest ecosystems (including protected areas, and biodiversity), this project will strive to engender five main outcomes (an illustration of the theory of change below) leading to: (i) An enhanced local policy and national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of

forests and natural resources. (ii) An integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems. (iii) Environmentally friendly income-generating activities and initiatives to provide economic incentives for the participation of local communities' in the conservation of key natural resources and sensitive landscapes. (iv) Better public-private partnerships to stimulate private investments in green development ventures and ensure that private sector initiatives strive for higher and better sustainability standards; and (v) More effective generation and dissemination of knowledge and communication products to support adaptive management at different levels (see Figure 11).

To arrive at these outcomes, a number of key barriers will have to be surmounted. These include: (i) The limited involvement of local communities and forest dependent people, as well as the private sector, a condition which is not optimal in order to scale interventions; (ii) Inadequate policies and weak implementation of the legal and regulatory framework in the country; (iii) The limited information on the management of peatlands (a key landscape to be protected during this project); (iv) The lack of land use planning at the level of the project area; (v) The limited opportunities for market-oriented sustainable/alternative livelihoods; (vi) The ineffective coordination of key policies and practices amongst key sectoral development institutions (mining, forestry, agriculture and environment) that are associated with environmental and natural resources management also constitute a substantial barrier.

Geist and Lambin[85] define two categories of drivers (underlying drivers associated with long-term and structural trends and conditions) and proximate (or immediate drivers). In the ToC, these underlying and proximate drivers are presented without need for categorization as root causes of environmental changes and associated natural resources management challenges in the project location. These include: population growth resulting in increasing demand for natural resources; Lack of opportunities for market-oriented sustainable/alternative; Limited resources allocated to the conservation efforts of peatlands; Lack of specific policies and institutional arrangements for the management of peatlands; Lack of knowledge of the nature and distribution of peatland ecosystems; and Climate change.

[85] Helmut J. Geist, Eric F. Lambin, Proximate Causes and Underlying Driving Forces of Tropical Deforestation: Tropical forests are disappearing as the result of many pressures, both local and regional, acting in various combinations in different geographical locations, *BioScience*, Volume 52, Issue 2, February 2002, Pages 143–150, https://doi.org/10.1641/0006-3568(2002)052[0143:PCAUDF]2.0.CO;2

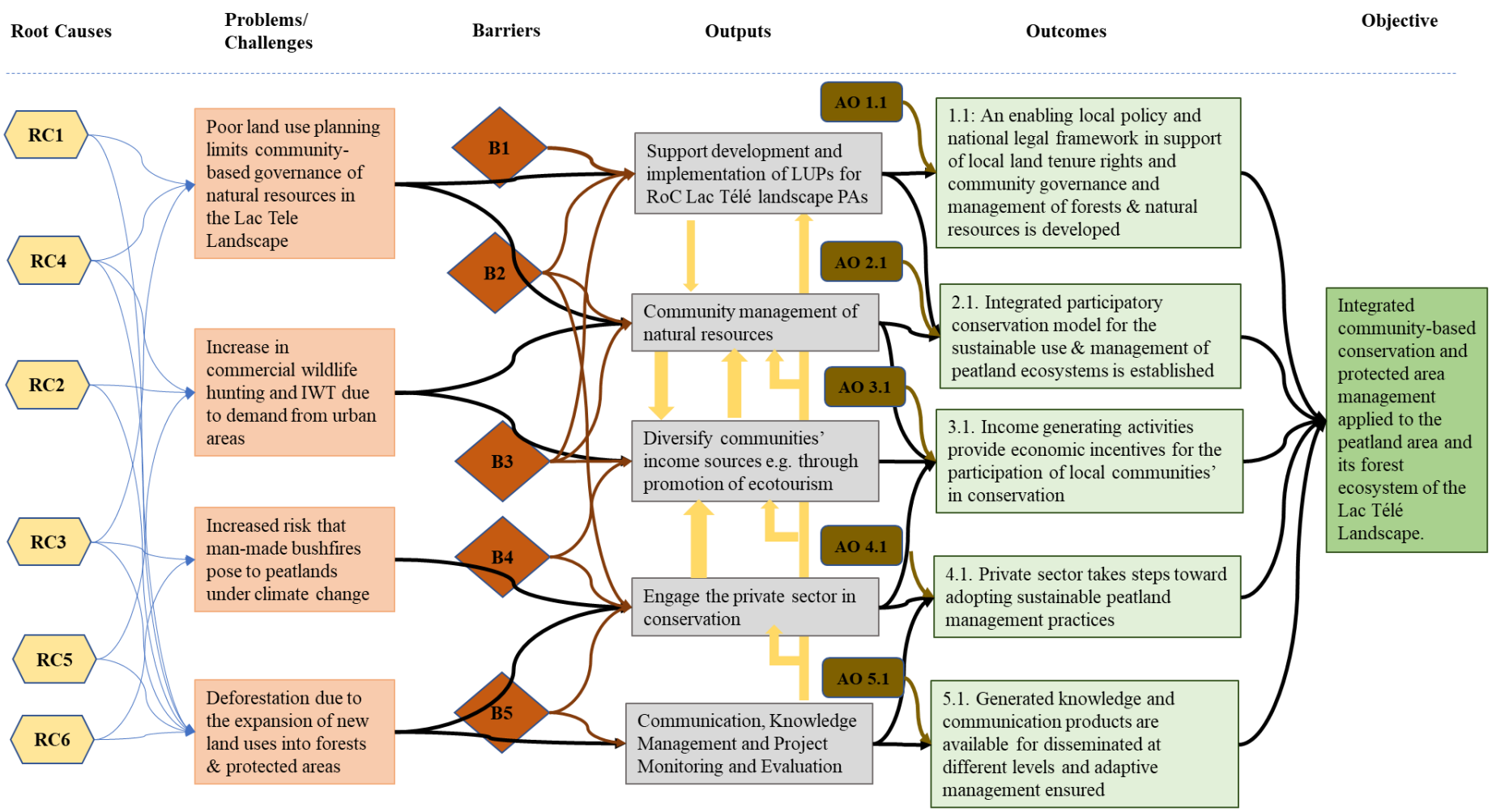

Figure 11. Project's theory of change.

Key to the theory of change

Barriers

B1 - Barrier 1: Lack of land use planning at the local level and insufficient coordination among sectoral development institutions in achieving effective land use planning

B2 - Barrier 2: Limited community participation in the management of natural resources

B3 - Barrier 3: Limited alternative and income generating and livelihood choices

B4 - Barrier 4: Lack of policies to handle conflicting vested interests in forest resources conservation, use and management

B5 - Barrier 5: Inadequate information on peatland management

Root causes

RC1: Population growth resulting in increasing demand for natural resources – the result is a drive towards expanding land holdings by encroaching into new lands through deforestation or other forms of land conquest and conversion.

RC2: Lack of opportunities for market-oriented sustainable/alternative livelihoods – Opportunities for sustainable alternatives to land-based livelihood support systems are few, contributing to higher pressures on land resources and ecosystem services.

RC3: Limited resources allocated to the conservation efforts of peatlands: Limited resources (financial, technological, skills, etc.) present a major barrier for mitigating threats and root causes.

RC4: Lack of specific policies and institutional arrangements for the management of peatlands: As mentioned in the previous point, peatlands are a new concept within the three target countries.

RC5: Lack of knowledge of the nature and distribution of peatland ecosystems in both in the Roc and in the Congo Basin Region: Peatland ecosystems have not been properly assessed, demarcated and recognized as the valuable types of landscapes they are, both in the Roc and in the Congo Basin Region.

RC6: Climate change: Climate change influences land use in multiple ways; for example, via changes periods of intensified rainfall or drought, changing temperatures and humidity affecting conditions for biotopes or agricultural production – leading to deforestation in search of new production areas, by increasing the potential for increased rates and intensities of bushfires, etc.

Project assumptions grouped based on project Outcomes. These are designated as assumptions for outcome (AO)

Outcome 1.1: An enabling local policy and national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and natural resources is developed and applied.	
AO 1.1	▪ Constitutional reforms and other political processes do not lead to a shift in the interest towards reforms to support local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and natural resources ▪ All participating stakeholders in the project at all levels are willing to contribute existing data in the development of the database ▪ The project staff will invest enough effort in ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups access the necessary information and opportunities for training ▪ The gender safeguards for the project are followed properly during the project implementation ▪ Decentralization policies and processes in relevant ministries to support the development and implementation of local level land use planning remain in place ▪ Issues of land tenure are properly addressed during initial consultations to ensure the smooth process of land use planning. ▪ The Government of the RoC is keen to support sustainable land use planning in the management of natural resources and landscapes of the country
Outcome 2.1: Integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems is established.	
AO 2.1	▪ The immediate benefits of the implementation of sustainable management practices are substantial enough to spur adoption by local communities ▪ Management staff of the Reserve take part in training on effective management, and receive continual support from project staff for field implementation ▪ The project staff will invest enough effort in ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups access the necessary information and opportunities for training
Outcome 3.1: Income generating activities provide economic incentives for the participation of local communities' in conservation.	
AO 3.1	▪ The price of cocoa in the world market does not fall significantly ▪ Efforts to increase and sustain the Western lowland gorilla population (a key ecotourism attraction) are successful.
Outcome 4.1: Private sector takes steps toward adopting sustainable peatland management practices.	
AO 4.1	▪ The government of the RoC redoubles support for public-private partnerships in investments on natural resources extraction and use. ▪ Local governments and other political authorities of the Lac Tele Landscape remain committed to environmental protection, and sustainable development programs ▪ Lobbying from the private sector does not derail efforts towards reforms ▪ Local residents are willing to change land use practices for conservation benefits
Outcome 5.1: Generated knowledge and communication products are available for disseminated at different levels and adaptive management ensured.	

AO 5.1	▪ The Scientific Committee of the project engages all relevant stakeholders to arrive at a versatile and representative knowledge management system

Component 1. Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Télé landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement.

The development and implementation of land use plans for the Lac Télé Landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape will build on activities being undertaken at the regional level through the Congo IP. The Congo IP will develop an enhanced methodological process and make available other tools for land use planning that will help the child projects to develop ILUMPs in their respective targeted priority transboundary landscapes. This project will therefore be guided by this methodological guidance that will build on past and ongoing regional collaborative efforts that include not only treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements, but also on specific case studies on the development of landscape management strategies and approaches. This methodological guidance will include the integration of tools for valuing natural capital (e.g., natural capital accounting, economic valuation of ecosystem services)[86]. This child project will enhance the impact of land use planning by leveraging the value-adding cross-sectoral approach of the Congo IP. The project will make use of the knowledge management platform and other tools and methods developed by the regional planning for land use planning that use a systems approach in the development of integrated land use management plans (ILUMPs).

There are major challenges related to current capacity at national and local/district levels to implement viable natural resources management programmes and incorporating best practices like Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with local indigenous communities. One of such challenges includes formalizing the involvement of local communities (including indigenous peoples and women) into the management of natural resources at the local level[87]. These include the design and implementation of viable Access Benefit Sharing models that support local initiatives and desires to participate as active stakeholders in the conservation, preservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Another key challenge includes that of understanding the multiple impacts of large-scale land-use projects such as infrastructure, mining and/or industrial agriculture, and the lack of effective tenure and land rights for forest-dependent communities. Finally, there is the problem of the lack of, or inability to implement land use planning in the process of achieving planned development use of land resources.

The planned development is essential for sustainable development and thus the optimal use of available resources. Since resources are limited it becomes necessary to use the resources wisely. Land use planning is essential for governing the growth of the different activities. A certain percentage of land is reserved for various activities. This helps in balancing all the activities and avoiding the excess of a particular activity. It also helps in keeping a check on conflicting activities. It also helps in environmental management by segregating different activities using certain restrictions and regulations. These restrictions and categorizations are called zoning, categorization of permissible and non-permissible activities, conforming and non-conforming land uses, etc. Land use plans provide both theoretical and spatial information, which will govern the growth of the towns and cities. Land use planning forms most crucial part in these plans and is shown in the land use map of such plans.

The Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) invested resources in the developing and implementation land use plans for Extractive Resource Zones (ERZ) within the Congo

[86] See Component 1 of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) 2019: The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP). https://www.thegef.org/project/congo-basin-sustainable-landscapes-impact-program-cbsl-ip

[87] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Landscapes. ERZs include forest concessions, large-scale private plantations, mining, oil and gas, safari hunting zones, and other energy infrastructure[88]. These include Landscapes of the Lac Tele. However, these land use plans have not been put into use, because of not having been endorsed by relevant national institutions. This project will therefore direct resources to ensure the endorsement of land use plans, as well as their anchoring into national policies and development processes. In cases where these plans do not exist, they will be developed based on the model and approach already adopted and used by the CARPE initiative to ensure conformity and alignment with existing plans.

Through component 1, the following outcome 1.1 and its related outputs will be generated:

Outcome 1.1. The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape

Secure tenure rights to commons are crucial for women and men, indigenous peoples and local communities in various contexts, including fisherfolk, pastoralists, farmers, landless people, and other vulnerable, food insecure and marginalized groups. They depend on commons for their fundamental well-being: for access to food, for sustaining their livelihoods, and for their cultural and social identity[89]. The FAO recognizes the responsibility of states to recognize legally, and protect, legitimate tenure rights to commons, their rights holders, and related customary tenure systems. Legislation should enable these rights holders to take the authority and responsibility to govern the commons at the local level collectively. It notes that this devolution comes with legal requirements for communities to strengthen or set up processes for inclusive, accountable and sustainable governance and decision-making, in accordance with the principles laid out in the Guidelines (Strategy 1). The legal framework should focus on procedural rather than substantive rules (Strategy 2), to accommodate the complexity, diversity and flexibility of tenure rights to commons and to provide for context-specific and flexible adjustment by community rules. The community needs to engage in an inclusive local process to agree on rules for the sustainable utilization of the commons, to identify and map the outer boundaries of the commons, and to register them with the support of state authorities (Strategy 3). To ensure transparency, accountability and effectiveness of legislation, the state should establish an inclusive and deliberative policy-making and law-making process that facilitates the participation of civil society and rights holders. To this end, scientists, lawyers, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the state need to innovate on new legal concepts and terms (Strategy 4). Advocacy work plays a crucial role in supporting the process of political, public and personal acceptance of tenure rights to commons and community-based governance, and the structures to ensure the implementation and enforcement of these rights (Strategy 5)[90].

This Outcome will provide the policy and legislative framework necessary to promote sustainable peatland management, community conservation areas, and control over IWT as part of local resource management activities and plans. This Outcome will also support the establishment of critical national policies and legal frameworks required to ensure the sustainability of productive activities such as ecotourism, organic cash crop production, controlled harvesting of non-timber forest products, etc. that ensure sustainable local livelihood support in the project area.

[88] USFS (2018). Extractive Resource Zone Planning in Central Africa: A U.S. Forest Service Guide. https://carpe.umd.edu/sites/default/files/documents/lessons_learned/2010/USFS_CARPE_ERZ_Guide_v1_final.pdf

[89] FAO (2016). Governing Tenure Rights to Commons A guide to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. FAO Governance of Tenure, Technical Guide 8. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Rome, Italy. http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6381e.pdf

[90] Ibid. FAO (2016).

Output 1.1.1. National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption

This project will support the development of an enabling framework for community engagement in the conservation of natural resources. This will involve a detailed review of the existing frameworks, including implementation processes and challenges related to protected areas, wildlife conservation, as well as national and cross-border IWT. The role of communities as defined in relevant environmental and rights regulations will be revisited and revised or updated to reflect improved understanding of the role of positive community engagements in the management of natural resources both as stewards, ands as stakeholders and beneficiaries. The strategy will include a sound legal and policy basis for community cooperation with relevant government agencies, NGOs and private sector in the joint efforts to combat IWT in the country. The project will establish a special Working Group to review the strategy and support stakeholder round table discussions with the goal of drafting and presenting a documented framework to increase and improve the role and functioning of Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) systems that will be applied to the Lac Télé Landscape, evaluated, refined and eventually serve as a blueprint for application nationwide. Updated draft of the CBNRM strategy document will be submitted to the Government for approval. After approval by the Government, the revised strategy will support the national implementation of CBNRM, other international agreements and national programmes for natural resources management at the community and local level, including inter-agency collaboration and involvement of public in community-based natural resources management. This Output will be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, with collaboration from the Ministry of Forest Economy.

Output 1.1.2. Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc.

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), there are a number of governance and capacity challenges in extractive resource zones in the Congo Basin Region, which limits the effectiveness of Government forest sector-related systems, frameworks, and their implementation at the local level[91]. These include: (i) The legal/regulatory framework in several countries is incomplete because many of the detailed implementing regulations (*décrets, arrêtés, etc*.) and/or handbooks/manuals are either non-existent or exist in draft form only. (ii) The judicial system is described as unable to enforce forest/mining/wildlife laws (e.g., judges are uninformed about forest/wildlife laws, and there are insufficient prison facilities and resources, etc.). (iii) Insufficiency of inter-ministerial collaboration and information sharing, leading to actions being uncoordinated or not communicated appropriately among government agencies (e.g., exploration mining permits being attributed in forest concessions without notice to any local actors—government, NGO, community, logging company). (iv) In many cases, multi-level, multi-departmental governmental reviews delay communities' participation in natural resource management activities. (v) Lack of respect and or application of international conventions/treaties such as CITES.

The goal of this Output is to increase the capacity of key stakeholders in understanding governance issues relevant for the sustainable management of peatlands, through training workshops at national and district levels. This Output will seek to strengthen knowledge on the policy and legal frameworks for the sustainable management of peatlands through national strategies, action plans and national and sub-national policies and regulations. The training will cover a number of key features, such as: (i)

[91] USAID and CARPE (2007). Extractive Resource Zone Planning in Central Africa: A U.S. Forest Service Guide Version 1.0. https://carpe.umd.edu/sites/default/files/documents/lessons_learned/2010/USFS_CARPE_ERZ_Guide_v1_final.pdf

strengthening the capacity of existing protected areas to deal with the external and internal threats and constraints; (ii) promoting closer collaboration with communities living in or in proximity to protected areas (including transboundary communities and initiatives) in the conversation and management of biodiversity; (iii) creating new nature reserves and corridors designed to improve the ecological integrity of the area under protection; and, (iv) promoting a series of cross-CBNRM activities focusing on the development and implementation of species-specific conservation action plans and ecological monitoring[92]. This Output will be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, with collaboration from the Ministry of Forest Economy and the WWF.

Output 1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website.

One of the main constraints impeding the achievement of increased management effectiveness in the Lac Télé Landscape (and indeed in many areas and sectors of conservation in the RoC) is the lack of the collection, processing and usage field data in support of more informed natural resources management decision-making processes. There is very limited ecological and management monitoring in many of the protected areas and peatlands of the country. Moreover, even when *ad hoc* field patrols are launched focusing mainly on the issues of illegal logging, forest fire prevention and forest land conversion and/or encroachment they usually don't collect data to support systematic assessment of relevant ecological states and processes such as species, habitats, threats such as invasive species, etc. Such data is vitally important for understanding environmental states, assessing the role and effectiveness of conservation, and designing policies to address major environmental challenges in areas such as the projects area and other biodiversity sensitive regions of the RoC. A second major constraint is the need to integrate data collection and promote sharing across nature reserves to support management decisions for wildlife that migrate across reserve boundaries. With the exception of a few flagship species such as the lowland gorillas and forest elephants, there are few field-based wildlife monitoring data. Outputs and activities supported under this outcome will help address these issues. Université Marien Ngouabi has been undertaking a wide range of natural resources assessments in northern RoC, including in the peatlands of these areas. This institution has partnered with various international organization to research and publish on the situation of peatlands of the region. Université Marien Ngouabi will be supporting the implementing this Output in collaboration with other members of the Scientific and Technical Committee which it will lead. Collaboration will also be brought in from various ministerial bodies and agencies.

Six main elements will be addressed under this Output:

i) Assessment of size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands: This Output will support the assessment for the entire Lac Télé landscape. This assessment will generate understanding of the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands, protected areas, and surrounding landscapes of the project area. The assessments will also report on the factors such as the biophysical condition of ecosystems within the Lac Télé Landscape, ecosystem services (flood control, water supply, climate change mitigation, NTFPs) and relevance to local communities. Local communities (men and women) will be involved in the surveys in order to ensure an inclusive process and the use of local knowledge. Considerable work has recently been put into forest cover monitoring in the Congo

[92] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Basin region by other initiatives (see for example, the Global Forest Atlas https://globalforestatlas.yale.edu/region/congo; and work done by the World Resources Institute https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/forest-atlases; NASA https://www.nasa.gov/feature/jpl/nasa-survey-technique-estimates-congo-forest-s-carbon; and others). This Project aims to leverage that knowledge. Building on the assessment of the characteristics of the Lac Tele peatlands, a national assessment will be carried out to provide a nation-wide understanding of the extent and challenges of peatlands and challenges for their conservation and protection.

ii) Assessment of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in targeted peatlands: GHG emissions will be assessed against a baseline. The proposed assessment will build on methodologies already being used or developed in the RoC – such as, those proposed for the Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) of emissions under the National REDD+ Strategy. This project will focus primarily on documentation of activity data (i.e. area of drained, cleared for agriculture, burnt or rewetted peatland, etc.) for the project areas and support for refinement of emission factors linked to planned project activities (i.e. fire prevention, reforestation, improved water management). This can help verify emission reductions as a result of the Project as well as contribute to ongoing work by the government and other agencies to develop appropriate MRV methodologies for peatlands (especially for fire-related emissions) for peatlands in the Congo Basin region.

This Output will also develop a GHG emission baseline on peatlands of the RoC to determine current and projected emissions, as well as undertake an ex-post assessment of pilot sites to measure changes in fire occurrence and extent (fire scars/hotspots), in water table level in protection (through rewetting and canal blocking for agriculture) and utilization zones (through enhanced water management), in rate of clearing and extraction of forest resources and peatland rehabilitation. Compute and document changes in GHG emission and trends.

iii) Peatland fire frequency, prediction and early warning system: These systems need to be enhanced through improvement of validated data sets, shift to real-time data collection, especially from fire-prone peatlands; upgrading of fire risk prediction products including Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) and hotspot monitoring and notification. The Project will work to improve the analysis and dissemination of timely information, including data from weather stations and weather satellites for data generation to run the FDRS. In the project preparation phase, the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC) promised to support this project with data and technical support where possible. One of the key challenges of ANAC is the limited number of rain gauges in operation in the country. This makes it difficult to generate robust and representative datasets in monitoring the effects of climate on sensitive ecosystems such as the RoC's peatlands. This project will provide resources to support the country's ability to generate such relevant data by increasing its availability of working weather monitoring systems, especially in the regions of the Congo's peatlands. The Project will use near real time fire hotspot data from analysis of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) satellite data sets. Also, analyses using VIIRS and recently launched satellites that have increased resolution capacity (including a thermal imaging system), down to 30m pixels (compared with 1000 m for NOAA) will be explored.

iv) Develop Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires: This will involve three main activities: (i) Validate hotspots and improve fire detection using the following technology options in collaboration with partner agencies through the following possible measures: i)) thermal Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) imaging cameras or relevant remote sensing sensors, ii) high resolution satellite based thermal imagers (a newly launched satellite is delivering 30m resolution data, including a thermal imager, but as yet this is untested in the RoC); iii) satellite based application from VIIRS satellite which can measure live and smouldering fires down to a 50-100 m accuracy on-ground; and iv) Feedback from site-based observers and fire suppression teams. (ii) Develop and refine Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in collaboration with the relevant Ministries and other

governmental agencies for reporting and response at national, provincial and district levels to different Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) warning categories and hotspot occurrence and density. Disseminate and test SOPs at different levels and with different agencies. (iii) Develop a guideline and information/training materials on Integrated Fire Management. In order to introduce the Integrated Fire management concept it will be necessary to develop national guidelines and training materials on the system in partnership with key national stakeholders led by the relevant agency in the Ministry of Forest Economics.

v) Build capacity on monitoring: This Output will organize technical workshops bringing together key players involved in GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) work for establishing an appropriate MRV methodology for tropical peatlands (especially for fire related emissions) suitable for use in the target pilot sites. GHG monitoring will include two main aspects: (i) refinement of peatland GHG assessment methodologies to measure change over time; and (ii) monitoring of encroachment and forest cover loss in the Lac Tele Landscape through the use of airborne or satellite sensors (and the huge range of products available for free through institutions such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the European Space Agency, etc.). This project will support capacity building for fire prediction, use of early warning systems, and improvement of the available tools and systems for peatland fire prediction and monitoring in the RoC. The main existing tools and systems for peatland fire prediction and monitoring in the RoC currently include: (i) fire danger rating systems based on weather stations supplemented by satellite-based rainfall monitoring; and (ii) hotspot monitoring using satellite data input, and dissemination of hotspot data to national agency web sites and others.

vi) Information management and monitoring system: The Output will also support the establishment of an information management and monitoring system on peatland resources, protected area conservation, and the dangers and scale of IWT in the project area. The information system will allow storing, managing, and analysing technical and scientific information and participatory monitoring related to the Lac Télé landscape. The information management and monitoring system be cross-institutional and cross- disciplinary; thus, it will be a key tool for decision-making regarding conservation and ecological monitoring and will be developed with the participation of public institutions, the private sector (agriculture, tourism, urban development, and fishing), members of academia, and civil society, who will become the main users. The information management and monitoring system on protected areas and peatland biodiversity in the project area will include indicators to assess the health of such biodiversity as well as protocols for data gathering. The system will serve as an information exchange platform for promoting the agreement and participation of the different stakeholders, and will include a well-equipped office (databases, software, hardware, etc.) to be hosted by the project host institution, which will provide the necessary staff for its operation and maintenance.

Output 1.1.4. Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Tele landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism and made available for adoption.

A land use management plan is the master plan that is used to guide the future use of land in a specific area and the actions of the community on that piece of land. In general, the land use management plan is the vision of the future of a community in a particular area. This document includes land use policies, implementation guidelines, sub-plans, a zone map, and zone descriptions. The different sections serve different needs. The following two sections (land use policies, implementation guidelines) list central, and concise, policies and implementation actions. The sub-plans include more detail on land use activities and site characteristics. The zone map and accompanying zone descriptions provide a geographical guide to land use. Where practical, the zone map and descriptions are cross-referenced to land use sub-plans.

The CARPE program invested resources in the developing of land use plans for various landscapes of the Republic of Congo. These include Landscapes of the Lac Tele. However, these land use plans have not been put into use, because of not having been endorsed by relevant national institutions. This project will therefore direct resources to ensure the endorsement of land use plans, as well as their anchoring into national policies and development processes. In cases where these plans do not exist, they will be developed based on the model and approach already adopted and used by the CARPE initiative to ensure conformity and alignment with existing plans and consideration of peatlands conservation objectives. The World Conservation Society (WCS) has also been working in the project location – with part of its work being to develop land use management plans following the community-based natural resources management model (see Figure 12). WCS has wide reach on the ground and many years of experience working with local communities, regional governments and national institutions in the field of land use, indigenous rights, and community-based natural resources management. WCS will support the implementation of this Output.

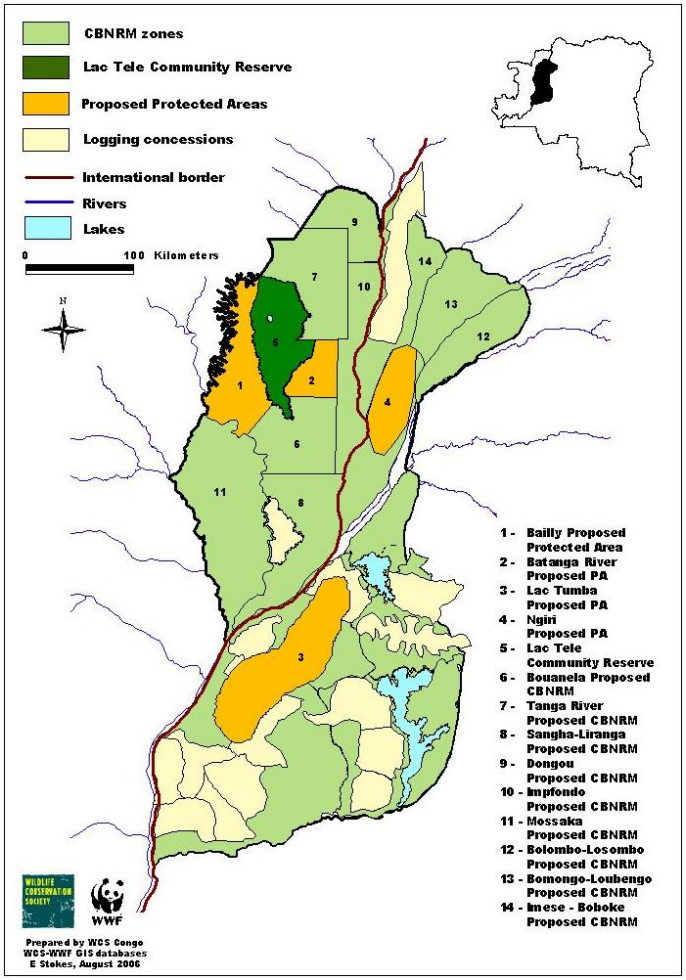

Figure 12. Key conservation and livelihood zones of the Lac Télé Landscape (source: World Conservation Society, Congo).

In cases where land use management plans do not exist, this project will support the development of such plans, by funding the 10-step process defined by the FAO in its guidelines for land use planning[93]. During the inception workshop, the degree of coverage of the CARPE developed land use

[93] FAO (1993). Guidelines for land-use planning. FAO Development Series 1. Soil Resources, Management and Conservation Service, Inter-Departmental Working Group on Land Use Planning. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Rome, Italy. http://www.fao.org/3/t0715e/t0715e00.htm

management plans will be ascertained, to determine if all areas in the project area already have such plans. The steps to be funded for the development of land use management plans in the absence of any will include: *Step 1. Establish goals and terms of reference.* Ascertain the present situation; find out the needs of the people and of the government; decide on the land area to be covered; agree on the broad goals and specific objectives of the plan; settle the terms of reference for the plan. *Step 2. Organize the work.* Decide what needs to be done; identify the activities needed and select the planning team; draw up a schedule of activities and outputs; ensure that everyone who may be affected by the plan, or will contribute to it, is consulted. *Step 3. Analyse the problems.* Study the existing land-use situation, including in the field; talk to the land users and find out their needs and views; identify the problems and analyse their causes; identify constraints to change. *Step 4. Identify opportunities for charge.* Identify and draft a design for a range of land-use types that might achieve the goals of the plan; present these options for public discussion. *Step 5. Evaluate land suitability.* For each promising land-use type, establish the land requirements and match these with the properties of the land to establish physical land suitability. *Step 6. Appraise the alternatives: environmental, economic and social analysis.* For each physically suitable combination of land use and land, assess the environmental, economic and social impacts, for the land users and for the community as a whole. List the consequences, favourable and unfavourable, of alternative courses of action. *Step 7. Choose the best option.* Hold public and executive discussions of the viable options and their consequences. Based on these discussions and the above appraisal, decide which changes in land use should be made or worked towards. *Step 8. Prepare the land-use plan.* Make allocations or recommendations of the selected land uses for the chosen areas of land; make plans for appropriate land management; plan how the selected improvements are to be brought about and how the plan is to be put into practice; draw up policy guidelines, prepare a budget and draft any necessary legislation; involve decision-makers, sectoral agencies and land users. Step 9. *Implement the plan.* Either directly within the planning process or, more likely, as a separate development project, put the plan into action; the planning team should work in conjunction with the implementing agencies. *Step 10. Monitor and revise the plan.* Monitor the progress of the plan towards its goals; modify or revise the plan in the light of experience.

These plans will address in a consultative manner all aspects of land use and potential natural resources extraction activities in the project area, including sustainable use of wildlife, forest resources and biodiversity- friendly initiatives (e.g., sustainable game and bushmeat hunting, ecotourism, harvest of forest fruits, honey production, aquaculture and multiple use tree plantations in degraded forest). These identification and development of frameworks governing these extractive methods will be based on the principles of The Access Restriction Mitigation Process[94].

Relevant agreements on sustainable forest and wildlife management will be developed and signed between local communities, protected areas, forest concessions and relevant government agencies based on the customary rights of local people on forest and wildlife. Indigenous Peoples Land Committees (IPLCs) will be established prior to the commencement of the development of LUMPs to uphold the role and importance of indigenous peoples as active rights-holders. A set of local rules and regulations will be integrated in the LUMPs using local traditional knowledge on sustainable use of wildlife and other biological resources.

[94] This will be done in an inclusive, participatory process to avoid any negative impacts on vulnerable groups. In the event that any access restrictions are required, mitigation measures to compensate livelihood losses will be developed and agreed upon. Elements of a Process Framework are provided by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/iucn_esms_process_framework_guidance_note.pdf, and the Social Impact Assessment report to guide the development of an Action Plan to mitigate impacts from access restrictions.

In the participatory processes setting the scene for the demarcating of land uses in each community, potential threats stemming from human use should be identified, and measures designed for their use, management, conservation or protection. CBNRM rules and regulations will be developed, and serve to manage any unsustainable use of wildlife and forests such as harvesting of non-ripe fruits, poaching traps, hunting in closed seasons, and unsustainable logging. In general, the LUMPs along with will create management basis for strengthening law enforcement in combating IWT, the use of protected landscapes (including peatlands) and the implementation CBNRM and the sustainable management of environmental and biological resources in the project area[95].

Minimum standards and guidelines for resource extraction plans should include most or all of the following[96]: (i) low-impact road construction and access. (ii) Special provisions for mining and harvesting timber in or near streams or other water bodies. (iii) Protection of locally important or rare habitats. (iv) For logging operations, provisions for tree extraction on slopes, such as the use of cables and wenches to pull felled trees to skid trail locations. (v) Tree felling and extraction procedures for other conditions. (vi) Inventory and monitoring requirements. (vii) Placement of logging or mining camps and landings. (viii) Access of indigenous and other local populations to the forest for hunting, gathering and other resource use. (x) Including local populations in natural resource planning; and (xi) Reducing impacts on wildlife and other non-forest products.

Support for the implementation of land-use management plans for the Lac Tele protected areas and surrounding landscape will work in close alignment with the land use planning activities of the Congo IP at the regional level. These efforts will also be harmonized with the government (regional, municipal) land use planning, and the community level land use planning levels (local community level) initiatives for the project area. The goal of the land use planning within this component will be to tackle threats to biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and sustainable peatland management in a comprehensive manner. By enabling informed decision making and promoting an inclusive negotiation-based land use and development planning and decision making, the project aims to set the stage for the long-term sustainable development of the Lac Tele Landscape.

The project will adopt and implement the multi-sector landscape governance structure being proposed by the Congo IP, which will include enhancing the negotiating capacity of local stakeholders, such as community members living in and around protected areas, forests and peatlands, hence building their knowledge and capacity to defend their rights to a safe environment and strengthening their ability to monitor potential violations on these landscapes. Communities will be able to participate actively in decision making regarding land use planning, and safeguard their environment and their livelihood base. It will be useful to functionally integrate protected areas with other relevant landscapes of value where a there exists a multiplicity of productive land uses. These areas must also be aware of the needs of protected areas. The institutional system that enables to mainstream biodiversity and protected areas within land use planning is still insufficient to safeguard the region's natural capital, especially in the face of new emerging productive sectors both by local communities and the private sector.

Building on the methodological guide produced by the regional program, this project will develop a Land Use Planning Framework for application in the Lac Tele Landscape. The framework will be specifically designed to respond to the specific geographical and political ecology context of the project area. The goal of this framework will be to facilitate the operationalization of the landscape

[95] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[96] USAID and CARPE (2007). Extractive Resource Zone Planning in Central Africa: A U.S. Forest Service Guide Version 1.0. https://carpe.umd.edu/sites/default/files/documents/lessons_learned/2010/USFS_CARPE_ERZ_Guide_v1_final.pdf

approach with full participation by stakeholders across sectors (government decision makers, NGOs, private sector investors, civil society) in the Lac Tele Landscape. The Land Use Planning Framework will supply geo-referenced spatial information that will be accessible on-line and open to public access. This will enable informed decision making on land-use planning, help monitor the state of the environment, and ensure a warning system on violation of natural resource and forest regulations. This will enable to address threats to biodiversity in real time (also refer to Output 1.2). The framework will consist of a systematic biodiversity plan associated with compatible land use guidelines from the Congo IP. The framework will provide a scientific basis for issuing advice on the projects footprints and assess impacts on biodiversity.

Among other things, the framework will facilitate (i) Both wider-scale and fine-scale land-use planning at the landscape level, taking into consideration the impacts that productive activities have on biodiversity, and where maps and plans at different resolutions can be navigated and compiled according to the needs, audience and context, but where the background data will always be collected and stored at the finest scale possible; (ii) The zoning/demarcation of the limits of protected areas in a context that is specific to the realities of the Lac Tele Landscape; (iii) The identification of key biodiversity hotspots that need to be accorded higher protection status, for example. as new protected areas or a community conservation areas; (iv) Recommendations on land-uses and environmental management measures that are appropriate and compatible with the ecological sensitivity of certain areas (such as rare habitats, including those that harbour populations of threatened species, buffer zones surrounding core protected areas, riparian areas that are key to the maintenance watersheds, important support areas that provide ecosystem services etc.); (v) Support the monitoring of activities and threats to forests and peatland landscapes of the Lac Tele Landscape.

Component 2. Community management of natural resources

This component responds to two key components of the Congo IP (Components 2 & 3). Component 2 of the regional program envisages a long-term viability of forests and area-based management of critical high conservation value forest providing important habitat to endangered species and critical ecosystem services. Component 3 seeks to catalyse more effective participation of communities and amplify the ability of businesses to divert capital from degrading activities to supporting SFM enterprises, at scale. An inclusive vision of natural resources management in which local communities are engaged as partners in conservation and management is therefore required to ensure sustainable outcomes. In this Component ensuring biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration in forest landscapes will make use of a broader definition of forest resources management[97]. In this case, forest resources management means the application of business methods and technical forestry principles to the operation of a forestry property. It involves the task of building up, putting in order, and keeping in order a forest business. One or a multiplicity of parties (stakeholders) can do this.

CBNRM is a people-centered approach to the integration of conservation of the natural resource base (water, soil, trees and local biodiversity) and development to overcome poverty, hunger and disease. The community-based natural resources management model will be promoted to achieve goals of sustainable peatland management, elimination of IWT, enhanced management of protected areas and related goals of this project (see Supplement 1). These will be achieved through a range of approaches: (i) consultative and participatory processes will be used to bring on board local communities to become an integral part of the protection and conservation of local biodiversity, peatlands, and protected areas in the Lac Télé Landscape. (ii) A key focus of the project is on building

[97] McEvoy, T. J. Positive Impact Forestry: A Sustainable Approach to Managing Woodlands. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004. Also see: Smith, W. Brad, Patrick D. Miles, John S. Vissage, and Scott A. Pugh. Forest Resources of the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, 2002.

the capacity of local communities and forest-dependent peoples to participate in, manage, and benefit from actions to limit environmental degradation across the biome, in particular the sustainable management of natural resources. (iii) Research will be carried out to buttress community-based conservation actions and methods on sound scientific principles supported by local data and scientific findings. (iv) Collaboration in a trans-boundary context will ensure that lessons learned from similar projects and experiences in the region, as well as in other developing countries can be incorporated into the decision-making and operations of the current project to ensure optimal outcomes. South-South collaboration will also support the sharing of information and lessons learned from the current project with other stakeholders in the wider Congo Basin Region and other parts of the continental sub-region.

The component 2 will be delivered through the following outcome and outputs:

Outcome 2.1. Local communities in the Lac Télé Landscape adopt integrated participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems

This Outcome will focus on improving the capacity of all stakeholders and local institutions to participate actively in the management of natural resources of the Lac Tele Landscape. The active participation of local communities will enable them to become officially recognized as co-custodians of natural resources in the local areas in which they are found, and hence as stewards in the conservation of these resources. The sustainable management of these resources will be key to the social and economic development of local communities as well as the basis for a future of their successors.

Output 2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years

Under this output to be led by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, the project will support the development and implementation of co-management contracts (one per district) with local communities of the Lac Tele Landscape. These contracts will be designed to introduce and demonstrate the CBNRM principles and approaches into protected areas of the Lac Télé Landscape, its wetlands and fisheries, as well as its peatlands. Potential activities identified to involve local communities include facilitating their participation in participatory field patrolling, fuel-wood/energy saving, alternative income generation of community-based tourism development and/or traditional culture conservation. For each of these co-management schemes, management mechanisms will be agreed to and established through a participatory approach with local householders, grant donors, as well as relevant local and national stakeholders. The GEF and UNEP gender criteria and guidelines will be incorporated into the grant management mechanisms to ensure full and equitable gender participation. Finally, the mechanisms will be endorsed, and the grant contracts will be supervised and evaluated by the PMU. To be able to assess the effectiveness of the management structures and build make changes as necessary, a system to monitor and evaluate project impacts on peatlands, hunting, poaching, IWT management, and the use of fire will be established at the level of the Field Implementation Unit (see the implementation arrangements), based in the project area.

Output 2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production

Currently there is limited knowledge among local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples around peatlands, including what they are exactly, how they are distinguished from the larger ecosystem category of wetlands, and why they are important. Building capacity and awareness will be important not only among local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples, but also among a broad range of government officials, but also within the private sector, civil society and the

donor community at large. In this Output, the capacity of local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples to develop and implement environmental projects will be enhanced through action-oriented training on practices for environmental restoration and nature-friendly production processes. This group of stakeholders will gain knowledge on the assessment and sustainable management of peatlands, the identification of entry points for restoration and remediation of undesirable states, and multi-stakeholder processes for achieving positive collaborative outcomes. It also aims to increase awareness and understanding of the values and functions of peatland ecosystems, by preparing and disseminating information and awareness-raising materials.

Strengthening of existing governance and peatland management capacity in the Lac Télé Landscape will be aided by the development and implementation of a comprehensive capacity building program for decision makers, management practitioners and regular staff of the natural reserves with introduction of advanced concepts and best practices distilled from experiences elsewhere in both The RoC as well as internationally. Based on the lessons-learned and experience of most international-funded peatland and protected area management projects, this training program will emphasize innovative concepts and tools designed to build on and strengthen Lac Télé Landscape. These concepts and tools will include (but not be limited to) the following topics and issues presented as an illustrative list. (i) Participatory co-management approaches to biodiversity, peatland and IWT management including participatory approach, co-management, community mobilization/consultation, etc. (ii) Sustainable finance in the form of payments for ecosystem services. (iii) Ecological management effectiveness using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scorecards. (iv) Conflict resolution and collaboration with sectors in surrounding landscape etc.

One of the main constraints impeding the achievement of increased management effectiveness in the Lac Télé Landscape (and indeed in many areas and sectors of conservation in the RoC) is the lack of field data, its collection, processing and usage in support of more informed management decisions. There is very limited ecological and management monitoring in many of the protected areas and peatlands of the country. Moreover, even when *ad hoc* field patrols are launched focusing mainly on the issues of illegal logging, forest fire prevention and forest land conversion and/or encroachment they usually don't collect data to support systematic assessment of relevant ecological states and processes such as species, habitats, threats such as invasive species, etc. Such data is vitally important for understanding environmental states, assessing the role and effectiveness of conservation, designing policies to address major environmental challenges, and for the development of adaptive management protocols in areas such as the Lac Télé Landscape and other biodiversity sensitive regions of the RoC. A second major constraint is the need to integrate data collection and promote sharing across nature reserves to support management decisions for wildlife that migrate across reserve boundaries. With the exception of a few flagship species such as the lowland gorillas and forest elephants, there are few field-based wildlife monitoring data. Adaptive management can be an approach to achieve solutions for the above issues.

This Output will be led by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, with collaboration from the Ministry of Forest Economy.

Output 2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level

The use of participatory action research in natural resources management has become more popular and more widely accepted over the years. It has become a widely accepted techniques for watershed planning and management including: rapid catchment assessment, soil and water conservation, degraded forest assessment, nurseries and planting, identification of trees' uses, rural energy assessment, green enterprise development, wildlife reservation, and village resource management

plans. Action research is based on an experimental learning process. It consists of a four-stage cycle: planning, action, observation and reflection. This cycle is applied to develop, test and reflect on solutions to a problem that has been identified. Out of the fourth stage, a new cycle is started from the planning stage by considering the results of the reflection in the previous cycle. This second cycle, and other subsequent cycles, lead towards a better solution. Participatory Action Research (PAR) incorporates participatory processes in the action research. This brings forth multiple perspectives from stakeholders, resulting in more effective and sustainable solutions. PAR employs the core values of participatory processes (mutual understanding, full participation, inclusive solutions and shared responsibility) to help overcome conflict and other difficulties that conventional top-down natural resource management planning struggles with. Top- down approaches create disconnects between professional practices and what is needed for meaningful community participation. Where conventional natural resource management has failed, PAR can contribute to the development of locally-appropriate community forestry and natural resource management models. PAR is also needed to find ways in which local people can participate meaningfully in key internationally recognized environmental and natural resources related initiatives such as REDD+, as required in the REDD+ safeguards set out by the UNFCCC COP.

Adaptive management implies a large variety of different measures that support and assist forest ecosystems' stress resistance, resilience, and dynamic response, representing a set of target responses to climate change impacts[98]. The nature of forests makes them a prime resource for the application of adaptive management – a prospect that has been examined and explored by many scholars see[99 and 100]. Forests and protected areas can contribute to adaptation at the landscape level through the creation and expansion of functional habitat networks, flood risk management, protection of water quality and quantity, and protection against soil erosion[101]. The location and composition of forests and woodlands can facilitate or hinder the migration of species. For example, forests and woodlands that are connected with each other and with other natural habitats can facilitate the movement of species through the landscape and provide a better opportunity for species and ecosystems to adapt to new conditions.

In this Output to be implemented in collaboration with Université Marien Ngouabi, the following actions will be required to ensure that forests respond to the effects of climate change and to help society and the environment adapt to these changes[102]: (i) Fragmentation of existing natural habitats should be avoided, and the impacts of new plantations on the ecology of adjacent sites should be considered. (ii) Introduction and development of genetically modified organisms is an emerging issue to be taken into account in the management of dryland forests. (iii) The ecological connectivity of the landscape for forests and woodland species can be improved by extending, maintaining and restoring existing natural habitats using the forest landscape restoration approach, while taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic needs. (iv) The movement of populations of

[98] Bolte et al. (2009). Adaptive Forest Management: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Forestry in the Face of Climate Change. In Gadow K.; Pukalla, T.; and Tome, M. (Eds.) Managing Forest Ecosystems *Sustainable Forest Management in a Changing World*. Springer, Volume 19, pp 115-139.

[99] Fady, B., et al. (2016). "Forests and global change: what can genetics contribute to the major forest management and policy challenges of the twenty-first century?" Regional Environmental Change **16**(4): 927-939.

[100] Spathelf, P., et al. (2018). "Adaptive measures: integrating adaptive forest management and forest landscape restoration." Annals of Forest Science **75**(2): 55.

[101] FAO. 2010. Guidelines on sustainable forest management in drylands of sub-Saharan Africa. Arid Zone Forests and Forestry Working Paper No. 1. Rome.

[102] Ibid.

non-indigenous species that are invasive and problematic in forests and woodlands and their surroundings should be controlled.

This project recognizes the role of society in the management of natural resources, as well as recognizes the need to understand the underlying determinants of societal approaches, preferences, goals and ambitions regarding their resources management. Hence, this Output will strive to fully incorporate the issues of social science research in the problem identification, definition, data collection, analysis and dissemination process in relation to natural resources management in the Lac Tele Landscape. These will be clarified through action research carried out by a multi-disciplinary teams identified by the Scientific Committee of the project.

This Output will also undertake activities to support the ecological and management monitoring of sensitive areas (peatlands, hotspots of IWT, and protected areas) of the Lac Télé Landscape. The design of adaptive management approaches will build on the results derived from the action research undertaken in the same Output. Adaptive forest and landscape management approaches will be introduced into forests, protected areas, and peatland management in the project area and its surrounding areas. This will contribute to improving reserve management effectiveness, biodiversity conservation, and the health of ecosystems and related services locally.

Output 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted, 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted results documented and made available in the project site.

South-South cooperation is a means of development cooperation in which developing countries assist each other by sharing technical or economic knowledge and skills to facilitate development. It differs from bilateral exchange of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how by developing countries, which are often buttressed by bilateral cooperation agreements, in that it is much broader as it entails political, economic and technical collaboration among developing countries. While the southern African region in general is cited as being relatively weak with respect to South-South cooperation, this situation within the natural resources management sector in the Congo Basin Region can be described as quite positive. A strong example of such viable cooperation in the region is the cross-border collaboration in forest management through the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC). This is the only authority in term of political, technical orientation, coordination, harmonization and decision making regarding the conservation and sustainable management of the Central Africa forests ecosystem and savannah. Its convergence plan brings together ten strategic axes for which the current project is very well aligned[103].

This project will expand efforts to promote, facilitate and realize public-private partnership in addition to continued leveraging resources from other donors and implementing partners. Extractive industries, especially those with international financing and the accompanying social corporate responsibility policies they require present good opportunities for partnerships. Already many logging companies are working with partners on wildlife management and community outreach in on-going projects in the north of the RoC, such as with World Conservation Society, and within the context of CARPE III. New opportunities to work with other private sector partners such as large-scale mining companies for both biodiversity and forest conservation are being explored.

This project will cooperation closely with the region's governments through activities and initiatives with a transboundary character to expand on existing efforts towards regional collective action.

[103] These axes include: harmonization of fiscal and forestry regulation; resources knowledge; ecosystems management; biodiversity preservation; sustainable valorization of forest resources; development of activities in order to reduce poverty; strengthening capabilities and participation through information and education; research-development; financing tools development; and regional cooperation and partnerships. https://whc.unesco.org/en/COMIFAC

Examples of existing initiatives and programs include the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) http://www.apvflegtcongo.com/index.php; the Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative multi-donor (CAWHFI); and the Conservation and Rational Use of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa Program. To guarantee the legal exploitation of forests, the Congolese government and the European Union signed on May 17, 2010 a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on the Application of Forest Forests, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)[104].

The Output will be led by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, and will provide a strong lessons-learning and adaptive feedback mechanism, to share and disseminate examples of success and to ensure that mistakes and setbacks become opportunities to learn. The implementation of this Output will also require collaboration with the regional program to leverage the additional partnerships catalysed for conservation of the Congo Basin through platforms bringing together leading private sector companies in the Congo Basin for deforestation-free commodity supply chains. These platforms will be used to enhance south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, IWT management for the Lac Tele Landscape. The regional program also seeks to extend south-south collaboration beyond the Congo Basin region to include the two other biomes identified by the GEF's SFM IP (Amazon, Drylands). This will expand the experiential horizons of this project in terms of the scope of lessons learned and experiences shared.

Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism[105]

The Congo IP regional program recognizes the value of alternative livelihood options in reducing pressures on natural resources in the targeted geographies. In its Component 3, it envisages the promotion of sustainable forest-related value chains by empowering local communities, forest dependent people, and collaborating with the private sector. It is within this light that the program sees the need for removing barriers to the valorisation of environmentally-friendly economic activities in the targeted geographies of Lac Tele. Overcoming such barriers will require the targeted strengthening of some key products and services across value chains, allowing to amplify income generating activities.

It is within the same spirit that this child project will work with relevant national and local institutions and partners in order to identify alternative income-generating opportunities to increase resilience of communities, replacing vulnerable dependence on natural resources. The project will focus on the provision of institutional and technical support to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, the COVID 19 pandemic and climate change impacts. The project will also promote sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production. This project will build on a baseline of many initiatives at supporting sustainable income-generating activities in the region. The income-generating activities will be identified during the assessment of opportunities and limitations in supporting current livelihoods, taking into account the capacity-building needs and the time it takes to set up the requisite infrastructure, capacities, markets, etc. It is important to build on lessons learned from previous initiatives in the region, including those undertaken by WCS, the World Bank, and other development partners. The marketing strategies adopted by any destination should consider the desires and

[104] Benoit MOUDANGA (2020). Etude sur l'implication du secteur prive dans la conservation par la promotion des pratiques de gestion durable des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[105] Community-based ecotourism refers to lodges and tourism attractions that are owned by grassroots community conservation organizations. In these communities, tourism helps to conserve tropical forests, preserves local culture rather than destroying it, and helps farmers supplement their income so that they can stay on the land (http://keytocostarica.beablake.com/community/faq/what-is-community-based-ecotourism.html)

expectations of all stakeholders, such as the resident population, entrepreneurs and investors, tourists, tour operators, intermediaries and other interest groups. The outcome of the component is successful, resilient, income-generating activities acting as a driver for local communities' ownership and participation to conservation. The component objectives will be delivered through the following outcome and outputs:

Outcome 3.1. Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment.

REPALEAC is the strategic partner identified for the NTFP. However, the partnership with WCS and WWF will be used to support the delivery on this project aspect . This Output will develop livelihood improvement initiatives for local populations in the project area linked to sustainable management of peatlands. The types of initiatives to be developed will draw on data and analysis identified in Output 1.1.4 and 1.1.5, as well as through the action-based research carried out in Output 3.1.3.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, likely models may include ecotourism activities, small-scale agriculture and aquaculture development, improvement in the processing of fish products, beekeeping, the development of NTFPs value chains, and sustainable livestock raising. The aim of these initiatives will be to reduce human pressures on the peatlands by providing sustainable alternatives to the exploitation of peatland resources. The implementation of livelihood improvement activities will involve training villagers on the selected livelihood improvement models, support for purchase of materials, technical support during implementation, monitoring and evaluating the process and outcomes, and adjustment of the approaches as necessary to respond to the organic process on the ground. Special provisions will be made to tailor the delivery of training to also needs of women and indigenous communities.

Output 3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, results documented and made available in the project site.

Community-based ecotourism is a form of ecotourism that emphasizes the development of local communities and allows for local residents to have substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community (see Supplement 1). UNEP and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) as (i) involving appreciation not only of nature, but also of indigenous cultures prevailing in natural areas, as part of the visitor experience. (ii) Containing education and interpretation as part of the tourist offer. (iii) Generally, but not exclusively, organised for small groups by small, specialised and locally owned businesses (while recognising that foreign operators also market and operate ecotourism). (iv) Minimising negative impacts on the natural and socio-cultural environment in the context of COVID 19 and climate change and supporting the protection of natural areas by generating economic benefits for the managers of natural areas. (v) Providing alternative income and employment for local communities and increasing local and visitor awareness of conservation.

Besides its very rich repertoire of biodiversity, the RoC is a stronghold for two species of Great Apes which are heavily dependent upon the presence of natural forests for their habitat: the Western Lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and the Central chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*). These species also hold important potential for the development of ecotourism in the region.

This project will build on lessons on promotion of ecotourism and the basis for community-based ecotourism in other parts of the world[106] as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (especially East and Southern Africa). An ecotourism development plan will be established for the project area to address

[106] See some ideas from which to draw on in the African continent: https://safariguideafrica.com/ecotourism-in-africa/; and https://sustainabletourism.net/case-studies/austrailianz/africa/

all aspects of planning, developing, marketing and managing resources and facilities for this form of tourism. Specific opportunities and challenges related to access to natural areas and cultural heritage, guiding and interpretative services, accommodation, catering, sales of produce and handicrafts, and transport will be spelt out in the plan. The project will also fund the establishment of a tourism information centre at Impfondo that will be operated and run by a board of key stakeholders (drawn mainly, but not exclusively from project communities). Capacity building will be provided to relevant local community representatives on running and managing ecotourism using participatory models within multi-stakeholder environments (see Supplement 1). Training and tools will also be provided to guides to furnish relevant skills required for operating in biodiversity-rich and ecologically-sensitive environments. A business plan for sustainability of the investment will be established through collaborative processes and implemented. This project will fund processes leading to the inclusion of Impfondo ecotourism practice as a certified ecological travel experience, and ensure that it features in recognized platforms[107]. This will ensure that the Impfondo ecotourism investments captures some of the tourism flow with sustainability in mind.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been working closely with the government of the RoC and related governmental bodies to develop ecotourism in the country. The UNDP helped develop the country's national ecotourism strategy, and has invested effort in ensuring that this strategy can be recognized and brought into national legal and policy frameworks. UNDP will be an important partner in the implementation of this Output with inputs from WCS.

Output 3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site

The achievement of goals of this Output will build on models of community-based sustainable production systems called the Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) Platforms. The SAFE model can serve here as a learning platform and baseline approach on which the organic cocoa initiatives could be designed (https://www.hivos.org/program/safe-platform/). Cocoa cultivation was a key cash crop income earning activity for this region before the discovery of petroleum. Since the discovery of petroleum, government attention has been on developing its extraction and sale. There is the livelihood arm of this project which intends to support local communities engage in sustainable economic activities that reduce their reliance on forest resources. The development of ecotourism is going to be one of these initiatives. Organic cocoa production will be another of such. The SAFE Platform has existed for long and its production model has been tested in different parts of the developing world, including African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania. The SAFE platforms will serve the purpose of fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus; promoting the development of sustainable and deforestation free supply chains for the selected products; and connecting buyers of sustainable products with producers to establish preferential purchasing agreements for products that comply with sustainable production standards and/or implement certification schemes.

The cocoa and NTFPs platforms will address accessing opportunities in market niches that value environmentally and socially responsible production to access differentiated prices to increase producers' incomes and contribute to financial sustainability of adopting sound environmental practices and certification schemes. The livestock platform will focus on sustainability of production, and quality and safety of products for the domestic market.

[107] Examples include: Sustainability Leaders Project (https://sustainability-leaders.com/); the Biosphere Tourism (https://www.biospheretourism.com/en); Tripadvisor (https://www.tripadvisor.com); and https://blog.goway.com/globetrotting/2016/02/ecotourism-destinations-east-africa/.

Building on the SAFE Platforms model, this Output will support the implementation of livelihood generation options for project communities. Communities in the project site will be provided with the tools, resources and capacities to develop conservation-compatible livelihood opportunities in non-service livelihood sectors (to complement service sector livelihood opportunities in Output 3.1.1.). These will include development in sectors such as sustainable agriculture (particularly the development of the organic cocoa value chain, as well as value chains for other potentially viable commercial and subsistence crops - such as spices and fruits incorporated into agroforestry systems). This support will be provided in terms of seeds for enhanced locally compatible breeds of crops and trees for farming initiatives to enhance agricultural production; and funding for opening up farms to market access by opening up key road infrastructure within the project area[108]. Given the established dependence of local communities on non-timber forest products, possibilities of developing these value chains will also be examined and promoted where the harvesting of these products is sustainable and the ecological impact of harvesting practices can be monitored and reported. Communities will also be equipped with the business-planning tools necessary for them to identify, develop and manage the mix of business enterprises most suitable for their needs in these proposed value chains.

Adding value to Non-timber forest products (NTFPs): Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are wild plant and animal products harvested from forests, savannahs and other natural vegetation types. This definition includes the use of wood for canoes, woodcarvings, local house construction, fencing materials and firewood, but excludes industrial timber. In the Congo Basin region, the use of NTFPs is common, both in rural and urban areas. Some of the most common categories include NTFPs as (i) Food (wild fruits, vegetables, nuts, edible roots, bush meat, edible insects, and honey). (ii) Food additives: (spices, food colorants, fermentation agents). (iii) Construction material (palm leaves or grass for roof thatch, bamboo, wood, sticks and poles). (iv) Fuel (firewood, charcoal). (v) Medicine (medicinal plants, bark, seeds). (vi) Environmental uses (ornamental plants, shelter trees).

Local communities of the Lac Tele Landscape use and depend on a wide variety of NTFPs[109]. The main challenge faced with using NTFPs to support livelihoods is the lack of value addition. These products are exported to markets outside the local, rural environments in which they are harvested in the very raw form – very limited or often no processing. There is also no support for addressing issues of sustainable harvesting of these products. This project will address these two problems by (i) Supporting local communities to organize into NTFPs common initiative groups, and provide capacity building on the sustainable extraction and management of NTFPs. (ii) This project will also support local communities to add value to NTFPs by undertaking pre-processing or full processing. This will involve purchasing and installing at least four pre-processing, or full processing plants for at least two NTFPs identified through participatory processes as economically viable, and environmentally benign. While the type of plant and level of processing will be decided through community engagements, it is expected that these plants should support local communities in some of the key value addition processes of at least one NTFP. (iii) Finally, the project will support the local common initiative groups in obtaining organic certification for their products, properly packaging and labelling, identifying and accessing markets outside of the local communities. Examples of such certification schemes include whose services may be sought include: AFNOR Certification (https://certification.afnor.org/agriculture/agriculture-biologique); DEMETER (https://www.demeter.net/); Rainforest Alliance (https://www.rainforest-

[108] By clearing and opening up these road infrastructure, the project will also be reducing access constraints to key ecotourism sites – a potentially limiting impediment to tourism flows.

[109] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

alliance.org/articles/rainforest-alliance-utz-merger); and GLOBAL G.A.P (https://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/).

Adding value to organic cocoa: Future Market Insights report that the certified organic cocoa market represents a very small share of the total cocoa market, estimated around 0.5% of total production[110]. However, the demand for organic cocoa products are growing at a very strong pace, the supply side faces a strong challenge to meet the demand of organic cocoa. The organic cocoa market is expected to be largely driven by the health consciousness among consumers. Chocolate is the main application of organic cocoa which is the main growth driver of organic cocoa market. However, lack of proper supply of organic cocoa restrains the global organic cocoa market which also leads to increase in price of organic cocoa.

The environment of the RoC, and in particular the project location is suitable for cocoa production – as the crop has been produced here for decades[111]. The discovery and exploitation of petroleum products substantially diminished the focus the country had on its cocoa production. Given the potential that this crop has to do well in this region, and especially given the increase in demand for certified organic products, this project will support a revival of cocoa production – but this time with a strong organic focus. The project recognizes that improving the cocoa value chain will entail aligning Corporate Social Responsibility and value chain related investments. Climate related objectives and initiatives can be aligned with the overall sustainability, production, sourcing, and growth strategy of the GEF investments in this initiative. Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives can comprehensively address the supply chain challenges related to short term volatility and long-term security of supply. Targeting both small and medium-scale producers, this project will fund the development of seedling producing initiatives through common initiative groups, capacity building in organic cocoa production, and support for value addition and access to organic certified markets as is the case with NTFPs described above.

To promote organic cocoa production as one of the diversification activities in the Lac Tele Landscape, this project will undertake the following: (i) select project sites and engage project stakeholders; (ii) analyse market barriers to mainstreaming certified cocoa and determine project interventions; (iii) analyse and prepare to address the financial barriers to production of certified sustainable cocoa; (iv) assess technical needs of certified cocoa producers; and (v) prepare demand-side mechanisms to mainstream and scale-up sustainable cocoa.

(i) Select project sites and engage project stakeholders: Geographic information system will be used to select and map suitable sites for organic cocoa production within the Lac Tele Landscape. Sites are prioritized based on market-driven and biodiversity criteria. Private sector, NGO, community-based and host government stakeholders will be engaged in the site selection and project planning process, and regular communication and coordination with donors, such as the will be established.

(ii) Analyse market barriers to mainstreaming certified cocoa and determine project interventions: A desktop study will be undertaken to assess and evaluate market potentials and barriers for organic cocoa production. This will be followed by the development and implementation a business and plan for the institutional and financial arrangements needed to continue to overcome market barriers beyond the life of the full project.

[110] Future Market Insights (2020) Organic Cocoa Market: Global Industry Analysis and Opportunity Assessment 2015 – 2025. Accessed on 04-03-2020. https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/organic-cocoa-market

[111] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la présentation d'un modèle économique intégré de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles en République du Congo. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

(iii) Analyse and prepare to address the financial barriers to production of certified sustainable cocoa: Undertake consultations to identify and profile financing and credit institutions that would be interested in supporting investments in organic cocoa, as well as obtain written commitments to participate in GEF full project from recommended lending institutions and/or exporting companies. Finance the preparation of group certification strategies for participating farmers and institutions, and define technical assistance needs and Terms of Reference (TORs) for GEF Full Project activities toward the development of group certification controls and administration. Develop a position statement on pricing, based on calculation of weighted sustainable price differentials, agreed upon among relevant stakeholders in the organic cocoa sectors and communicate to participating producers, roasters, traders and retailers. Develop a business and implementation plan for the institutional and financial arrangements needed to continue to overcome financial barriers beyond the life of the full project.

Assess technical needs of certified cocoa producers: Sustainable cocoa association organizational development assistance will be defined and full project activities delineated for technical assistance in business administration and commercialization. Auditor training curriculum and materials will be prepared to support the technical feasibility of the sector, and technical needs assessment written for improving cocoa quality. A strategy for meeting additional needs for organic cocoa production will be developed through a broad stakeholder consultation.

Prepare demand-side mechanisms to mainstream and scale-up sustainable cocoa: A replication strategy will be developed, which contains the factors that contribute to replication of demand-side sourcing and sale of sustainable cocoa. It will outline demand-side opportunities and needs toward scaling-up sustainable cocoa and includes maps of potential replication sites within the first two years of the full project. It will also outline a methodology for documenting lessons learned from the full project activities with a plan for subsequent outreach to a broader audience. A preliminary marketing strategy and budget will be developed to better increase demand and facilitate market linkages – a strategy that will be refined periodically as new information emerges.

As a preamble to the above activities however, this project will also support the review and evaluation of existing biodiversity, socio-economic and landscape level data from existing cocoa certification audits, economic studies, and other biodiversity monitoring sources. Drawing from the review and evaluation, a preliminary marketing strategy will be developed that will aim to increase demand for organic cocoa from the Lac Tele Landscape. A project marketing consultant will query targeted roaster-retailers and traders, as well as at least three more potential participants (roaster-retailers and traders), to identify marketing campaign needs, develop a strategy to build consumer awareness and delineate activities to be carried out during the project implementation to further support consumer awareness campaigns. In the strategy, private sector support or financial leverage to the campaign will be defined.

A consultant specializing in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will work with the project team and farmers to review and evaluate existing biodiversity, socio-economic and landscape level data from existing certification audits, economic studies, and other biodiversity monitoring sources. The consultant will conduct a preliminary baseline study necessary to develop project monitoring and evaluation. This study will also identify gaps in data necessary for the development of an M&E plan replicable to other sites. An M&E information management system appropriate to the scope, scale and needs of project stakeholders and implementers will be designed to ensure that relevant indicators to support the organic cocoa certification credentials can be monitored at the site level to ensure compliance with certification needs at all times. The principles that the organic cocoa certification scheme will strive to uphold (indicators of relevance that will need to be monitored) may include: ecosystem conservation; wildlife conservation; water resource conservation; soil conservation;

integrated crop management; complete, integrated waste management; fair treatment and good conditions for workers; community relations; and social and environmental monitoring.

In this Output, a small grants program will be created to support individual small business investments in the implementation of land use plans. The small grants will be used to support individual projects for livelihood transformation to enable a change in income generating activities at the household level. The project will also establish in parallel a micro-loan facility for local communities to support larger community developed projects that may be undertaken by local CBOs, NGOs, villages and districts. The micro-loans will support sustainable wildlife management projects, including community-based trophy and bushmeat hunting, and certification of the sustainable wildlife production for selling on local and national markets. Projects that benefit from the micro-loans will serve as demonstration projects that will be used as learning cases for local people interested in developing alternative income sources other than poaching and illegal wildlife trade. These programs will be administered by a local financial institution under the guidance of the PMU. The PMU will identify and contract the local financial institution through an open bidding process. The appropriate establishment documents as well as a decision on how much of these grants will be allocated per individual, and the interest rates on the micro-loans will be agreed upon during the project's inception workshop. Beneficiaries of the small grant and micro-loan programmes will include former poachers among indigenous people and women. Priority for awarding grants and micro-loans will be given to the projects proposing CBNRM, SFM, and use of degraded lands for small-scale oil palm plantations[112]. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will establish a transparent committee for the selection of eligible micro projects compatible with the implementation of the LUMPs developed in Output 1.1.4 of this project

Tourism is not an entirely new economic activity in the project region. While current data is scarce, there is data available on tourism traffic in Likouala relate to the period 2009-2012[113]. The occupancy rate calculated over the four years varies between 48% and 52.3%[114]. These obsolete data need to be updated to take into account the period 2013-2019, for a better analysis. This project will support the development of ecotourism framework that will leverage the potential of the demarcated protected areas, the rich biodiversity of the Lac Tele Landscape, and the unique flavour of the tropical peatland landscape of the project area to generate ecotourism flows and revenues for the project area (see Supplement 1). Imfondo will serve as the locational anchor for ecotourism activities that are outside of the forests or peatlands. Support will be provided for small business initiatives to develop tourism-related non-forest business initiatives such as handicrafts, cultural displays, a local training centre for ecotourism related value chains, and an office for tourism information and outreach. The ecotourism packages developed will form a basis for such development in other parts of Congo. This framework will address issues such as considering charging entrance fees, which could be two-tiered, i.e. lower for nationals than for international visitors. Cooperation with local communities around protected areas and areas of ecotourism potential. Benefit sharing with key actors in the tourism sectors; and other relevant issues. Ecotourism strives to empower and benefit local residents and rural communities

[112] It should be noted that not everything has to involve financial incentives, however. Introducing incentives in areas where the stakeholders could simply respect the law could have the perverse effect of supplanting civic motivations. While financial incentives will be used to support alternative investments, activities such as poaching and IWT will be seen as illegal, and this project will make efforts to sensitize project beneficiaries on the legal, socio-economic and environmental implications of such practices.

[113] Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'ecotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[114] Ibid. Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020).

in part through small-scale, locally owned enterprises. Sometimes, these communities do not have access to the financial resources required for higher-level and/or larger tourism operations. Local and/or foreign investments may be needed to provide the lodging that well-to-do ecotourists desire even for an overnight stay[115].

This Output aligns with efforts that the WCS has ´been undertaking to support income-generation activities in areas around the project area – notable in the development of sustainable fishing practices, beekeeping initiatives and other income-generation activities. WCS will be supporting implementation of this Output, which stands to benefit from associated lessons learned in WCS experiences, as well as fill in existing gaps in income-generation among local communities.

Output 3.1.3. Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation.

This project will support the implementation of a training and communication program on sustainable livelihoods with special focus on sustainable CBNRM, including transparent community governance and equity, and mechanisms to ensure satisfactory revenue flows and a fair distribution benefits from the benefits of training among a broad spectrum of community members (including women, indigenous populations, and the youth). This training program will serve to improve local knowledge on the value of wildlife and other nature-based resources and how these resources could be harnessed sustainably to general legal and robust economic value that sustainably and viably supports livelihoods. Special focus of the training will be on ecotourism – its potentials, functioning, current structure in the Congo, legal requirements, and potential project support for pilot initiatives in the project area. Potential beneficiaries of the training will be broad based, and designed to provide alternative sources of livelihood to members of the community whose activities directly negatively affect environmental health, as well as potential investors in the ecotourism sector. For example, traditional local hunters will be trained to serve as guides, souvenir makers and entertainers for tourists given their unique tracking skills, knowledge of wildlife and amazing cultural traditions. Besides the ecotourism focus, the training will also provide tools on how to undertake CBNRM practices in livelihood support activities such as sustainable game and bushmeat hunting, forest fruit harvesting and processing, the harvesting and processing of wild tropical spices, bee keeping, caterpillars collecting, aquaculture and fish processing within the project area in accordance with relevant LUMPs. This Output will be implemented by Ministry of Tourism and the Environment in collaboration with UNDP Brazzaville.

Component 4. Engaging the private sector in conservation

The regional program targets the strengthening of private sector partnerships within the targeted landscapes through collaborative learning, to ensure scaling up of successful approaches for private sector investment through market access for thousands of farmers and forest producers within commodity supply chains. The third Component of the Congo IP seeks to achieve sustainable use of forests by local communities and forest dependent people through strengthening of rights and tenure, and sustainable management of production sector activities. One of the indicators of this Component envisions increase in investments by private sector companies in conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Congo Basin. The implementation of this Component of the current project will therefore align with, and contribute to the third Component of the regional program. This alignment will enable scaling-up of successful approaches for private sector investment through market access for thousands of farmers and forest producers within commodity supply chains. Private sector partners will likely offer targeted investment to train producers in best land and forest

[115] Ibid. Joseph Léon SAMBA (2020).

management and supporting the cost of verifying these sustainable practices. This will pay the producers larger premiums and improve terms of payment and financing, recognizing the increased sustainability of the products from supported landscapes.

Private sector involvement in investment in peatland rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management can help provide the necessary long-term financing commitment. However, care must be taken that this should not reduce the pressure on industry and transport sectors to reduce their own emissions. Offsets should be additional to credible GHG emission reduction programmes and be limited to compensating only for unavoidable emissions associated with any form of activity or initiative on peatlands. This Component strives to (i) Empower civil society and communities to become involved in, and benefit from, environmental management and sustainable natural resource use through direct project implementation addressing local environmental problems. (ii) Encourage partnerships between communities, the public sector and private stakeholders. (iii) Document and replicating best practices of community-private sector collaboration and outcomes.

The component objectives will be delivered through the following outcome and output:

Outcome 4.1. Private sector adopts sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the integrity of peatland ecosystems.

The private sector is actively engaged in different activities associated with land use, land cover change, access to natural resources, associated issues of livelihoods in the project area. In 2016 the Ministry of Mines and Energy issued at least seven permits that allow companies to prospect or begin mining for gold inside the Republic of Congo's largest national park[116]. Odzala-Kokoua became a national park in 2001 by presidential decree, which does not allow mining. It has been feared that the Republic of Congo's pivot toward mineral extraction as an economic development strategy may mean that the government could change the park's borders to allow mining if it is in the public interest. The boundaries of Odzala-Kokoua National Park contain some of the best-preserved old-growth rainforest in the Republic of Congo. Its terrain varies from hills rising to 350 meters to dense low-lying jungles to more than a hundred clearings in the forest – popular hangouts for wildlife.

While petroleum exploitation has been an ongoing activity in the project area, there are new concessions being offered and developed to further expand on the existing production capacity. One of the latest has been the Petroleum Exploration and Production Africa (PEPA) which, by decree No. 6757/MTE/CAB/DGE/DPPN of April 11, 2019, was authorized to open the drilling and to exploit the wells of the Ngoki Permit, in the basin of the Cuvette[117].

Timber is playing an outsized role in the Central African developing country's economy, particularly now that its petroleum export profits have taken a hit from a nosedive in global oil prices. Around 90 percent of Congo's forests are earmarked for logging concessions, and the majority of them are in production, according to a 2014 report published by Chatham House[118]. Some of the major players in forest exploitation and management in the project area are shown in *Table 6* and *Table 7* below:

[116] https://infocongo.org/en/country/republique-du-congo/

[117] Benoit MOUDANGA (2020). Etude sur l'implication du secteur prive dans la conservation par la promotion des pratiques de gestion durable des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[118] Republic of the Congo - Explore trends in forest policy, forest resources and the trade in timber and paper products in Republic of the Congo. https://forestgovernance.chathamhouse.org/countries/republic-of-the-congo

Table 6. Forest concessions and Protected areas on the outskirts of the Lac Télé Landscape[119]

Forest concessions	**Managers**	**Area**	**Departements**
UFA Mimbelli-Ibenga	CIB-OLAM	669 589	Likouala
UFA Ipendja	Thanry Congo	451 245	Likouala
UFA Loundoungou-Toukoulaka	CIB-OLAM	571 100	Likouala
UFA Pokola	CIB-OLAM	452 200	Sangha
UFA Ngombé	IFO	1 159 643	Sangha
UFA Makoua	Christelle	706 452	Cuvette
Protected areas			
Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua	WCS	1 354 600	Cuvette/ Sangha

Besides forest exploitation, mining is also an important economic activity with potential for land use conversion, natural resource access implications for local communities, and environmental change. Below are some details of the mining companies operating in the project area:

Table 7.1. Mining companies on the outskirts of the Lac Télé Landscape[120]

Désignation	**Compagnie**	**Produits**	**Départements**	**Localisation**
Permis minier (Exploitation semi-industrielle)	Niel Congo	Diamant	Likouala	Mokabi Ibenga
				Motaba
				Ipendja
				Iblinki
Permis minier (Exploitation semi-industrielle)	Famiye	Or	Sangha	Ekouye
				Lobo
				Liouesso
Permis pétrolier	Pétroleum	Pétrole	Cuvette	Districts de Lokolelé et Mossaka

This project will assess the conditions necessary to attract and encourage such private sector investment in green initiatives that benefit local communities in and around the project area. This will be contributing to existing efforts in creating and improving the enabling environment for sustainable investments, corporate social responsibility, and engagements between the private sector and local communities in joint sustainability goals. This will include exploring different models of environment-improving activities such as reforestation, targeting of markets for green initiatives (such as sustainable NTFPs, and organic cocoa), and sustainable production initiatives such as agroforestry.

This project will leverage the distinct strengths of private sector actors in the achievement of natural resources management goals in the project area. Private sector actors offer significant technical

[119] Ibid. Benoit MOUDANGA (2020).
[120] Ibid. Benoit MOUDANGA (2020).

expertise and finance and implementation capacities that can improve the outcomes from collaborative actions for all concerned[121]. The approach to private sector and other stakeholder engagement will focus on core issues that stakeholders value in common. It is through focusing on challenges that matter to the private sector, government agencies and local communities alike that the dialogue processes will be regarded as socially legitimate. Core resource governance interests of rural communities relate to security of rights, regulations addressing land use and shared resources, and policies affecting small-scale agriculture. By focusing on the points where these goals converge, this project will be fostering inter-institutional collaborations to influence land-related policy and practice related to large-scale public and private investments[122].

Output 4.1.1. Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) have emerged to specify requirements on a wide range of sustainability metrics, including respect for human rights, workers' health and safety, a decent income, and environmental degradation[123]. The production of VSS-compliant commodities has continued to grow, reaching at least 34.5 per cent of coffee's global production and 29 per cent of cocoa's, based on 2016 data. This is driven in many cases by consumer demand, purchase decisions, sourcing commitments from larger buyers and traders, and government regulations. Despite this growth and the promising sign of the expansion of VSS-compliant production in the agricultural sector, producers in many less-developed countries continue to face major challenges in accessing and benefiting from these sustainable markets. Challenges include: price volatility, income disparity across the value chain, market imbalance and the effects of climate change[124].

VSS schemes are developed in partnership with a range of non-governmental actors such as civil society groups and businesses. The selling point of VSS is that such schemes bring greater transparency to how sustainably supply chains are managed, and that they provide market incentives to altering production processes towards more sustainable ones. VSS schemes can also increase awareness of consumer around issues such as ethical production, producer well-being, and corporate accountability. There has been some case-specific evidence that VSS may generate environmental and economic benefits. Most VSS, such as the Marine Stewardship Council and the Rainforest Alliance among others, stipulate certain types of practices, such as limited use of agro-chemicals, policies on deforestation, soil conservation, waste, and water management, to control negative environmental externalities arising from value chains. The economic benefits of VSS that would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the SDGs 1 (poverty reduction), 8 (sustainable economic growth and employment), 9 (sustainable industrialization), and 10 (reduction in inequality), are tied to the potential that implementation of VSS and its related capacity building projects may help increase farmers' productivity. This in turn would lead to higher income for farmers, more stable relationships with their buyers, and greater access to resources. In Kenya, for example, support for the implementation of Rainforest Alliance Certification and its training in Farmer Field Schools led to increased productivity and higher yields[125].

In this project, VSS principles will be introduced at different levels in the Lac Télé Landscape. Some of the areas of application will include in the development of strategy documents across all landscapes

[121] Clementine Burnley, Irina Comardicea, Anne Dahmen and Blake D. Ratner. (2014). Engaging the private sector to address conflict in natural resource management. Policy Brief. Collaborating for Resilience.
[122] Ibid. Clementine Burnley, Irina Comardicea, Anne Dahmen and Blake D. Ratner. (2014).
[123] Mai-Lan Ha, Jason Morrison, Aimée Hampel-Milagrosa, Pieter Glasbergen, Ulrich Hoffmann, Halina Ward, Norma Tregurtha, and David D'Hollander (2016). Meeting Sustainability Goals: Voluntary Sustainability Standards and the Role of the Government. United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS). https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/final_unfss-report_28092016.pdf
[124] Ibid.
[125] Review (2014). "No. 397: Riding the Wave of Sustainable Commodity Sourcing: Review of the Sustainable Trade Initiative IDH 2008–2013." The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Policy and Operations Evaluation. 2014

and identified zones in Output 1.1.4. where LUMPs will be developed for selected districts in Lac Télé landscape. It will also be applied in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography's protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation (Output 1.1.5). In production landscapes (related to forestry, agriculture, fisheries and even some forms of NTFPs, VSS will serve to infuse and ensure sustainable harvesting and production. To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the principles, application and the opportunities offered by VSS, the training in Output 2.1.2. for local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples to develop and implement environmental projects will include capacity-building on VSS.

Certain baseline information is needed to identify and evaluate how extractive resource activities affect, and are affected by, other natural resources and human conditions and values – and hence properly implement VSS. Examples of the information and data that may be available or still needed for a concession and its immediate area include: (i) inventory of tree species, their characteristics, numbers, and distribution; (ii) knowledge of the current conservation status of large mammal populations; (iii) wildlife habitat conditions, and conditions of key habitat components; (iv) water quality, quantity, and users of rivers and streams that will be affected by the extractive activity; (v) road networks, how people use roads now, and how population and immigration trends forecast people will use roads in the future; (vi) amount and location of both illegal and legal bushmeat and trophy hunting; (vii) amount and extent of illegal exploitation and trade of timber and mineral products; (viii) overall current indigenous and local communities' natural resource use patterns current and future sources of food provisioning for indigenous and local communities; (ix) current and anticipated job, housing, health, and education conditions. These data will be collected as part of the action-based research in Output 2.1.3.

This Output will be led by the Ministry of Forest Economy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment.

In this Output, capacity will be developed for a range of on-the-ground stakeholders, including for protected area staff, provincial and local government officials, community-based land user groups and conservation concerns, and other stakeholders. The training will cover the systematic and participatory conservation management planning, as well as management processes and activities for peatlands, wildlife, and protected areas. This training will cover competencies including dealing with landscape-based (sector) developments (such as agriculture & water use, sustainable land management, the integrated management of peatland resources, eco-tourism), threats (such as deforestation, IWT, invasive species) and opportunities for enhancing the conservation of environmental resources (such as financing opportunities offered by payments for ecosystem services – PES schemes). This Output will be implemented with technical support from Université Marien Ngouabi and other relevant institutions within the Scientific and Technical Committee.

Output 4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption

Concessions owned or leased by forestry companies do possess significant amounts of native vegetation as well as critical biodiversity (including some keystone and endemic species) relevant for conservation and environmental sustainability of the Lac Télé Landscape and the Congo Basin Region in general. The main focus of this Output is to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation and restoration in the Forestry sector companies. To do so, the project will intervene on the indirect threats of poor knowledge about conservation value in owned or leased concessions, lack of integrated landscape planning, low compliance with environmental legislation in force, and poor knowledge of landowners about environmental-friendly techniques. This Output intends to support Forestry industries and their logging activities to go beyond acknowledging the importance of biodiversity conservation, current monitoring actions, and forest recovery. The expectation is that the

sector boosts its performance in these components, systematise these achievements into evidence that instructs RoC government regarding its targeted achievements in the scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and disseminates solutions found within and outside the sector. It is the sector interest: i) that protocols for biodiversity monitoring, SLM, SFL and restoration are improved, and that data obtained from it are incorporated into national reports in the scope of CBD; ii) that their areas of highest conservation value are identified and properly managed based on the improved protocols; and that iii) priority areas for native vegetation restoration are identified and considered by the companies. Therefore, the project, in partnership with the forestry sector companies, will support the acquisition and use of data on biodiversity in their respective concessions, as well as increase conservation and restoration quality in these areas.

This Output will be implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Forest Economy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Mining, and the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment. It will support an enhancement of the effectiveness of operational modalities of companies operating concessions to ensure that relevant legislation and rules regarding sustainability in forestry practice is adhered to be forestry and logging companies. To ensure adherence with the RoC target achievements within the scope of the CBD, a framework for monitoring logging by forestry companies will be developed and/or revised and enhanced to take recommendations on current assessment and monitoring challenges in the sector. The development/revision/enhancement of current assessment and monitoring challenges will be elucidated through broad consultations with all relevant stakeholders (including mandatory inputs from local communities, land users, and governmental forestry and environmental stakeholders).

Output 4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site.

This project will support initiatives towards finding and implementing suitable policy and technical incentives for private sector commitments to sustainable peatland management. This will include the identification, legal and policy recognition of, and the implementation of suitable economic and legal incentives for conservation.

There is a growing movement toward using economic incentives to help accomplish environmental goals. The challenge is to craft such incentives to encourage the private sector to conserve resources while still achieving sustainable economic development[126]. Economic incentives as a method of encouraging private sector involvement are advantageous as they can accomplish major conservation actions at a lower cost than traditional approaches. While tax incentives for conservation may reduce government revenues slightly in the short run, in the long run, the overall economy benefits from resulting resource conservation[127]. For example, conservation incentives can promote sustainable economic activities such as ecologically sound tourism and recreation that might otherwise be foreclosed. There are many economic incentives available as tools to spur or achieve conservation. Incentive mechanisms are increasingly being tried out in developing countries to address the conservation of biodiversity and provision of ecosystem services – that is services that ecosystems provide. They include among others: i) Payments for Environmental Service (PES) schemes, in which natural resource users are paid to conserve natural resources or manage them more sustainably[128]. ii) The certification of 'biodiversity-friendly products', the production of which conserves key species and habitats while improving the livelihoods of people; iii) Benefit-sharing schemes to give local communities a stake in conserving critical habitats and species.

[126] Ian Bowles et al. (1998). Economic Incentives and Legal Tools for Private Sector Conservation,
8 *Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum* 209-244. Available at: https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/delpf/vol8/iss2/2
[127] Ibid. Ian Bowles et al. (1998).
[128] Sven Wunder (2007). The Efficiency of Payments for Environmental Services in Tropical Conservation. Conservation Biology. Volume21, Issue1, Pages 48-58.

The use of legal tools to achieve conservation aims is also well documented, with several important legal tools available for private actors to use in accomplishing conservation[129]. The simplest and most obvious is a gift of land, money, or securities (a donation) to a conservation organization or government agency. A second approach is the "conservation easement," a tool for permanently conserving land by restricting most forms of new development while allowing landowners to use it for limited purposes consistent with conservation. A third tool is the conservation agreement, in which a landowner keeps full ownership of the land, but enters into a legal contract with a government agency or a conservation organization in which the owner commits to manage the land so as to ensure conservation. Lastly, exchanges of public and private land can involve the private sector in conservation and allow efficient use of government resources. To increase the incentive for conservation, these legal tools are often combined with tax policies that encourage their use[130].

Component 5. Communication, Knowledge Management and Project Monitoring and Evaluation

The Congo Basin IP will establish mechanisms for assimilating, documenting and sharing knowledge gained through project experiences. The intention is to address the needs of critical knowledge areas for the project include causal knowledge (know-why), declarative knowledge (know-what), and procedural knowledge (know-how). This project will therefore take advantage of the Congo IP's overall knowledge management strategy, which will involve: (i) Empowering project countries to implement effective KM and learning activities at national level that respond to their needs (relevance); (ii) Providing regional KM instruments in support of project countries and incentivizing regional sharing and learning to foster synergies (coherence), reduce overlaps (efficiency), and facilitate knowledge uptake, innovation and scaling (effectiveness); and (iii) Harnessing knowledge and achievements of project countries to raise the visibility of the program.

This component of the current project will therefore be developed in coordination with the Regional Project, which will develop a Knowledge component for the overall Congo Basin Impact Program building on the following principles:

- Empowering project countries to implement effective KM and learning activities at national level that respond to their needs;
- Providing regional KM instruments in support of project countries and incentivise regional sharing and learning to foster synergies (coherence), reduce overlaps (efficiency), and facilitate knowledge uptake, innovation and scaling (effectiveness);
- Harnessing knowledge and achievements of project countries to raise the visibility of the program and knowledge outreach at global level to contribute to global goods and support the sustainable use and management of environmental resources.

This component will allow organization of a system and platforms for documenting and sharing best practices and lessons learned on peatland landscapes, biodiversity, and freshwater biodiversity areas in the project locations of Lac Tele Landscape, and to ensure that these are made available for use in other conservation and production forests and peatlands in the rest of the Congo Basin Region in general. It will also support adaptive management so that the project integrates experiences that result during implementation of the activities in the new programmatic cycles of the project. Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention area through a number of existing information sharing networks and forums.

The project approach recognizes that there is often substantial common interest between local indigenous people wishing to retain their rights to land, conservationists who wish to preserve

[129] Ibid. Ian Bowles et al. (1998).
[130] Ibid. Ian Bowles et al. (1998).

ecological habitats for biodiversity, and private sector companies seeking to build sound, long-term local relationships and 'social license to operate'[131]. Research on local institutions[132] has shown that the impacts of public and private organisations partnering up with local communities empowers them and gives them a sense of "ownership", which in turn drives commitment, accountability and responsibility, actually encouraging local communities to conserve and to help in restricting access to outsiders. Another impact is that such an approach builds local capacity, improves communication, stabilises power relationships and increases transparency[133]. Most importantly, it is necessary to recognise and foster the already existing links between conservation and the knowledge systems and livelihoods of local communities, ensuring a far more holistic, sustainable, realistic and resilient conservation approach than that currently applied in the mainstream. The project will undertake a suite of activities for empowering local communities including women, outreach and education relating to conservation, the roles and functions of protected areas and corridors/complexes, relevant regulations regarding resource use (including poaching), and the goals and activities of the proposed project.

A variety of outreach materials will be disseminated to villages and municipalities within the project area, including a well-designed educational booklet, newsletters, radio and television reports, and field reports and published articles. The anticipated long-term impact is that the local communities and private sector will become active stakeholders of conservation and will mainstream it in their daily life and local development activities. The linkage of these awareness activities with the alternative livelihoods that the project will create will contribute as driver for this change.

These multi-channel communication efforts will be built on annual multi-stakeholder consultative forums on the project progress and achieved results and to provide an opportunity to build partnerships and monitor the impact of the project[134]. In addition, the project will strengthen and make use of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment website to showcase project activities and progress, to report on relevant policy and regulatory changes and other events, and to make available key documentation and lessons learned. The project will also develop a sound monitoring and evaluation system which will give adequate attention to indicators related to gender and indigenous people issues[135]. The expected outcome will be "Generated knowledge and communication products are available for disseminated at different levels and adaptive management ensured". The outputs will include: i) Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project and disseminated at local, national and regional levels to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation; ii) RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged; and iii) Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant evaluations are conducted.

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[131] See e.g. Gadgil, M., F. Berkes and C. Folke. 1993. Indigenous knowledge for biodiversity conservation. *Ambio* 22: 151-156.; also, Kemf, E. (ed.). 1993. The Law of the Mother: Protecting Indigenous Peoples in Protected Areas. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. Cited in Pyhälä et al. 2016. Regarding private sector, see CSBI (2015).A cross-sector approach to the mitigation hierarchy. Prepared by The Biodiversity Consultancy for IPIECA, ICMM and the Equator Principles Association: Cambridge UK.

[132] See e.g. Ostrom, E. 1990. Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge University Press. Ostrom, E. 2010. Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change. Glob. Environ. Change Hum. Policy Dimens. 20:550–557. Cited in Pyhälä et al. 2016.

[133] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[134] Ibid. Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020).

[135] Théophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l'etude sur le developpement d'un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l'utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

The component objectives will be delivered through the following outcome and outputs:

Outcome 5.1. Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.

This Output will contribute to improved communications and enhanced awareness in the Lac Télé landscape on biodiversity, IWT, ecosystems conservation, and sustainable peatlands management. There are currently very limited initiatives to support biodiversity communications and information dissemination on relevant environmental and socio-economic development issues, challenges and opportunities in the project area[136]. This project will promote initiatives for the distribution of environmental and development related information to support the fight against IWT, sustainable peatlands management, and improved protected area management by harnessing the potential offered by traditional media including newspapers and radio, and self-organized general public campaign, such as community meetings through grassroots organizations, conservation billboards, signage, and countryside literary activities, etc. Target audiences include villagers, students, tourists and general public. There are three major shortcomings identified with conservation communication in the Lac Télé Landscape: (i) existing communications platform and channels in the Lac Télé Landscape are out of date - and related, there is a lack of capacity in using modern media, networks means and social media for effective environment education and information dissemination. (ii) Outreach and communication programs are more traditional in content, restricted to biodiversity only, and do not incorporate the economics and values of ecosystem services (contained in the Lac Télé Landscape). (iii) Communications in the Lac Télé Landscape are not integrated and harmonized to support a common message because of the absence of an agreed strategy and delivery plan.

Output 5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation.

The project will systemize and disseminate key lessons learned for the benefit of other projects and programs at regional, national, cross-border and global levels based on appropriate media means (e.g., national and foreign media, scientific journals and scientific networks, community forums, theatre groups, etc.). This Output will identify lessons learned related to the implementation of strategies to promote biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use, sustainable peatland management, CBNRM, and IWT in the project area. This effort will bring forth useful lessons and successful experiences that result from actions to strengthening the regulatory and institutional frameworks for integrated management and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in peatland landscapes in the Lac Télé landscape. This will include biodiversity-friendly wildlife practices, regulation of land development, participatory zoning, protection, and management of peatlands, ecotourism, and public involvement to reduce threats to peatlands and biodiversity in the project area. Identifying the lessons learned and best management practices will help to: a) guide future actions, including the replication of experience and incorporation of lessons learned in other parts of the country and the Congo Basin Region. b) Guide dialogue at the national, subnational, and local levels with regard to policies and strategies for reducing loss in coastal marine biodiversity; and c) Improve the impact of the projects and programs financed by GEF.

A web-based coordination platform will be created to facilitate inter-institutional information sharing, joint programming, and mutual understanding of project activities and as well as information and results sharing. The project host institution as part of its official website will host the web-based coordination platform. The web-based platform will initially operate for sharing information and promoting coordination between the key project stakeholders related to the project, but will gradually

[136] Ibid. Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020).

expand to serve as a coordination platform for biodiversity conservation, sustainable peatland management, CBNRM, and IWT around the country. The platform will have a collaborative system that will enable authorized users in geographically different locations to have access and share information. As part of the web- based coordination platform, a Facebook page and other social media will be established for the project that will serve both for disseminating project information, lessons learned, and best practices as well as for raising public and community awareness. The Facebook page will also gradually expand to include information about biodiversity conservation, sustainable peatland management, CBNRM, and IWT around the country. This Output will be led by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment.

Output 5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations.

This project recognizes that stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management are possibly the most important ingredients for successful project delivery[137]. The strategy of this project is to maintain synergistic relationships between its various stakeholders, not only thematically but also through a mutual enrichment between the three project intervention sites. This has been the basis of the stakeholder contributions during the project preparation phase (see Supplement 2). The project plan for engaging key actors, including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management revolves around four integrated approaches. These include[138] (i) Identifying project stakeholders, reviewing expectations, and analysing the level of influence and interest in the project. This was done during the thematic studies and related consultation during the development of the project documents. (ii) Determining a communication strategy, which involves determining preferred method of reaching out and allowing information flow through all stakeholders and levels of the project. This strategy has also been developed as part of Component 5 of this document. (iii) Preform risk, change impact analysis to identify advocates as well as potential adversaries and create a plan for conflict resolution. This has been done as part of the project documents. (iv) Consult and communicate early and often to ensure that requirements are agreed and a delivery.

3.4. Intervention logic and key assumptions

Besides contributing at the regional level, this project also targets on-the-ground implementation that would benefit both the local communities as well as the local government in promoting sustainable peatland management, mitigation of IWT, and protected area management. Realizing the importance of linking the project with the bigger child project "Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin", as well as existing or past projects with similar nature, the experiences and lessons learnt from them could help in fine-tuning some methodologies in the implementation of this proposed project. Involvement or consultation with the private sector is also one of the key approaches this project will embark on. There are portions of peatland which are managed by private sector through forest concessions and other forms of agri-business development, but the lack of understanding about appropriate management approaches as well as perverse incentives encourages unsustainable approaches. Another core approach is targeting the alleviation of poverty of peatland dependent communities.

Five key approaches have been followed in the design of the project namely:

[137] Ibid. Théophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020).

[138] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

i. Coordination with the regional program: Through this coordination, benefits can be gained by sharing experiences and lessons learnt in the region. In addition, issues tackled by this project in one country, such as the degradation of peatlands, IWT and protected area conservation management challenges, tend to have major negative environmental and social impacts on other countries in the region through transboundary effects of smoke haze pollution (in terms of peatland fires); cross-border poaching (in terms of IWT); and the degradation of ecosystem services (in relation to biodiversity loss and poor management of protected areas). Furthermore, the economies and in many cases the cultures of frontier communities of countries in the region are interlinked, hence understanding the challenges and dealing with issues of natural resources management in one country can have implications for other countries in the region.

ii. On-the-ground implementation: A key principle for the design of the project is that it must lead to direct changes on-the–ground rather than address only policy and coordination issues. This is based on the belief that the on-the- ground problems are severe and need to be solved urgently. There is also a clear understanding that in order to correct policy failures, there is a need to have practical on-the-ground demonstrations of peatland rehabilitation and sustainable use. As a result, the project design has incorporated establishment of demonstration sites and pilot projects as well as promoting sustainable use and livelihood for peatland and forest-dependent communities. It is also important to establish appropriate channels of communication to link local communities, government and other stakeholders in peatland management and fire prevention and control[139].

iii. Creating linkages to other interventions and cooperation frameworks: The intervention has been designed so that it builds on and complements other completed, ongoing and planned interventions related to the management of peatlands in the region. Linkages are envisioned with other related projects in the region, such as other GEF funded child projects within the Congo IP. Lessons learned from these projects would be taken into consideration during the process of implementation. Linkages will also be enhanced by taking a multi-stakeholder approach in development of strategy as well as implementation of action plans. Linkages are also being made with global frameworks such as CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD.

iv. Linkage to private sector: One of the proposed innovations in the project is a proposed linkage to the private sector, which is active in the region in utilizing peatland and managing its resources, as well as in influencing rates and patterns of biodiversity loss through forest exploitation, logging, and through large-scale land investments in the agricultural sector. This approach will include involving the palm oil community through the ongoing the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil (contributing to the criteria development for oil palm on peat soils). It also includes working with the timber and non-timber forest products sector who are involved in harvesting or processing resources from peat swamp forest, as well as developing plantations of fast-growing tree species on peatland areas. Linkages will also be made with the tourism and aviation industries in the region, which are impacted by smoke from peatland fires, as well as the insurance industry, which may be facing potentially increasing claims for peatland, fire related losses if developments such as tourism and related industries were to develop in the region.

v. Addressing poverty and community livelihood issues: The protection and sustainable management of peatlands and forests in the Congo Basin Region is closely linked with the issue of community livelihoods and poverty. If local communities living in or adjacent to peatlands, forests and protected areas benefit from the natural goods and services provided by peatlands and can be empowered and supported to protect or rehabilitate peatlands, they can play an important role in the rehabilitation and

[139] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

sustainable use of peatland resources. On the other hand, if local communities are marginalized and disempowered, they may have a more negative impact on the peatlands. It is therefore a key strategy in the design of this project to incorporate mechanisms to empower and support peatland and forest-dependent communities in the sustainable use of these areas. Support for the development of sustainable livelihood activities and initiatives have been built into the project design to ensure that livelihood support is sustainable even beyond the project. This support takes the form of community based sub-projects such as the development of ecotourism, as well as individual and community projects related to the transition to sustainable land use activities that are friendly to peatlands, forest conservation and the health of biodiversity.

vi. Knowledge to identify and implement cross-cutting sustainable peatlands initiatives is missing

Knowledge generation and management

Local knowledge, skills, and public awareness concerning the peatland management are main challenges. Issues related to the peatlands (and associated co-sustainability dimensions of peatlands such as biodiversity and sustainable forest management) are poorly covered in the information flows both at the local level (the project area) and even at the national level (RoC as a country). This limits the opportunity for public awareness and therefore public involvement in the implementation of sustainable practices on peatlands, IWT and co-management of forest resources. This is due in part to insufficient knowledge of these linkages among key government and civil society stakeholders at national and community levels.

With regards to knowledge management, this output will assess the data, information, knowledge generation's gaps and weaknesses affecting peatland health, management, resource extraction impacts and trends, and how best to address the associated challenges and barriers to sustainable practices in the Lac Tele Landscape. This includes an assessment of the institutional structures and mechanisms to manage data, information and knowledge as well as it will make recommendations on priority capacity development activities at the systemic, institutional, and technical levels. The focus under this output is to carry out activities to ensure that data relevant for environmental management be collected, managed, and shared effectively; and to engage relevant stakeholders to achieve consensus and trust around a mechanism for data and information sharing on peatlands and associated environmental resources.

Understanding subsidiarity in the context of knowledge exchange is crucial. Knowledge exchange will be most effective at the level where the knowledge is to be directly used. Therefore, considerable effort should be made to work with the local actors to determine what they already know, what their information needs are and what their capacity is for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. Understanding local needs, context and application is an essential starting point to develop online platforms that support local knowledge exchange.

Knowledge sharing

Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond - with other communities within the Congo IP network, and especially with transboundary communities in the Lac Tumba Landscape of the DRC. The project intervention zone through information sharing networks and forums of the regional project. The project will identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be

of benefit to project implementation though lessons learned. There will be a two-way flow of information between this project and other projects of a similar focus.

Project Publications will form a key method of crystallizing and disseminating the results and achievements of the Project. These publications may be scientific or informational texts on the activities and achievements of the Project, in the form of journal articles, multimedia publications, etc. These publications can be based on Technical Reports, depending upon inter alia the relevance and scientific worth of these Reports, or may be summaries or compilations of a series of Technical Reports and other research.

Key assumptions include the following:

Outcome 1.1: An enabling local policy and national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and natural resources is developed and applied

- Constitutional reforms and other political processes do not lead to a shift in the interest towards reforms to support local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and natural resources
- All participating stakeholders in the project at all levels are willing to contribute existing data in the development of the database
- The project staff will invest enough effort in ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups access the necessary information and opportunities for training
- The gender safeguards for the project are followed properly during the project implementation
- Decentralization policies and processes in relevant ministries to support the development and implementation of local level land use planning remain in place
- Issues of land tenure are properly addressed during initial consultations to ensure the smooth process of land use planning.
- The Government of the RoC is keen to support sustainable land use planning in the management of natural resources and landscapes of the country

Outcome 2.1: Integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems is established

- The immediate benefits of the implementation of sustainable management practices are substantial enough to spur adoption by local communities
- Management staff of the Reserve take part in training on effective management, and receive continual support from project staff for field implementation
- The project staff will invest enough effort in ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups access the necessary information and opportunities for training

Outcome 3.1: Income generating activities provide economic incentives for the participation of local communities' in conservation

- The price of cocoa in the world market does not fall significantly
- Efforts to increase and sustain the Western lowland gorilla population (a key ecotourism attraction) are successful.

Outcome 4.1: Private sector takes steps toward adopting sustainable peatland management practices

- The government of the RoC redoubles support for public-private partnerships in investments on natural resources extraction and use.
- Local governments and other political authorities of the Lac Tele Landscape remain committed to environmental protection, and sustainable development programs
- Lobbying from the private sector does not derail efforts towards reforms

- Local residents are willing to change land use practices for conservation benefits

Outcome 5.1: Generated knowledge and communication products are available for disseminated at different levels and adaptive management ensured.

- The Scientific Committee of the project engages all relevant stakeholders to arrive at a versatile and representative knowledge management system

3.5. Risk analysis and risk management measures

The key risks identified that could hinder achievement of the Project Development Objective, and the proposed mitigation measures to address them, are summarized in Table 9 below. Some of the key risks include the following: Some members of the community may be too poor to wait for, or too disorganized to access, the benefits of the project. The Livelihood Support Mechanism, as well as the economic initiatives to be implemented and supported by this project (ecotourism, sustainable harvesting and management of NTFPs, development of the organic cocoa value chain, etc.) are designed to reduce this risk. The continual logging by private companies and the development of new farmlands for extensive cash crop production may persist as the responsible entrepreneurs may not see the benefits of switching to more sustainable practices, backed by strict reporting and monitoring procedures and standards. The above land cover changes to support logging and agricultural activities in the Lac Télé Landscape may contribute to the opening of new highways into and within the forest in the area within the project lifetime. By supporting the development and implementation of environmentally friendly legislation and policy, future developments in the project landscape will come under stricter scrutiny of environmental and socio-economic and cultural safeguards demanded by local and national policies and legal frameworks. This will greatly alter the local social dynamics and economics of land use, increasing the risk that both local and external stakeholders will challenge the adoption of forest management options geared towards conservation and low-impact community use. Close collaboration and engagement will all relevant stakeholders will ensure that communication on the need for sustainability and adherence to existing and revised legal and policy frameworks is maintained. The existence of multiple donors and investors in the area is both a risk, due to increasing complexity of coordinating multiple interventions, and an advantage, because it can provide the capacity and resources to transform the area, and ensure that there is close third party monitoring of the Ministry's GEF funded operations.

One of the key risks within the current global health crisis is that of the consumption of wild meat products (bushmeat). The consumption of bushmeat has been associated with a number of health challenges[140 and 141]. The Covid-19 epidemic currently plaguing the world is supposed to have some of its roots in human consumption of wild game[142]. This calls for careful consideration of practices around wild food harvests, marketing and consumption – a phenomenon that may not be well-known in the project area, and among some decision-makers. Lastly, it must be recognized that even with proper awareness on the implications of bushmeat consumption, progress can only be significantly achieved in decreasing this practice when and if alternatives to sources of animal protein are available, or or when sustainably managed harvests of wildlife are commonplace. The GEF recognises the need

[140] Weiss S, Nowak K, Fahr J, et al. (2012). Henipavirus-related Sequences in Fruit Bat Bushmeat, Republic of Congo. Emerging Infectious Diseases. 18(9):1535-1536. doi:10.3201/eid1809.111607.
[141] Ibid. Chausson, A.M., Rowcliffe, J.M., Escouflaire, L. et al. (2019).
[142] Mizumoto, Kenji et al. "Effect of a wet market on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmission dynamics in China, 2019-2020." *International journal of infectious diseases : IJID : official publication of the International Society for Infectious Diseases* vol. 97 (2020): 96-101. doi:10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.091

for care to be given to avoid increase potential exposure of these groups to COVID-19[143], and the consumption of bushmeat can constitute one such avenue of exposure.

The climate risk is another important factor to be considered in the project area. According to the Rainforest Foundation, historical climate data shows that, on average, temperatures have increased and rainfall has decreased in the Republic of Congo in the second half of the twentieth century. Models predict that temperatures could rise by up to 1.1°C on average by 2050[144]. The key hazards that are associated with this projected climate changes in the project area according to the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).
Local perceptions of climatic changes largely correlate with the scientific data, with communities reporting to have observed increased temperature, changes in the length of seasons, drying up of rivers and water pollution – all of which can potentially be linked to climate change. The primary social impact of climate change on communities studied relates to deteriorating human health. The prolonged dry season and reduced rainfall have led to streams in the forest flowing for shorter periods in the year, and when stagnant, tend to breed bacteria and become polluted leading to diarrhoea, vomiting and occasionally death. Stagnant ponds are also ideal breeding ground for malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

In general, this project is categorized as low-to-medium risk and is not expected to have any negative environmental or social impacts.

Table 9. Risk analysis and mitigation strategies.

Risk	**Risk rating**	**Risk Mitigation Strategies**
The Government of RoC is not sufficiently interested in policies that favour of improvements in environmental quality	Low	The government is very aware of and supportive of the goals of this project. While there is potential for the development of some sections of the peatlands, the government continues to hold that all forms of development in this sensitive landscape should be carried out within the framework of environmental sustainability.
Alternative initiatives that reduce pressures on peatlands and the forests they harbour may not be economically viable enough – leading local communities to question the rational for long-term benefits from environmental conservation	Medium	The participatory action-based research in Output 2.1.3 is designed to use scientific and participatory methods to identify best alternative options for activities that put pressure on peatlands, forest, and their related ecosystems. This data driven participatory approach should be able to identify best practices that are both economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable for local use. This offers potential for these alternatives to be successful. Learning from previous projects carried out in the area will be a key part of this process.
The model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem does not	Medium	The project will identify and develop the broadest possible range of revenue generation options, to maximise benefits to participating communities. Specific outputs target developing a viable organizational and enabling framework for ecotourism development and the enhancement of the organic cacao value chains. To arrive at these value chains, there will be spin-offs in income generating activities such as

[143] GEF 2020. "Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics."
https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_COVID_Project_Design_Review_Considerations_20200925.pdf
[144] The Rainforest Foundation 2018. Research on Climate Change Adaptation by Indigenous People in the Republic Of Congo. Final Case Study Report November 2013.

provide sufficient income streams and alternatives to convince communities to continue conserving their protected areas		the development of handicrafts, different forms of hospitality sector development, etc. The project will also strive to reduce the risk that adverse changes in any one revenue area (e.g. sudden drop in tourist arrivals, reduction in agricultural prices) would jeopardise the overall revenue model. Nevertheless, this remains the primary strategic risk facing the project.
Conflict between and within social groups prevents agreement on development strategies and resource management plans	Medium	Traditional social groups in RoC have a long history of inter- and intra-tribal conflict, particularly over resource use and resource distribution. The goal of the establishment of the integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland (in Component 2) is designed to provide an appropriate framework for community engagement in the natural resources management structure within the project. The project will ensure that the communities involved in the project are supported with strong conflict resolution and benefit-sharing capacities. The emphasis on gradual, consensus-driven development of resource management plans will also allow disagreements to be aired and resolved as plans are developed, thus minimising the risk of these disagreements erupting into open conflict. Nevertheless, this continues to be a significant risk that the project will have to monitor and address.
Conflict between transboundary stakeholders impedes the achievement of project goals	Low	The project location constitutes the largest transboundary RAMSAR site worldwide, with the landscape extending into the DR Congo. The project will work in close collaboration with countries of the Child Project "Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin", to ensure that synergies on objectives, practice and overall strategies are harvested among member countries of the program. This will especially be the case with DR Congo that shares part of the project landscape with Rep. of Congo.
Capacities within decentralised government structures are insufficient to effectively deliver the project strategy	Medium	The project will explicitly address this risk by providing on-going, targeted capacity development support for local and district governments where required. In Component 1, this training will improve the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands. In Component 2, it will target local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples, and improve skills on the development and implementation of environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production. In Component 3, it will build skills on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representative among local community organized structures.
Climate change and variability negatively impact protected areas and peatlands or revenue generation models being put in place by the project	Low	While climatic change can have an impact on the length and severity of rainy and dry seasons, the project area is located at the equator where seasonal variabilities are low. Long-term climate change may affect forest systems, but the short-term impact of changing weather events on forest systems in the project areas is unlikely to be significant. Short-term weather impacts on revenue generation (e.g. reductions in tourism, disruptions to transportation networks) may increase in the medium-term, but are unlikely to be a discernible factor during the project's

		lifetime.
The private sector is not interested in being involved in project activities	Medium	Proactive engagement of the private sector at all levels of the project development has the potential of promoting engagement. The project will facilitate collaboration between the private sector and local communities, facilitate joint examination of the benefits of investment in corporate social responsibility programmes, and support private sector initiatives in this community engagement model.
Existing programmes and projects may be duplicated	Medium	The development of this project engaged a broad spectrum of key national, multi-lateral, and local stakeholders operating in the peatlands, forests, and livelihoods sectors of the project area (see Supplement 1). Further engagement effort included sharing the project document for feedback. All of these engagement measures were aimed at eliminating duplication, and finding synergies with existing project. Collaboration will continue in the project implementation phase, with major partners contributing at different levels to the delivery of project Outputs, and being members of the PSC.
Continuous granting of mining permits and licenses	Medium	Mining activity (especially open cast mining) has the potential of substantially deforming a landscape and contributing negatively to the goals of the current project. Through proactive engagement, with the national government and the private sector, the role of environmental impact assessments will be promoted to support decision-making on the granting of licensing and mining permits
Expansion of commercial agriculture and logging activity	Medium	Efforts during the project preparation phase have brought together key private sector and governmental stakeholders to discuss the role of the project on issues of environmental and socio-economic sustainability, the aims of the project and the role of private sector investments in achieving these aims. These engagements will continue and intensify as the project development and implementation kicks in. It is hoped that these engagements will engender sustainable practices and policies to guide and support these practices from both governmental and private sector stakeholders.
Corona virus interrupts the smooth implementation of project activities	Medium	The impact of corona virus in sub-Saharan Africa has not been as bad as it has been in many parts of the world. This project will adhere to all governmental efforts at reducing the spread of the virus among populations. These measures in recent months have not been as stringent as they were in the beginning months of the pandemic, especially outside major cities such as Brazzaville.
Corruption may derail confidence in the project and reduce beneficiaries' ability to reap full benefits of the project	Medium	The project will adhere to strict guidelines on all aspects of its operation and implementation, including in the recruitment of project staff, procurement, and others. A strict culture of transparency will be initiated and cultivated at the earliest stages of the project implementation. During the inception workshop of the project, the effects of corruption and what to do about it within the implementation of the project will be the focus of a multi-stakeholder group, and the recommendations from this group work will be used to define a road path to guard against corruption in the implementation of the project.
National capacity may be lacking to ensure that the project has qualified staff	Medium	For key technical positions, the project will advertise widely and provide sufficient time for adverts to circulate within the national territory to enhance the potentials for attracting qualified talent.

▪ **Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) risk assessment**

The Republic of Congo has been struggling with the Corona Virus as many other countries. The Republic of Congo confirmed cases of COVID-19 on March 14, 2020. As of February 5, there were 8,354 confirmed cases, 7,008 recoveries and 122 confirmed deaths[145]. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the USA classifies the RoC as "Level 4: Very High Level of COVID-19 in the Republic of the Congo." Level 4 is the highest scale in their classification[146].

The government of the Republic of Congo has extended a State of Health Emergency several times since the outbreak of this pandemic. The current phase is extended until March 6 to limit the spread of COVID-19[147]. Besides the extension of states of heath emergencies, other efforts are being made to deal with the situation. All international passengers are required to self-quarantine for two weeks in their residence or hotel for 14 day upon arrival. Passengers in transit will be quarantined at their expense at designated facilities until they resume their travels. Other measures being encouraged are community mitigation activities. These are actions that people and communities can take to slow the spread of a new virus with pandemic potential. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus. Community mitigation actions are especially important before a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes widely available. Because COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can be spread by people who do not know they have the disease, risk of transmission within a community can be difficult to determine. Until broad-scale testing is widely implemented or we have a more comprehensive and precise measure of disease burden, states and communities should assume some community transmission or spread is occurring. Individuals need to follow healthy hygiene practices, stay at home when sick, practice physical distancing to lower the risk of disease spread, and use a cloth face covering (with some exceptions) in community settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained. These universal precautions are appropriate regardless of the extent of mitigation needed.

Protecting the public's health is paramount. As communities work to reduce the spread of COVID-19, they are also addressing the economic, social, and secondary health consequences of the disease. State, local, tribal, and territorial officials are best positioned to determine the level of mitigation required. Mitigation strategies should be feasible, practical, and acceptable; they should be tailored to the needs of each community and implemented in a manner that minimizes both morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 and does not create or exacerbate any health disparities.

Potential impacts of the the Covid-19 situation

1. COVID-19 may make it more difficult to get data since colleagues are busy with other pressing priorities ("regular" and new COVID-19 work) and less available due to work commitments given COVID-19 or as they work from home.

2. Data and documentation may not be readily available as they may be stored in offices inaccessible due to the confinement restriction.

[145] https://cg.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/
[146] https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-4/coronavirus-congo
[147] https://cg.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/

3. A focus of government may be shifted from other relevant development initiatives such as environmental protection, to that of fighting the pandemic.

4. Given the limited economic activity in the country (together with less reliable international trade) the project may face issues of procurement of necessary material for project work.

3. Types of data collection methods (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, observations) available to assess project outcomes may be limited depending on local circumstances.

4. Limited likelihood of field visits due to travel restrictions.

5. Limited and constrained validation of results through desk reviews without proper data to triangulate and without observation and limited contact with beneficiaries even with virtual stakeholder interviews.

6. Limited data and documentation on project implementation may continue to constrain evaluations.

Project activities to address the Covid-19 situation

To adhere to the principle of do no harm, the project team will not engage in any activity, or promote engagement in any activity that may place either a team member, a stakeholder or respondent, or a third party at risk of being infected by the virus. Practically, this means that data collection efforts, team meetings, and engagement with other stakeholders will be held virtually when possible, and with all the necessary precautions if face-to-face meeting are imperative. The team will capitalize on resources by relying on national and local consultants to support data collection through their early-on contact with local respondents. The national consultants will spend considerable time encouraging the participation of local counterparts, some of which may be less familiar with remote platforms.

Specifically, at the beginning of the project, the following will be done to assess the situation of Covid-19 in the project location:

1. Identify and review planned activities under the project requiring stakeholder engagement and public consultations.

2. Assess the level of proposed direct engagement with stakeholders, including location and size of proposed gatherings, frequency of engagement, categories of stakeholders (international, national, local) etc.

3. Assess the level of risks of the virus transmission for these engagements, and how restrictions that are in effect in the country / project area would affect these engagements.

4. Identify project activities for which consultation/engagement is critical and cannot be postponed without having significant impact on project timelines. For example, selection of resettlement options by affected people during project implementation. Reflecting the specific activity, consider viable means of achieving the necessary input from stakeholders.

5. Assess the level of ICT penetration among key stakeholder groups, to identify the type of communication channels that can be effectively used in the project context to avoid unnecessary contacts where possible.

6. Based on the above, the project implementing body will identify the specific channels of communication that should be used while conducting stakeholder consultation and engagement activities.

▪ **Climatic vulnerability challenges for the project locations**

The vulnerability of the provinces of Cuvette and Likouala to the effects of climate changes have been analyzed based on the STAP guidance on climate risk screening (2019), as well as using the hazards analysis and management engine developed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). These two provinces harbor both the landscape of Lac Tele and the adjoining ecologies whose changes or transformation will have implications on the land cover and heath of the peatlands. The GFDRR is a global partnership that helps developing countries better understand and reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change. Analysis for the two project locations are as follows:

In the Cuvette, extreme heat hazard is classified as medium based on modeled heat information. This means that there is more than a 25% chance that at least one period of prolonged exposure to extreme heat, resulting in heat stress, will occur in the next five years. Wildfire hazard is classified as medium, meaning that there is between a 10% and 50% chance of experiencing weather that could support a hazardous wildfire that may poses some risk of life and property loss in any given year. Climate projections indicate that there could also be an increase in the severity of fire. River flood hazard is classified as high, meaning that potentially damaging and life-threatening river floods are expected to occur at least once in the next 10 years. Water scarcity in the Equateur is classified as very low or non-existent.

In Likouala, the wildfire risk is classified as very high, while the risks of water scarcity and extreme heat are classified as medium. Extreme heat hazard is classified as medium based on modeled heat information currently available to this tool. This means that there is more than a 25% chance that at least one period of prolonged exposure to extreme heat, resulting in heat stress, will occur in the next five years. Medium water scarcity means that there is up to a 20% chance droughts will occur in the coming 10 years. In North Kivu, the climate risk is compounded by other geological risks, classified as high, such as the risks of earthquakes, landsides, and volcanic eruptions. River flood hazard is classified as high based on modeled flood information currently available to this tool. This means that potentially damaging and life-threatening river floods are expected to occur at least once in the next 10 years.

The Project will therefore work towards securing core areas for conservation and low-impact community use and ensure that all project funded activities are compliant with GEF-UNEP safeguard policies. Risk of not implementing the project is that the existence of valuable natural resources in the Lac Télé Landscape, prime tropical forest and peatland areas are likely to be put in danger of unsustainable exploitation, deterioration and degradation. This will be the result of widespread development of industrial and artisanal logging, expansion of commercial cocoa plantations, and potentially the installation of large-scale agricultural plantations in the area. These developments would in turn stimulate rapid immigration to the area, thereby increasing pressure on its natural resources, particularly wildlife for bushmeat to feed the expanding population, and contributing to degradation of habitats, loss of biodiversity, reduction of environmental services and undermining indigenous peoples'

communities' way of life. By contributing to the establishment of protected areas, the project can limit environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity in core areas. Therefore, the risks of not implementing the project are perceived as much greater than those entailed in project implementation.

Project approach to the climate change challenge

The project will assess the costs, benefits, tradeoffs and feasibility of implementing climate-change adaptation and mitigation actions within the project framework, as well as consider how these might affect – positively or negatively – the achievement of management objectives. The assessment will involve the following steps:

1. Assess the risk that climate change poses to the achievement of the management objectives of forest and peatland management (i.e. the delivery of desired forest products and environmental services);

2. Identify the forest-dependent people and forest areas that are most vulnerable to the likely impacts of climate change;

3. Identify forest management measures that would reduce the vulnerability of forest-dependent people and forest areas to climate

4. Gather information on policies, institutions, financial and technical incentives, the availability of support for undertaking adaptation measures, and the requirements for obtaining access to such incentives and support;

5. Identify the available options at the landscape level for contributing to climate-change mitigation, including the actions to be taken, the schedule for taking such actions, the costs involved and the mitigation benefits that could be expected to materialize;

6. Gather information on policies, financial and technical incentives and the availability of support for undertaking mitigation actions and the requirements to gain access to such incentives and support;

7. Conduct a cost–benefit assessment to identify the most cost-effective adaptation and mitigation measures, taking into consideration synergies and tradeoffs between them;

8. Adjust the peatlands and forest management plan and other planning tools to accommodate the adaptation and mitigation measures and to

9. Incorporate the knowledge gained through the assessments of vulnerability, risk and options for mitigation;

10. Identify capacity development needs and opportunities to implement adaptation and mitigation measures;

11. Adjust forest monitoring and evaluation procedures to allow for additional requirements related to the specified adaptation and climate change mitigation measures.

12. Develop mechanisms to ensure the continual adaptation of forest management in the light of monitoring and evaluation.

3.6. Consistency with national priorities or plans

This project contributes to some of the strategic goal of the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2016-2020.** This is especially true for Objectives 2, 10, and 15. Objective 2: "By 2020 at the latest, Biodiversity values have been mainstreamed into national and local development and poverty reduction planning strategies and processes and incorporated into Congo's national accounts." Objective 10: "By 2020, the many anthropogenic pressures exerted on coral reefs and vulnerable marine and coastal ecosystems affected by climate change where ocean acidification is minimized in order to preserve their integrity and functioning." Objective 15: "By 2020, the resilience of ecosystems and the contribution of biological diversity to carbon stocks are improved, thanks to conservation and restoration measures, including restoration by at least 15% degraded ecosystems, thereby helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as combating desertification."

The project will also contribute to **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15** through "Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss" (target 15.2, 15.5) by implementing an effective conservation system. It will also contribute to achieve SDG 16 through helping reduce threat finance to violent and criminal organizations (target 16.1 and 16.4), will strengthen countries' institutional capacity and international cooperation to combat wildlife crime (target 16.6 and 16.a) and will contribute to a consequent reduction in all forms of corruption and bribery related to wildlife poaching and trafficking (target 16.5). The project will also contribute to reduce poverty by providing alternative source of income and sustainable livelihoods for rural households (SDG 1, target 1.1, and target 1.5). Development of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) and sustainable land management (SLM) activities in the project area will participate to achieve SDG 13 especially target 13.2, "by 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources".

The current project will contribute to the implementation of many national strategies concerning biodiversity, and the sustainable use management of natural resources. These include:

The National Programme for Environmental Management (PNGE): The proposed GEF initiative will support the implementation of the PNGE through its activities dedicated to improve PA management and PA governance leading to better conservation impacts (Component 1). Its main goal is to strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in Congo by improving biodiversity enforcement, resilience management. It is directly in line with the PNGE objectives, which are to ensure sustainable management of natural resources, and efficient protection of the environment.

The National Programme for Forest Development includes protection and conservation measures concerning forest resources (NPFD)*:* The project is aligned to the NPFD as it will contribute to enhance forest conservation efforts by creating dialog the government and the private sector on sustainable forestry through Output 3.5. and by strengthening participation of local communities in management practices and conservation initiatives in the forest interzone (Component 3). The project will channel grants to forest-dependent communities to pilot sustainable livelihoods based on SLM and CBNRM to reduce deforestation, IWT and unsustainable bush meat exploitation and promote participatory forest management.

The Programme for Conservation and management of biodiversity in Congo (PCGBC)*:* The central aspect of the project is to ensure an effective conservation of biodiversity in the Congolese segment of the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe transboundary area by both strengthening capacities to reduce IWT and related poaching and trafficking, and supporting conservation efforts and sustainable use of natural resources by local communities, but also the private sector. The project thus directly follows the country's Programme for Conservation and management of biodiversity which initiated biodiversity inventories in Congo and which the main goals were to (i) promote the participation of

local populations in bio-diversity conservation, and (ii) encourage sustainable use of renewable natural resources and promote ecologically sound development around protected area.

The Sectoral Programme on Forest and Environment (PSFE): Many aspects of the proposed project are contributing to this sectoral programme of the MEFDDE, which is constituted of a number of components declined in four relevant programmes among which one concerns protected areas and wildlife management. Project activities such as bio-monitoring, biodiversity surveys, introduction of agro-forestry practices, consultation platforms for a more sustainable management of the forest resources in the interzone, are all aligned with the objectives of this programme.

REDD Strategy and programme*:* The proposed GEF initiative is aligned with the REDD+ strategy and activities in Congo, which include the development of projects for biodiversity conservation at the regional level through landscape management. Many activities under the relevant Outputs are directly targeting enhanced forest management and inclusion of local communities in conservation efforts.

The RoC's development ambitions, as expressed in its establishing a long-term partnership aimed at the implementation of the National REDD + Strategy Investment Plan, within the framework of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) are to a large extent based on its natural resource wealth, while remaining conscious of the risks of over-exploitation, negative environmental impacts of development, and climate change[148]. The proposed project is aligned with this ambition, which recognizes that land use planning and management is essential to secure integrated and sustainable development, and proposes to put in place contractual obligations for joint management of space by the state and decentralized authorities, in collaboration with the private sector and forest adjacent communities. It is also aligned with the "Rural Sector" component of The RoC's National Development Plan (NDP) 2018–2022 is a common roadmap for moving Congo forward and to integrate multilayer and multi-sectoral strategic planning framework[149]. This plan, which includes programs and sub-programs to achieve a number of goals. (i) Develop forestry production, through management and regeneration of permanent forests, and the valorisation of forest and faunal resources. (ii) Improve the quality of life through improved socio-economic infrastructure, community development and community management. (iii) Ensure sustainable management of natural resources through management of humid zones, environmental management of rural activities and management of biodiversity and to (iv) Improve the institutional framework, ensuring coherence of interventions, reinforcement of capacities, and development of financing mechanisms. This project also builds on the objectives and developments expressed in the country's Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP) 2012-2016. It provides an integrated framework of macroeconomic and sectoral strategies that Congo intends to combine to diversify and accelerate growth, create jobs, and develop the social sector in line with (i) the Millennium Development Goals, and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (ii) Congo's dreams of emergence, and (iii) the aspirations of the Congolese people[150].

To achieve its ambitions within the framework of the CAFI, the Government of Congo and CAFI confirmed their desire to support a number of objectives, aligned with the priorities identified by the National REDD + Strategy Investment Plan relating to allocation and use land. These objectives also align properly with many of the goals of the current project – showing the extent to which this project

[148] Government of the RoC (2019). Lettre d'Intention portant sur l'établissement d'un partenariat de long terme visant la réalisation du Plan d'Investissement de la Stratégie Nationale REDD+, dans le cadre de l'Initiative pour la Forêt d'Afrique Centrale (CAFI). https://www.wfp.org/publications/republic-congo-zero-hunger-strategic-review-2018.

[149] UNICEF (2017). The Congo. UNICEF Annual Report 2017. https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Congo_(the)_2017__COAR.pdf. Consulted on 18/01/2020.

[150] International Monetary Fund (2012). Republic of Congo: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. IMF Country Report No. 12/242. https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/CONGO%29%202009-2016%20National%20Development%20Plan.pdf

will be supportive of existing policies and both short and long-term plans of the Government of the RoC. These include:

1. ***Spatial planning:*** Develop, adopt and implement a National Land Allocation Plan (PNAT), a National Land Planning Scheme (SNAT) and Departmental Land Planning Schemes (SDAT) which organize and optimize the use of lands by the various national economic sectors. The goal here is to promote sustainable development at national and local scales, support the country's economic diversification policy, improve the business climate allowing increased mobilization of investments, and - reduce the impact on forests. Some of the key deliveries of the national land allocation plan are to develop and implement the principles of non-conversion of High Carbon Stocks (HSC) and High Conservation Value (HVC) forests, protection and sustainable management of peatlands so that they are neither drained nor drained. It also includes limited conversion and the strive for carbon neutrality from non-HSC / HVC forests, compensation for biodiversity and carbon losses, respect for customary land rights and will help resolve and prevent conflicts over land use. The development of LUMPs within the current project will collaborate with existing structures of the National Land Allocation Plan (PNAT), a SNAT and SDAT and build on efforts already implemented by them in the policy, legislative and practical fields.
2. ***Securing rural land:*** Implement the new land law which recognizes and respects the rights of use of land and resources of local communities and indigenous populations without a land title recognized by modern law, including the continuation of the recognition program land rights and land registration. The implementation of the land law will also make it possible to build up state land reserves for the benefit of investors and populations while reducing land conflicts and taking into account the prescriptions of PNAT, SNAT and SDAT. Set up a crossed land cadastre (mining cadastre, petroleum cadastre, agro-industry cadastre, forest cadastre) in order to avoid overlapping conflicting land uses. These are all initiatives that will contribute to the development of LUMPs in the current project.
3. ***Reinforcement of environmental and social control of activities on forest cover and biodiversity:*** Strengthen and implement the regulatory framework relating to environmental protection, environmental and social impact studies, in particular the monitoring of environmental and social management plans, to include provisions relating to compensation for biodiversity and carbon. This reinforcement will provide the appropriate tools for implementing and monitoring the principles of preservation of forests and peatlands, as well as the Cancun safeguards for land and resource use projects in the agricultural and forestry sectors, mining, hydrocarbons and infrastructures. This project will review the current regulatory framework to see if there is need for further review, or amendments to support project objectives (see Output .1.1.1). The current project will also contribute to this effort by training relevant stakeholders on the content, application and implications of existing frameworks – an indispensable requirement for the effective application and monitoring of legislation to support protected area management, biodiversity, and peatland management.
4. ***Agriculture development:*** Support the sustainable development of the agricultural sector, by orienting agro-industrial plantations, including those of oil palm, in the savannah zone in compliance with environmental requirements, and by promoting zero-deforestation agroforestry for peasant crops grown in forest areas. Support research in the study of soils in order to identify the savannah areas favourable to the development of oil palm. The development of the agricultural sector will take into account the principles of non-conversion of HCS and HCV forests, sustainable protection and management of peatlands so that they are neither drained nor dried up,

and the carbon neutral conversion of non-HCS and HCV forests. It will also take into account compensation for biodiversity and carbon losses, respect for customary land rights, and transparency in the planning and allocation of agricultural land for agro-industrial plantations. In this project, further research will be carried out to support knowledge development in this direction. Two main research directions are envisaged. The first in Output 1.1.3. to assess natural capital, targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape – a process that will provide a sound scientific basis for peatland delineation and regulatory frameworks for their protection and management. The second will be in Output 2.1.3 in which action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate).

5. ***Forest governance and sustainable forest management:*** Develop, adopt and implement a policy of sustainable forest management, exploitation legal wood and low emissions through the adoption of a legal framework aligned with the principles of sustainable development, continuing efforts to improve forest governance, and through the implementation work and strengthening the application of the legal and regulatory framework. This is in particular with regard to the control of legality, through the implementation of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA)[151], its Legality Verification System (SVL) and in particular the Computerized Legality Verification System (SIVL), and the pursuit of efforts development of Forest Management Units (UFA)[152]. Actions in this case will include the promotion of logging methods with reduced impact on ecosystems and carbon stocks, the supervision of the artisanal sector with a view to ensuring the legality of operations and its economic and environmental sustainability, and the strengthening the network of protected areas and its effective and efficient management. It will also include mapping and improving knowledge of customary usage rights recognized while respecting the safeguards tools environmental and social. The current project will support consultative processes and the implementation of actions that will push for the application of FLEGT-VPAs and its suite of legal, verification, and monitoring instruments for land uses in the Lac Télé Landscape. This will contribute to strengthen controls on mining, semi-industrial, artisanal and informal companies to limit the impact on forest ecosystems. Initiatives by this project for the Lac Télé Landscape will build on the FLEGT portfolio of projects in the RoC[153].

The current project is also consistent with key policy and legislative frameworks of the RoC. These among others include:

The forest policy of the Republic of Congo devotes a prominent place to the processes of implementation of key international, regional and national frameworks for sustainable development and environmental protection. The emergence of new concerns related to climate change, law enforcement, biodiversity conservation, the production of renewable energy, the integration of forestry into local development, the evolution of techniques and international dialogue on forests has made it possible to formulate a forest policy and initiate the review of the various instruments used for its implementation (law establishing the forest regime and its implementing texts).This important

[151] Benoit MOUDANGA (2020). Etude sur l'implication du secteur prive dans la conservation par la promotion des pratiques de gestion durable des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[152] Accord de Partenariat Volontaire (APV) sur l'Application des règlementations forestières, la gouvernance et les échanges commerciaux (FLEGT). http://www.apvflegtcongo.com/

[153] FLEGT already has 21 project in the Republic of Congo. http://www.euflegt.efi.int/what-is-flegt

strategic and political document presents the main management and development objectives of the forest sector which take into account the green economy, poverty reduction, participative management, the fight against climate change, conflicts around the superimposition of forestry and mining activities, existing instruments for cooperation in a new vision that takes advantage of current achievements. The forest policy of the Republic of Congo specifies the principles of its implementation, in particular: concerted and participative management of forest resources; public-private partnership; and the contribution of forests to the socio-economic development of the departments. The forest policy is aimed not only at managers of the forestry sector but also at other stakeholders at different levels of relationships with forests and related land uses: private sector actors, local communities, indigenous populations, civil society, technical development partners, and others. The forest policy has adopted a strategic focus on the promotion of governance of the forest sector including in the conservation of biodiversity; and sustainable development, and taking into account payment mechanisms for environmental services.

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development is conceived as a process of coordination, definition of synergies, identification of gaps, establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and consistency of existing national and sectoral policies. Its foundation is the combination of economic development strategies, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the protection of the environment and biological diversity, and the deduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The National Sustainable Development Strategy, which is consistent with the national forest and natural resources management, financing and conservation strategies as a tool for sustainable development, is based on existing strategies and plans, retaining the elements that are part of the international vision and commitments to which the country has subscribed in terms of sustainable development. It subscribes to the main conclusions of the Rio de Janeiro world summit in Brazil, in June 2012 (20 years after the 1992 Rio Conference), recorded in the final document.

The Constitution of 06 November 2015, which makes management and protection of the environment a principle of constitutional value with the obligations that this entails both for the State and for the citizens. It is indeed an indicator for the implementation of the REDD + mechanism. While recognizing the right of the individual to property and inheritance (Article 23), the 2015 Constitution again confirms, in its preamble, the "permanent right" of the Congolese people and their "inalienable sovereignty over all natural treasures and national resources as fundamental elements of its development". The Constitution further guarantees the "promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples" (Article 16). The detailed land tenure regime that follows constitutional guarantees is dealt with in specific legislation.

Law No. 003/91 of April 23, 1991 on environmental protection, which has a multi-sectoral scope. It imposes an environmental impact study on any development project (refer to the law enforcement decree2). However, it has a number of shortcomings, sometimes due to its precedence over major world events that changed environmental concerns such as the 1992 Rio Conference, and sometimes to shortcomings. To adapt it to emerging themes including protected area management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use management, this text has been revised.

Law n ° 16-2000 of 20 November 2000 on the forestry code is an important tool for forest governance, which aims to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. It describes the State Forest Domain (DFE) which covers an area of 21.8 million hectares, or 93% of the National Forest Domain (DFN).

Law n ° 10-2004 of March 26, 2004, fixing the general principles applicable to the state and land tenure system, which ultimately has a general character. It refers many provisions to other specific laws to be effective, including the regime for establishing land rights. It also enshrines the general principles applicable to state and land regimes, determines other transversal regimes such as the

mining regime or the forest regime (Article 13). This law also enshrines the legal recognition of customary land rights.

Law n ° 43-2014 of October 10, 2014 of orientation for the planning and development of the territory, which stipulates that "the State implements a land allocation policy which guarantees the concomitant development of the different sectors activities and respects the different forms of land ownership". It is a definite asset for protected area management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use management, which aims to manage in a harmonious way the use of land in several sectors including the agricultural, mining and forestry sectors.

Law No. 5-2011 of February 25, 2011 on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous populations, which made it possible to mark a step forward in the recognition of the rights of indigenous populations. It therefore breaks with this previous situation of ignorance of the rights of indigenous populations (see more on indigenous peoples of Congo in Supplement 1). This law contains relatively interesting elements for REDD+. By ensuring indigenous populations the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of renewable natural resources, by promoting the rights and interests of indigenous populations, the law opens up useful perspectives for the consolidation of the processes and initiatives for protected area management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use management.

3.7. Incremental cost reasoning

Baseline scenario

Without specific interventions through this GEF funding, intact peat swamp forest will continue to be degraded through continual over-exploitation or illegal harvesting of natural resources such as timber. In addition, there will be continued development of agriculture and infrastructure projects in and adjacent to the forest, threatening integrity of peat ecosystem and resulting in the loss of ecological support services (ie. flood mitigation, saline water intrusion prevention, sediment and toxic removal, groundwater recharge, micro-climate regulation etc.).

Peatlands (including peat swamp forests) possess a distinctive ecosystem and therefore possess unique biodiversity of flora and fauna that are specially adapted to this type of environment[154]. Peat swamp forest vegetation of the Lac Tele Landscape has been recognized as an important reservoir of plant diversity. Deforestation, IWT, and other forms of unsustainable land-use are contributing to the deterioration and endangerment of some niche-specific species. This has the potential of disrupting ecological systems and destabilizing ecosystems of the Lac Télé Landscape in particular, and of the Congo Basin in General. The rich biodiversity available in peatlands is also a source of food, medicine and livelihood for local communities. The depletion or loss of these biodiversity values will have negative impacts on local communities dependent on peatland resources and contribute to poverty. Without GEF funding, initiatives towards preventing and abating these loses in biodiversity-rich landscapes and endemic flora and fauna with not be possible.

Globally, peatlands are considered to be significant stores of carbon containing 20-35% of the carbon on the terrestrial biosphere/soils. While they only cover 3% of the land surface they

[154] Parish F., Sirin A., Charman D., Joosten H., Minayeva T. & M. Silvius (eds.) 2008. Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change: Main Report. Global Environment Centre, Kuala Lumpur and Wetlands International, Wageningen. p. 179 Available at http://www.imcg.net/media/download_gallery/books/assessment_peatland.pdf

store 30% of the carbon[155]. Tropical peatlands store ~150 - 250 t C ha^{-1} above-ground and ~250 - >10,000 t C ha^{-1} below-ground, compared to the average of about 270 t C/ha^{-1} on average in the world's forest ecosystems. However, this storage function is now being reversed due to human intervention. Activities related to land conversion and fire incidences release this stored carbon to the atmosphere, and in significant amounts it can have detrimental implications on climate change. Drainage releases 50-200 tC/ha/yr and fire may release 500-1000 t C/ha/fire. GEF funding will support sustainable management to ensure that these peatlands of the Lac Télé Landscape and those of the Congo Basin by extension continue to serve the RoC and global community as the extensive carbon sink they have been.

Fires in flooded savannah habitats (used for land clearing and other forms of land management) continue to be an important challenge in the sustainable management of land and natural resources in the Lac Tele Landscape. There is potential that in future the occurrence of fires may extend to the peatland area. Unless management changes are made, peatland fires in the region will continue to have a negative impact on health, tourism, transport and other economic sectors in the region. Without this GEF project, there will be no resources to support the transition to sustainable land use planning and implementation. This will involve ensuring that the current fire regime is sustainable and can be adapted to future climatic changes. Fire is necessary for local communities, and has been a part of the landscape for a long time. It needs to be well governed if it is to be a part of future sustainable livelihoods.

The livelihood of communities living in and adjacent to degraded peatland will continue to decline as problems related to peatland degradation become more severe such as flooding, soil subsidence, increasing fire frequency and smoke pollution, and declining timber and non-timber forest products. As such, the incidence of poverty will increase. Community members will become more involved in unsustainable or illegal activities. In the absence of this GEF project, there will be no livelihood component developed to support the sustainable management and use of environmental resources to address issues of livelihood development with a clear vision of long-term sustainability.

Proposed alternative scenario

The project's theory of change is based on the assumption that addressing the complex challenge of sustainable peatland conservation, protected area management, and preventing IWT requires coordinated and complementary actions in several key thematic areas, at multiple geographic levels and systematically over time. This is important given the relevance of the project to local, national development, and even regional (Congo Basin level) and global environmental benefits. The thematic aspect involves the complementary roles of planning, capacity building, policy reform *vis-à-vis* land use planning, demonstration and uptake, knowledge management and social inclusivity (especially the effective participation and the sharing of benefits with women and indigenous groups).

Below are specific increments to be provided by the current project on some key baseline activities:

The lack of land use planning at the local level and insufficient coordination among sectoral development institutions in achieving effective land use planning was identified as one of the barriers to effective conservation of peatlands, reduction of poaching and IWT and reverse

[155] Ibid. Parish F., Sirin A., Charman D., Joosten H., Minayeva T. & M. Silvius (eds.) 2008.

habitat degradation. The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) initiative has been working with the FAO to develop a standardized methodology to assess drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, piloting in 6 countries in Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon. The role of land use planning and policy coordination is among the drivers of interest. The current project will support the use of this methodology (based on cutting-edge cloud-computing and open-source tools) to test the mapping of disturbances and quantify direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the RoC. This is an increment to the CAFI initiative that will permit enhanced understanding of why and where forest disturbances occur is instrumental for the development of targeted policies and actions aiming to reduce the loss of forests and the associated carbon emissions.

Another barrier to the effective management of forests and peatlands in the RoC is the problem of limited alternative and income generating and livelihood choices. Initiatives of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have laid the ground work for reducing the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity for the most vulnerable segment of Congolese society (i.e. small farmers including women, young people and indigenous populations). The GCF-funded FP159: PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo, for example has contributed to the reduction of the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of approximately 41,373 direct beneficiaries (35% women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries (35% women) in the RoC. To further cement these achievements and gains, the current project will ensure that the local forests and peatlands (natural environments) which support resilience and enhance long-term adaptive capacity will be protected. This increment, together with the strengthening of land access and security rights for local and indigenous populations will contribute to achieving transformational change and sustainable processes of resource use and management in the Lac Tele and surrounding landscapes of the RoC.

Limited community participation in the management of wildlife and other biological resources is another barrier to effective protection and sustainable use of forest and peatland resources in the RoC. Among the two on-going initiatives funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) in the RoC, the goal of understanding the extent and characteristics of the Congo peatlands, as well as its decision-making regarding its protection and the protection of the biodiversity it contains features large. The current project provides increment in both cases: (i) It supports the research initiatives through its work with major local centers of scientific research (Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC), Université Marien Ngouabi (UMN), and Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Agronomie et de Foresterie) in developing understanding of both the physical and anthropogenic attributes of the Congo peatlands, and factors affecting its changes over time; (ii) The second dimension of this increment is the community-based approach to achieving the conservation of peatlands in the RoC (particularly of the Cuvette Centrale). The current project delivers this increment by supporting low-impact, drainage-free land-uses, financing alternative community-based livelihoods, promoting community-based ecotourism, and sustainable agricultural practices. This project will help catalyse an alternative scenario under which the extent of protected areas as well as peatland resources under protection will increase substantially, with increased levels of local stakeholder support. An increase in the participation of local communities and stakeholders in the management of local resources will improve the outcomes of conservation efforts and enhance the benefits reaped through improved ecosystem services to both local

communities and the global environment. Public-private partnerships in natural resources management will support the attainment of sustainable outcomes in conservation benefits, and ecosystem service provision. The area of high-value terrestrial and peatland biodiversity being managed sustainably will increase, and models will be developed which demonstrate that conservation and development can be successfully integrated at the community level in the RoC.

The World Bank's Sangha-Likouala Emission Reduction Program (PRE-SL) project seeks to support sustainable development and a green economy to empower businesses active in the region, rural communities and the government of Congo to combat climate change and improve the rural livelihoods. Among some of the key challenges are weak governance (an underlying causes of deforestation), lack of policy coordination and land use planning, poverty and insufficient enabling conditions for sustainable economic activities. An increment to be provided by the current project comes in the form of accelerated development of governance structures and processes for natural resources. The community-based model is one step. Other approaches will include the building of multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms at different levels, engaging small to large-scale land users to convert into more sustainable land use and management practices, and for the mapping of peatland units and hotspots of deforestation, poaching, and IWT.

The lack of policies to handle conflicting vested interests in forest resources conservation, use and management is detrimental to the sustainable management of peatlands and forest. This also includes policies that address the transnational nature of challenges associated with managing the Congo peatlands. The German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) has been employing efforts to enhance transboundary cooperation in the management of natural resources among frontline communities in Central Africa. An example is through its on-going initiative "Ready for Climate Finance" in Central Africa. The current project builds heavily on transboundary collaboration in the management of peatlands and protected areas for the wider Congo Basin landscape. This is especially true for the landscapes of the Lac Tele and Lac Tumba which are adjacent continuities of the same landscape in the RoC and the DRC. Lessons learned from this transboundary initiatives will be an increment to the GIZ efforts and potentially serve as pointers to best practices in the wider region.

Inadequate information on peatland management makes it difficult to derive data- of fact-driven decision-making in favour of peatland and forest protection, or the management of their resources. The U.S. Forest Service is also seeking to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the Ministry of Forest Economy, focusing on forest inventory and monitoring, fire management, sustainable ecotourism development, and institutional capacity development. The research component of the current project, including collaborations with major local centers of scientific research will provide an increment to plug gaps in data collection, curation, analysis and dissemination to the U.S. Forest Service efforts.

3.8. Sustainability

The sustainability of the current project is reflected through many dimentions. One of such dimentions is the integrated nature of the project. The current project brings together the economic, social and environmental aspects of environmental and natural resources in one initiative (see a close look at the different pillars of sustainability addressed by the project below).

The fact that the current project is one child project within the Congo IP that is addressing key issues of environmental and natural resources management is also a dimension of sustainbility. This is because the hope of viable outcomes in the management of transboundary environments and resources lie in transboundary cooperation and collaboration particularly on peatlands issues. The current project (as is the case wth other "child" project within the regional programme) therefore has built-in mechanisms for collaboration with other projects within the programm to achieve viable long-term outcomes for the challenges being addressed.

This project responds to the three key pillars of sustainability[156]: economic, social, and environmental sustainability[157].

Economic sustainability: Based on the nature of the project, classical financial and economic analyses cannot accurately measure its local impacts, and even less so those at country or global level. Consequently, while a quantitative cost benefit analysis of this project has not been conducted, a more qualitative Incremental Cost Analysis, following GEF guidelines, has been prepared and is presented in Appendix 3. In addition, all proposals for sub-projects / investments under the planned alternative income generating mechanisms (see Component 3) will be evaluated for financial and economic soundness under the selection process. The project will bring about a range of environmental, economic, social and institutional benefits. Institutional capacity building provides the enabling environment for more sustainable forest management, improved governance and transparency in the forest sector, and an increased flow of benefits from forests to communities and the government. More transparent, participatory forest management practices will likely result in social benefits such as reduced conflict among forest users, and broad participation of civil society during the future classification, management planning and decision-making processes, which is expected to lead to greater trust between citizens and government. The ensuing, more easily quantifiable economic benefits are the direct economic benefits to local communities from investment in sustainable socio-economic development activities via the alternative income generating mechanisms under Component 3 (and enabled by the capacity building initiatives across Outcomes). Long-term availability of natural resources essential for local livelihoods (fuelwood, water, fertile soil, wildlife and various non-timber forest products, etc.), resulting from improved management of the area's natural resources will also generate a sustainable flow of economic and social benefits for local communities. On the other hand, project implementation may reduce short-term benefits by limiting unsustainable activities, i.e. incurring opportunity costs from foregone use of certain parts of the forest by local communities for other productive uses such as hunting and gathering, or by enforcement of laws relating to the hunting of protected species. By design, the project sets out to minimize such restrictions beyond a return to sustainable off-take levels, and suspension of illegal activities, which will cause short term reductions of income. Since opportunity costs are likely to occur in the short-term, and some of the benefits will only materialize over the longer-term, active engagement and buy-in of local stakeholders is necessary, as well as support for local socio-economic development initiatives that go beyond usual protected area management activities. The alternative income generating mechanisms developed under Component 3 will contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development of the local population and ensure community support for conservation activities, while longer term sustainable financing mechanisms are being put in place by other projects. A well-functioning system for engaging the private sector will likely attract additional private sector investments, increasing funds for local development and serving as a key component of any future sustainable financing mechanism. Environmental benefits compared with the „without-project" scenario include reduced deforestation,

[156] The ecological definition of sustainability originated with the Brundtland Report in 1987, which describes sustainable development as one that satisfies the needs of the present without adversely affecting the conditions for future generations.

[157] Ben Purvis, B., Mao, Y. & Robinson, D. Three pillars of sustainability: in search of conceptual origins. *Sustain Sci* **14,** 681–695 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5

improved management, reduced poaching, better protection of endangered species, and an enabling environment for realization of a range of environmental services from the core area. Though these have substantial economic and social value, they are extremely difficult to quantify. The Project's stimulation of local communities' participation in the sustainable management of their local natural resources–for example through participatory forest management planning and sustainable income generating activities –could also have substantial, though not directly quantifiable, environmental, as well as economic, benefits.

Social sustainability: The project expects to have positive social impacts, notably through improving local communities' livelihood and quality of life. However, as the project will support the preparation for classification and better management of priority conservation areas, it might impact local populations' livelihood through limiting access to legally designated protected areas. The social safeguards documents prepared during the design of this project and building on the work done during the PPG is at the same time a process framework, a social assessment of the implications of the project to indigenous people and a referral bases for project implementation vis-à-vis the relationship between project implementation and indigenous peoples[158]. It presents guidance on the safeguards, principles and guidelines to be followed for sustainable management of those natural resources upon which local beneficiaries, particularly Indigenous Peoples livelihood depend. Moreover, it clearly defines the way in which traditional/customary rights will be preserved and establishes a framework for free prior and meaningful participatory consultation with all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) and other Civil Society Organizations (CSO).

There is potential that the project may brew suspicion and potential conflicts between the different stakeholder groups is an identified risk. Good communication to secure buy-in by the different stakeholder groups and consensus among them is therefore critical to successful implementation of this project. Consultations with communities and interest groups potentially affected by the project were conducted during the preparatory phase, and will be maintained during project implementation as part of a communications strategy (see Output 5.1.1) to ensure that concerns are addressed in a timely and consistent manner. A transparent conflict management approach with a clear grievance redress mechanism will also be established at the very outset, and be annexed to the Project Implementation Manual. This will permit the project to manage and resolve upfront any arising conflicts between stakeholders as soon as possible (both formal and traditional approaches will be explored for their suitable use in the context of the project). Of all the stakeholders, the private sector (logging, mining and perhaps hunting) companies will generate the most income in the short to medium term, and are most likely to have the greatest impacts on the forests and protected areas of the Lac Télé Landscape, its resources, and surrounding communities. These will far outweigh the likely impacts of the relatively modest investments made by this project.

Environmental sustainability: The overall goal of this project is to enhance sustainable peatland management and reduce GHG emissions from peatlands in the RoC, while enhancing the health of biological diversity by taking measures against IWT. The specific objective of the Project is to promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the RoC Lac Télé Landscape. The activities carried out by this project will therefore contribute to promoting sustainable peatland management, securing carbon stocks, and conserving biodiversity while improving the living standards of local communities. Beyond local benefits, more efficient management will also contribute to global benefits in terms of GHG emissions reductions (estimated to reach 20,398,082 tCO_2eq). This target will be

[158] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

achieved through a combination of support to best management practices in the wildlife, agricultural and fire prevention and control on peatland landscapes. This will be achieved by: (i) capacity building for sustainable peatland management; (ii) reducing peatland degradation and fires; and (iii) adopting best practices for integrated, sustainable management of peatlands at a landscape level through enhanced engagement of the private sector and local communities.

In all the communities, awareness raising and education on the win-win-win benefits accruing from biodiversity and ecosystem services and the economic benefits of the improved community-based natural resources management, including the elimination of IWT will sustain these resources. Education will also include biodiversity friendly agricultural practices to enhance ecosystem services, production and the resilience of agricultural systems in and around areas of the Lac Télé Landscape, using participatory / learning by doing approaches and study visits, to reduce the leakage effects. The project will also protect sections of the threatened Congo Basin Region biodiversity hotspot in the RoC, where large portions of the indigenous vegetation in the area is not found in contiguous form covering a large area, but rather it is seen as fragmented patches of bush land, shrub land and forests carved out by human activity. These areas will be more challenging to protect from human activity through non-community-based methods. Extensive community engagement will be used to raise awareness of the importance of these areas, not least, as they include the range of NTFPs that host communities depend so heavily on[159].

Innovation

The project innovativeness lies in the fact that it will be the first of its kind to take a holistic, people-focused approach to the management of forests, peatlands, and their associated resources to achieve ecological and socioeconomic development in the project locations. It is the first of its kind to try to achieve policy change and local level environmental change in the same seamless package. In Component 3, the project introduces on-the-ground application of innovative sustainable livelihood mechanisms to habitat conservation. These include support the development of livelihood support mechanisms such as ecotourism, organic cocoa and NTFP value chains. These are supported by training packages delivered to local communities and organized structures, which enables them to effectively function as co-managers of the resources around them and to which they depend, as well as serve as custodians of these resources for their progeny.

Through this, the project goes beyond a solution-for-the-present approach – it builds conservation and nature protection as an intergenerational struggle and initiative. It will be also introducing incentives for sustainable management in productive sectors such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries and tourism, through certification, eco-labelling and certification processes, to address the very causes of degradation by shifting unsustainable practices towards more sustainable ways, and doing so through a public-private partnership. This will offer rural citizens with viable alternatives for livelihood sustenance in the Lac Tele Landscape.

The project combines SLM, SFM, sustainable peatlands management, and effective biodiversity management with socioeconomic incentives as an indivisible package that address the challenges of land degradation and the unsustainable practices associated with land use. These innovative approaches, if proved successful, can go a long way in resolving the habitat fragmentation threats and ensuring long term stability of the populations of important species. The

[159] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Project is innovative within the physical and legal frameworks it has to face to date; there have been few attempts at establishing an integrated approach to land-use management in peatlands, incorporating conservation priorities, zoning, sustainable use of resources at the landscape level and clean/sustainable production agreements with the private sector. Over the past decades, there has been limited vertical integration and linking of planning processes from the national level down to the provincial, district and community levels. This is notwithstanding national efforts (at least at the policy level towards) a more disintegrated approach to decision-making on natural resources management.

Innovation is also provided in the support of key areas of attention regarding multi-stakeholder participation in local resources management (especially the participation of local communities and indigenous people). This project will be innovative in its support for mainstreaming of sustainable management of forests, peatlands, and natural resources through all levels of governance. Components 2, 3 and 5 simultaneously support the empowerment of local actors in taking responsibility and serving as effective co-managers of local resources. Component 5 supports the production and dissemination of knowledge and information management actions which provides bottom-up inputs for discussion of national environmental policies related to forests and peatlands, improving these in ways which generate a regulatory framework adapted to local conditions.

3.9. Replication

The potential for scaling up the project´s approach and impact will be encouraged through the dissemination of tested models for planning at the ecosystem level, lessons learned and experiences in implementing dynamic conservation in forests and peatland landscapes, The scaling up will also be supported by raising awareness on the value of the key ecosystems being addressed by this project (forests and peatlands). Capacity-building at different levels will ensure that local communities and stakeholders understand the challenges facing these ecosystems, and adopt incentives and tools for conservation, biodiversity management, SLM and SFM practices in and around these ecosystems. A multiplying effect will be encouraged through strategic policy support, regulatory frameworks in place and capacity building at the local, provincial and national level to consolidate effects within the project period. The heterogeneous nature of project pilots (including the forested and semi-forested lands as peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape) with different landscape mosaics of land uses and different productive sectors involved, provides many ways to achieve multiplier effects, replication and upscaling. Project implementation will be integrated in existing district institutions and will conduct workshops across areas with highest replication potential to demonstrate the experience and help other users and stakeholders to implement the same practices, thereby providing the systemic capacity needed for scaling up the initiative to other districts. The project will support the development of an exit strategy, which will cover all aspects handled by the project.

The project interventions will not only demonstrate selected priority activities and models for natural resources management in sensitive ecological areas, but also support national and basin-wide policy and institutional reforms to strengthen a policy enabling environment to attract larger-scale investments for the same or similar activities demonstrated by the project. Three of the most relevant are discussed below:

i. *Investments in low-cost community-inclusive models of natrual resources management:* The Government of the RoC is in particular interested in the effectiveness of such investment to alleviate challenges of unsustainable natural resources exploitation, forest degradation, deterioration of biological resources and IWT, as well as to ensure environmental and socio-economic sustainability for rural communities in the face of global challenges such as climate change. The project will provide nor only best practices and lessons learned on the natural resources management practicies, models and methods from this project, but also try to

improve communties livelihoods through introduction of alternative livelihood options and capacity building. If successful, this demonstration will be highly likely replicated and scaled by further investment in the future as a climate resilient development option.

ii. *Facilitation efforts towards community-based partnerships with the private sector as well as national and international stakeholders under Outcome 4.1:* Viable partnerships created with key stakeholders in the natrual resources use communities (local land and forest users, the private sector, local political and administrative stakeholders, the national governemnt, indeginous peoples, trans-boundary initiatives, and international stakeholders) to attain sustainable natrual resources conservation, preservation and management often makes a business sense for the private sector. The private sector can also achieve cost reductions, by reducing transaction costs as they operate in a more socially friendly environment. By demonstrating cost reduction in the attainment of goals of sustainable natural resources management and use, we can expect private sector financing of similar activities in the future to reduce environmental degradation both in the Lac Télé Landscape, in other sensitive areas of the RoC, and in the wider Congo Basin Landscape. Local stakeholders on the other hand benefit from closer collaboration with the private sector – associations that can forster responsible corporate social behavious to the benefit of local economies and social life, as well as responsible management of natural resources in the local landscape. To provide and enabling environment to provide incentives for such collaboration, this project will support the revision of the policy and regulartoy frameworks to further promote such environmentally conscious investmets in the future.

iii. During the project preparation, thought has been given to the sustainability of the alternative income generating mechanisms that enables community members and non-governmental organizations to access financing support to divest from environmentally damaging and biodiversity unfriendly production activities. Possibilities for replication of successful aspects of this socio-economic model beyond the project areas were also examined. The project envisages that during the project lifetime, the funds for the alternative income generating mechanisms Outcome 4.1will come directly from the GEF Project budget to design and test the mechanism, build local capacity for planning and managing micro-projects and assess its potential for delivering local level development impacts. As forest and wildlife derived revenues are generated through a range of new enterprises that become established in the region (including ecotourism value chains and their spin-offs, organic cocoa production, and other economic activities supported under this and related projects), a share of these funds will be used to sustain the alternative income generating mechanisms following follow the same funding procedures as well as planning and monitoring approaches.

Replication and up-scaling of good practices developed by the project will be achieved through the direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences outside of the project area, and within the Congo IP countries. The project will generate a number of practices for replication at various levels and through various mechanisms. For example, local implementation of co-management models of natural resources within a multi-stakeholder context; models for the management of sensitive resources (peatland ecosystems) within the context of multiple stressors (climate change, resource exploitation pressures, etc.), and others. The application of these good practices may benefit other transboundary natural resources contexts – such as in the ae Chad Basin; the “W” Park Complex is made up of the National Park of Pendjari and Djona game reserve in Benin, Arly Park (the wildlife reserves of Singou and Pama) in Burkina Faso, and Tamou and Dosso wildlife reserves and the “W” Park in Niger; and others.

It is the assumption of the project that the investments made for knowledge generation and harmonization will create an appetite with stakeholders for greater consolidated data sets in the long run. Trainings in the data and knowledge management systems will establish a new threshold of skills,

while disseminating this data will create new demand by end-users and stakeholders we beyond the geographic limits of the project area. Such knowledge and datasets will benefit national resources decision making at the national level (RoC), the regional eve (the Congo Basin region) and even beyond.

In general, the project's components could be replicated to support other focal areas within the environmental sectors or any other developmental areas at the national level of the RoC and beyond. For example, similar approaches to resources management could be put in place for the water or energy sectors in order to: 1) build the capacity of all stakeholders to effectively collect, analyze and share data and information pertaining to the targeted sector, 2) develop a system for data collection, analysis and sharing as well as for monitoring and reporting activities, 3) work with local communities to implement co-management modes of resource protection and conservation, etc.

3.10. Public awareness, communications and mainstreaming strategy

Public awareness: Local NGO representatives and government officials consulted during project preparation raised the problem of lack of information regarding important initiatives in the area, such as the legal framework for land management, forest classification and management[160]. They also expressed the need for awareness-raising on sustainable natural resource management issues among local populations if a conservation / sustainable-development project is to succeed. A strategy of law enforcement alone would be counterproductive and increase conflicts in the area. The Project Lead Technical Expert shall ensure effective communication with the local populations about the importance and benefits of successful project implementation. It is also crucial to engage local communities in every stage of project implementation in order to optimize alignment of the project activities with their interests and way of life, thereby increasing local buy-in and ownership of the project and consequently its chances of success. The project will finance a qualified communications consultant to build capacities of the Government and local partners and assist them as necessary to prepare and disseminate information prior to consultations. The consultant will be responsible for preparing a communications strategy, ensuring communications with the local population, and where necessary, contribute in the management of conflicts between key stakeholders. The consultant will also support interaction with the political and institutional stakeholders at the local, national and regional trans-boundary level to help raise awareness at the political level on the benefits inherent to the project. The Communication Consultant will also prepare a communications strategy that disseminates relevant information to all stakeholders (local, national, international) about the project, in particular: applicable GEF/UNEP safeguards policies and instruments; implications of the proposed classification and management options for the priority conservation and community use areas for protected areas, forests and peatlands; and other forthcoming developments in the area. In particular, the Communication Strategy will need to inform stakeholders on the stance of the Project towards hunting in the Lac Télé Landscape distinguishing between traditional user rights and poaching. The Strategy will also communicate the net costs and benefits of project implementation compared to the "without-project" situation. The Communications Strategy will allow for two-way communication –in particular by providing a mechanism for stakeholders to express their grievances which will be established at the very outset, as well as a clear procedure to respond to criticism, redress grievances, manage and resolve arising conflicts between stakeholders as soon as possible, and will establish a mediation committee for this purpose. The communication strategy will be validated at a public workshop.

[160] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

It will be the role of the consultant to disseminate adequate, appropriate and reliable information prior to consultations and decision making to ensure free, prior, informed consultations with all affected stakeholders on all project activities that have potential impacts on local communities and indigenous people. These include the consultations for the classification of forest areas, preparation of management plans, and design of the Livelihood Support Mechanism. Specific emphasis will be put on communicating to local communities the importance of sustainable management of their natural resources, of taking ownership of this process, and of potential costs and benefits to them in the short and long term. Efforts will also be made to convey to local communities that they are an active partner in this project and have the power to direct its design and implementation. Part of the role of the communication strategy will be to organize awareness-raising workshops both at the central level (ministries) and the local level and conducted in local language to ensure broad endorsement of the project by government staff and local communities.

Knowledge management: Knowledge management and learning exchanges are core elements of the Republic of Congo project's design and implementation and is including capacity building activities, training, technical assistance including possible south-south exchanges in all components. The project will develop cross-sectoral platforms to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange and communication and promote linkages to successful platforms in Republic of Congo and in the region. The project will also promote the sharing of experience and best practices between project stakeholders at the local, sub-national and national levels and with peers from other Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP) projects. The proposed project is fully in line with the Congo IP which aims to "incorporate environmental management principles in forest management through integrated approaches at different levels (local, national, and transboundary)". As described above, the project aims to develop an integrated approach for peatland management through a community-focused and locally-relevant governance model that can be scaled to other areas in the Congo Basin region, such as community development zones within forestry concessions. The project will focus on socio-ecological systems (rather than on a single discipline/field of study) making it both pragmatic and long-lasting while providing benefits to both people and the environment. Wildlife and peatland conservation will be a core component of the project, while an innovative local governance framework will be developed and the use of new technologies promoted.

Mainstreaming strategy: The project will link to the DRC project working in the Lac Tumba-Lac Télé landscape, which is continuous/contiguous habitat and essential peatland, swamp forest and *terra firma* forest. This is a critical area for the last remaining large populations of western lowland gorilla, forest elephant, bonobo and countless other endangered species. It is also a critically important forest to the Batwa-Ba'aka people who are dependent on these forests for their survival. Although generally low human population density, the forest is being exploited heavily for logging and is now a new frontier for oil palm cultivation, which is leading to severe forest degradation. The program also will extend to include the Odzala, Nouabale-Ndoki NPs as well as forests around them (including Mondika and Goualougo Triangle). These are critically important forests and their inclusion means that positive and lasting impact in this region will make a significant contribution to climate and biodiversity conservation targets, as well as indigenous people's rights and livelihoods[161].

Further, being part of the Congo IP, the project will benefit from the Regional child project that will promote knowledge exchange between the participating countries, ensuring that emerging knowledge is captured and capacity building activities are well tailored to the needs of the countries' and their stakeholder groups at all levels (local, regional and national governments from environment and other

[161] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Chérubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

sectors, indigenous and communities, farmers and producer associations, private sector, other decision makers, etc.). The Congo IP will collaborate and co-finance knowledge and best practice exchanges between stakeholders of the project and the national and regional community. This can include conference, analytical papers, technical workshops and study tours to support capacity building of the project's stakeholders.

3.11. Environmental and social safeguards

The GEF/UNEP environmental and social safeguards requirements have been followed in the development of this project. In accordance with the UNEP risk screening procedure, the project is categorized as low-to-medium risk and and is not expected to have any negative environmental or social impacts. The project aims to achieve the natural resources management (including the management of peatlands, forests and their associated biodiversity, as welll as combating IWT) in the Lac Télé Landscape and the wider Congo Basin transboundary; therefore, the project interventions will result in the improved ecosystem in the targeted areas posing little risks in environmental sustainability.

The project will not involve any relocation of people or alternation of their existing access to land or water. The project contribute to a long-term objective of improving the productivity of land, and the basin populations resilience to climate shocks, leading to improved livelihood and food security, through sustainable management and utilization of natural resources in the in the Lac Télé Landscape and in the context of the Congo Basin Region.

While the project is multi-actor in design (bringing together many stakeholders to achieve the goals of the project), during the project preparation phase, attention was given to vulnerable groups in the project implementation location. These are mainly indigenous people and women.

How the project incorporated considerations of indigenous peoples

While the Republic of Congo has various indigenous peoples such as the Batswa, Mbendjele, Baaka, Mikaya, Nguelé, Balouma, Bagyeli, Babi and Bangombe, the pygmies and the Bantou are the most represented indigenous people of the Lac Télé Landscape and its surrounding areas. Recognizing the significant conservation contribution that these indigenous people can make, Conservation frameworks such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and related programmes of work have recognized the value of participation of indigenous peoples in the conservation of natural resources, and the role traditional knowledge in understanding challenges as well as potential solutions related to natural resources management and conservation. There is also an understanding of the need to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources, which is dependent on the equitable participation of indigenous and local communities in protected area management. For example, the NBSAP and fifth national project actively engaged Congo's indigenous people as important stakeholders in determining and planning for Congo's biodiversity future.

Indigenous peoples in the Congo Basin region in general face many challenges, social marginalization based on culture and language being the most prominent. They often struggle for recognition of their status and rights. From within this weak position they are forced to negotiate with government and private sector representatives for fair and equitable benefit sharing, in particular for adequate Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). It is therefore essential that they stand on equal footing with their counterparts. This is all the more important as local small- and large-scale enterprises can contribute to conserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods if they are integrated into value chains based on Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) principles. The rights of local communities and indigenous peoples in the project locations, including existing land tenure practices recognized by the existing laws, will be maintained in the establishment of any new and/or upgrading of existing nature reserves. Basic stakeholder identification and consultation has occurred during the project preparation phase, and a

communication and outreach strategy will be developed during the project to support community engagement and their participation in project activities including co-management processes.

The indigenous communities of the Lac Tele Landscape are very dependent on the forest[162] and have a close social economic and cultural relationship with the forest. During the PPG, extensive and substantial efforts were made to consult, discuss with and draw on ideas relating to the project with these indigenous communities. Meetings were held on 5th – 8th February 2020 in Brazzaville, bringing together leaders, community welfare group members and members of the general population of these indigenous groups. The preparation phase of this project also benefited from engagements with a broad array of indigenous stakeholders during the Annual Regional Planning Workshop of REPALEAC and Preparation of the International Forum of Indigenous Peoples of Central Africa which took place from the 5th – 8th February 2020 in Brazzaville; Republic of Congo.

How the project incorporates gender considerations

Women in the Republic of Congo in general, and in the Lac Tele Landscape in particular have access to land through three main ways: i) matrilineal or patrilineal filiations (most often, the head of the lineage is a man and the filiation patrilineal, but the head of lineage can choose to allocate the land to a woman); ii) marriage (at the husband's request, the head of the lineage may allocate land to the wife); or iii) rent and purchase. Overall, women's land holdings are limited. According to the government's 2010 report to CEDAW, women produced approximately 90% of food products for household consumption. In 2002, the government reported that women accounted for 60% of the agricultural workforce, but own only 25% of agricultural land usually in small holdings. There is no reported legal discrimination against women in regard to access to non-land assets, and women are able to sign contracts in the same way as men. However, as noted in the Family Code section, women's rights to property more generally are tied to the type of marriage they enter into, where under a "separation of property" contract a widow has no right to claim ownership of her deceased husband's estate but can use the property.

Gender equality will support sustainable resource use and biodiversity conservation by strengthening a group that plays the central role in resource use. The 2015 Congolese NBSAP highlighted the central role women play as the main natural resource users and agricultural producers in the country. As the main resource users, women have developed sustainable use systems for food production and traditional medicine, but this traditional knowledge has not been considered or valued in past projects in the country. However, women are amongst the most vulnerable groups and have suffered from past development and conservation projects, which have often worked to further marginalize them. The NBSAP's recognition of the central role women can play in conservation should be the catalyst to putting this long marginalized group on the forefront of conservation and development projects. By recognizing the central women play as the main resource users, and working towards strengthening women's socio-economic potential, this project will work toward gender equality and autonomy. The co-management approach of the project, coupled with an emphasis on gender dimensions, will ensure that women have an active and meaningful role in project design and management. This approach will benefit women by giving them the opportunity to develop a project from which they can benefit financially, economically, and socially. The help-desk approach to institutional capacity building will create a space for women to be supported in finding solutions to issues they are facing.

It is in the above light that this project recognizes the fundamental role of women in the conservation of biodiversity in reference to the fact that they are the key actresses in gathering, processing, packaging and marketing of the forest products. For large hunting expeditions, women prepare hunting camps, provide all logistical support, treat bush meat, and secretly sell it in the markets. During the

[162] Boyzibu Ekhassa and Pierre Oyo 2012. Lac Télé – Lac Tumba Landscape - Climate Change and Forests in the Congo Basin: Synergies between Adaptation and Mitigation. http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/cobambrief/3929-cobambrief.pdf

project preparation phase, women were encouraged to provide inputs to discussion ns and reflect on their opinions and ideas of different aspects of the project design and its potential implementation. Besides providing useful inputs into the project design, women's participation as active stakeholders in the implementation of project activities is expected to generate meaningful value to the outputs delivered by this project.

The project will make conscious efforts to mainstreaming gender and empower women and girls across all interventions and will make necessary budgetary provision to do so. Due to the current limited experience and best practices in identifying effective indicators to monitor and track the gender empowerment results in the transboundary water resources management and water resources planning to date (most sex-aggregated indicators well established to date are related to watsan issues), sex-aggregated indicators included in the Results Framework are rather limited and of general nature; however, the project stakeholders (both duty-bearers and right-holders) expressed their strong commitment during the project appraisal meeting that they will identify concrete gender empowerment activities as well as effective indicators to monitor progress as the project implementation progresses. Therefore, the project will pose low risk in gender equality and women's empowerment. This project has developed a strategy for mitigating gender-based imbalances in project participation and benefits (see Table 8 below).

Table 10. Proposed strategy for mitigating gender-based imbalances in project participation and benefits.

Expected Outputs	**Gender-responsive measures**
1.1.1. An enabling environment including a national legal framework for community engagement & conservation, local bylaws and enforcement of both levels of legislation is put in place.	▪ Involvement of women in the Working Groups to review the national legal framework for community engagement and conservation as well as contribute to the drafting of local bylaws
1.1.2. Training conducted toward government and local/district and regional hubs on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting IWT, etc.	▪ Involvement of local women in trainings for governance and management of participatory decision-making structures (at least 50% of training beneficiaries are women) ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants[163].
1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas & surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration & formalized community involvement.	▪ Women are recruited to participate in the development of terms of references for the data collection, and to serve in different positions during the data collection and analysis process.

[163] Théophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l'etude sur le developpement d'un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l'utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

1.1.4. Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Télé landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism.	▪ Proactive inclusion of women and women organizations in working groups and committees involved in the establishment of LUMPs, including in the design of framework documents to support these LUMPs[164].
1.1.5. Investments in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography's protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation	▪ Proactive inclusion of women and women organizations in working groups and committees involved in the implementation of land use management plans ▪ Promotion of women participation in the project M&E process
2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years	▪ Local women and women organizations participate in the drafting of, and serve in management structures of these activities
2.1.2. Training conducted for local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production	▪ Gender roles to be clearly articulated while undertaking training needs assessment and incorporate in training modules ▪ A gender balance in the demographic that benefits from the training. ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants
2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted	▪ Gendered differentiation on attributes of adaptive management are properly identified and analysed within the research
2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, IWT, etc. are conducted	▪ The role of women and their relationship to natural resources are properly articulated in cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration
3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises.	▪ The potential of women and women's common initiative groups is articulated in the derived business model. ▪ Women-owned enterprises benefit from the value chain development of ecotourism in the project area ▪ Requirement for gender-disaggregated information for appropriate indicators in the M&E Plan ▪ Specific monitoring of gender mainstreaming progress during project implementation
3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation[165]	▪ Promotion of gender balance in the initiative groups for pilot project implementation ▪ Development of pilot projects implemented by women organizations (at least 40% of the projects); ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting on the participants of the pilot

[164] Théophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l'etude sur le developpement d'un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l'utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

[165] The SAFE model can serve here as a learning platform and baseline approach on which the organic cocoa initiatives could be designed (https://www.hivos.org/program/safe-platform/). The SAFE Platform has existed for long and its production model has been tested in different parts of the developing world, including African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania

	project
3.1.3. Training package is delivered to local community organized structures and include promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representative	▪ Women benefit from the capacity building on the promotion of ecotourism (at least 40% representation)
4.1.1. Promotion of and training on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) targeting existing concessions conducted to protect the integrating of peatlands ecosystem[166].	▪ Women benefit from the capacity building on the Voluntary Sustainability Standards (at least 40% representation)
4.1.2. Capacity-building and technical assistance on best-practices in resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem	▪ Women benefit from capacity building on best-practices in resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (at least 40% representation)
4.1.3. Revising operational modalities of companies operating concessions	▪ Proactive involvement of women in the Working ▪ Groups to review and revise operational modalities of companies operating concessions
4.1.4. Policy and technical incentives for private sector commitment to sustainable peatlands landscape management are Identified and implemented	▪ Proactive inclusion of the female private sector entrepreneurs to take part in private sector engagement in the project ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants
5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project and disseminated at local, national and regional levels to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation[167]	▪ Reporting of gender oriented lessons learned from the project ▪ Inclusion of women in generating and discussion of the lessons learned from IWT management and CBNRM
5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged	▪ Women are equal beneficiaries of this Output as the key householders and producers of NTFPs ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting on the beneficiaries from renewable energy sources in the local villages
5.1.3. Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant evaluations are conducted	▪ Requirement for gender-disaggregated information for appropriate indicators in the M&E Plan ▪ Specific monitoring of gender mainstreaming progress during project implementation ▪ Promotion of women participation in the project M&E process ▪ Gender disaggregated reporting of M&E participants

SECTION 4: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION is the **Implementing Agency (IA)** for this GEF project (Figure 13). UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION shall in its role as GEF Implementing Agency, provide project oversight to ensure that GEF policies and criteria are adhered to and that the project meets its objectives and achieves expected outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. It shall also in

[166] The Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) Platform can serve as a model here.

[167] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une étude thématique pour le projet intitulée: «Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL». Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, République du Congo.

partnership with MTE and other key project partners engage in promoting the project with a view to mobilizing resources and partnership. Project supervision will be entrusted to the UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION Director who will discharge this responsibility through the assigned Task Manager who represents the UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION Director on the Project Steering Committee. Project supervision missions by the Task Manager shall constitute part of the project supervision plan. UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION will perform the liaison function between UNEP and the GEF Secretariat and report on the progress against milestones outlined in the CEO approval letter to the GEF Secretariat. UNEP shall inform the GEF Secretariat whenever there is a potentially substantive co-financing change (i.e. one affecting the project objectives, the underlying concept, scale, scope, strategic priority, conformity with GEF criteria, likelihood of project success, or outcome of the project). It shall rate, on an annual basis, progress in meeting project objectives, project implementation progress, risk, and quality of project monitoring and evaluation, and report to the GEF Secretariat through the Project Implementation Review (PIR) report prepared by the Executing Agency (EA) and ensure that the Evaluation and Oversight Unit of UNEP arranges for an independent terminal evaluation and submits its report to the GEF Evaluation Office.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment is the **Executing Agency (EA)** of the project and shall take responsibility to ensure that the project is implemented in accordance with the (a) agreement to be signed with UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION, (b) agreed objectives, activities and budget and deliver the outputs and demonstrate its best efforts in achieving the project outcomes. It shall also coordinate activities with the other key Government and other relevant partners and address and rectify any issues raised by UNEP with respect to project execution in a timely manner. As Executing Agency (EA), the Ministry is committed to make best use of project resources and implement the project in the most effective manner (Figure 13).

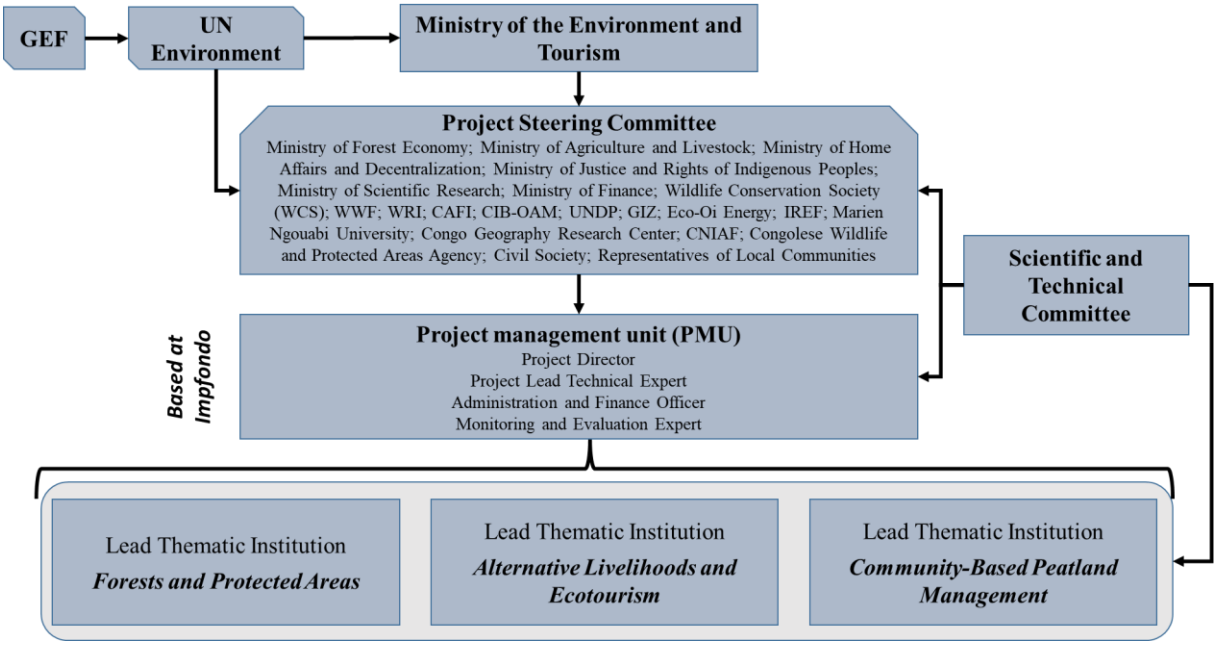

Figure 13. Project implementation arrangements.

The Project management structures will be comprised of the following:

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established to oversee the GEF project. Strategic monitoring of project activities will be the responsibility of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which acts as the Project Orientation Board. The PSC will meet annually, or extraordinarily as may be

warranted, in order to:

- Provide overall guidance and ensure coordination between all parties;
- Provide monitoring for project implementation;
- Review and adopt the annual work plans and budgets prepared by the Project Coordinator and Chief Technical Advisor, in conformity with the project objective and subject to the rules of GEF and UNEP;
- Review the six-monthly progress reports to be prepared by PMU and oversee the implementation of corrective actions, when necessary;
- Enhance synergy between the GEF project and other initiatives being implemented in the project area; and
- Provide advice on policy and strategic issues to be taken into account during project implementation.

The members of the PSC will include:

- **Chair**: the designated Senior Staff from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment
- **Co**-Chair: UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION Task manager or mandated UNEP Official
- **Members**: GEF Operational focal point and representatives of various ministries, in particular those in charge of the environment, forests, protected areas, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, mines, finance, spatial planning, land, women, tourism, scientific research and administration of the territory, as well as special economic zones. The specific roles within the PSC are based on the mandates assigned to each ministry.

The Secretariat to the PSC will be provided by the Project Management Unit.

As may be required on specific issues, an Advisory group can be formed to offer any other guidance or expertise as required by the specific agenda of the PSC.

A Scientific Committee will be set up and directed by the Institute specializing in peatland issues at Marien N'Gouabi University to offer the PSC, the PMU and the thematic teams specific guidance or expertise as needed.

A Project Management Unit (PMU): The daily management of the project remains with the project team under the watchful eye of the designated Project Director. The PMU will serve as the critical link between the Agency, the project partners assuming the lead of thematic areas, and the different groups engaged on project activities, will ensure project planned activities are adequately executed and that lessons learned are shared among sites and within national committees and to provide visibility of the project at the national and international level. The PMU will be responsible for ensuring adequate communication of information to all national and international partners. The PMU will elaborate and submit to the IA technical and financial progress reports. The Project Management Unit consists of:

- Project Lead Technical Expert – national
- Project Director / Stakeholder Engagement Officer- national (designated by the Minister of Environment)

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Expert – International/Regional

- Financial Officer (Financier) – national
- Communication Specialist
- Support staff – national

See Appendix 5: Terms of Reference for Project Personnel for detailed overview of PMU roles.

The PMU will be hosted by Department of Environment and Tourism in Impfondo. The hosting costs will be covered by the Government.

Lead Thematic Institutions on (i) Forests and Protected Areas [led by WCS]; (ii) Alternative Livelihoods through Ecotourism [led by UNDP]; (iii) Community-Based Peatlands Management [led by University Marien N'Gouabi]: Lead Thematic Institutions will be experts in their field (peatlands conservation and management; biodiversity management, conservation and relations with human activities; and protected area management). They will provide technical advice on the methodological soundness of project activities; support the design of studies, implementation of activities, and the assessments of outcomes relevant to their areas of specialization. Each of these lead institutions for the thematic areas will appoint focal points for the thematic area under their respective lead.

External Structure

Project activities at the site level will be realized by the local partners including NGOs, the site managers / promoters and by the local communities.

Technical and Financial Partners, Decentralized Technical Services, Regional and Local Authorities, Consultants and service providers are part of the external structure and will contribute to the achievement of the project objectives.

Oversight Mechanism

The PMU will assess, monitor, and control through reports, on-sites follow-up visits while feeding the indicators and disseminating the results to stakeholders and UNEP.

SECTION 5: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Stakeholder consultations have been the key part of the work undertaken during preparation of this project (Table 9). Consultations have engaged local stakeholders at all levels, and reached out to potential partners developing the Congo IP for which the current project is a "child". A broad range of international development institutions and non-governmental organizations were also consulted. International development and non-government organizations are critical facilitators and funders of sustainable development and conservation projects with which this project finds synergies. They work for achievement of relevant sustainable development goals, including poverty alleviation, biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation, land degradation, sustainable forest management.
The project has paid special attention during the preparation phase to ensure that the guiding principles regarding indigenous peoples are carefully adhered to, to ensure that this demographic participates fully in the design, implementation and benefits accruing from the project. These principles have been drawn from the guiding document[168]. The project preparation team used the opportunity of a regional meeting in Brazzaville to engage with a broad section of the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC) representatives from all Central African countries regarding the project[169]. In this meeting, presentations were made, and one-on-one discussions held with diverse stakeholders in the indigenous and local peoples' communities throughout the region. Regarding indigenous people, the

[168] REPALEAC 2019. Strategy for the sustainable development of indigenous peoples and local communities of Central Congo (2018-2025). Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (REPALEAC). Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.
[169] The meeting took place in Brazzaville from 5th – 8 February, 2020.

project will encourage their active participation in the decision-making process regarding their natural resources, during the zoning of peatlands and protected areas during the LUMPs development. The project will also ensure the recognition of the indigenous people's rights, systems and knowledge, especially in terms of natural resources ownership and management via catalysing implementation of the Article 31 of Law No. 10-2004 of 26 March 2004.

Representatives of these institutions have already consulted and engaged on the Project during the project preparation phase and contributed in discussing their roles and expectations in project implementation. Although the PSC will be the main mechanism that policy-level stakeholders will participate in the Project, various project implementation and coordination mechanisms, including through sub-contracted work as well as co-management committees, communications as well as various co-funding partnerships will enable a strong and broad stakeholder participation, both at governmental as well as non-government levels. It will also be the responsibility of PSC to take into account interests and concerns of stakeholders on all key issues affecting the whole process of project implementation. Importantly, the PSC member institutions will have their institutional counterparts at the district and provincial level that will participate in relevant project activities. At the level of the protected areas, biodiversity management, and peatland management, in addition to staff from decentralized services of relevant ministries, local communities will participate in the co-management of pilot activities such as the development of LUMPs, the implementation of these plans, the establishment of the Livelihood Support Mechanisms, etc. In addition, it is scheduled to implement a significant number of project-supported activities through sub-contracts that will provide a means to engage government agencies at provincial and county levels, key think tanks, universities and research institutions in the Project. Public - private partnerships will also be explored as a possible means to improve the sustainability of nature reserves and encouraging greater participation among other stakeholders in the Project.

Project implementation will begin with an inception workshop (see Table 12 below) that will be designed to include wide participation from interested stakeholders. The workshop will be used to provide stakeholders with the latest information on the Project as well as identify and agree on collaboration. Depending on the number of invited stakeholders and budgetary constraints, annual stakeholder consultations will be scheduled as part of the PSC meetings (e.g. as side meetings). Over lifetime of the, any adjustments required to project design, implementation and management will be made in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders, facilitated by the PMU and PSC and to be endorsed by UNEP. Finally, given the distances and number of counties involved in the Lac Tele Landscape, a primary means to keep all existing and potential stakeholders informed on the Project will be through the establishment of a website on biodiversity conservation under Output 5.1.1.

Table 12. Stakeholder engagement plan.

Engagement technique	**Stakeholders and partners**	**Purpose of engagement**
Information Centre and Information Boards	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations ▪ Local communities	▪ Establish Information Boards in each Project area community.
Correspondence by phone, email, text, and instant messaging	▪ Government officials ▪ NGO's and conservation Organisations ▪ Private sector ▪ National institutional	▪ Distribute project information to government officials, organizations, agencies and companies ▪ Invite stakeholders to meetings

	partners	
Print media and radio announcements	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations ▪ Local communities	▪ Disseminate project information to large audiences, and illiterate stakeholders ▪ Inform stakeholders about consultation meetings
One-on-one interviews	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations	▪ Solicit views and opinions ▪ Enable stakeholders to speak freely and confidentially about controversial and sensitive issues ▪ Build personal relations with stakeholders ▪ Recording of interviews
Formal meetings	▪ Government officials ▪ NGO's and conservation Organisations ▪ Private sector ▪ National institutional partners	▪ Present project information to a group of stakeholders ▪ Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ▪ Build impersonal relations with high level stakeholders ▪ Distribute technical documents ▪ Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses
Public meetings	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation Organisations ▪ Private sector ▪ Local communities ▪ National institutional partners	▪ Present project information to a large audience of stakeholders, and in particular communities ▪ Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ▪ Build relationships with neighbouring communities ▪ Distribute non-technical project information Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations, posters, models, videos and pamphlets or project information documents ▪ Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses
Workshops	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations ▪ Local communities ▪ National institutional partners	▪ Present project information to a group of stakeholders Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ▪ Use participatory exercises to facilitate group discussions, brainstorm issues, analyse information, and develop recommendations and strategies ▪ Recording of responses
Focus group meetings	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations ▪ Local communities	▪ Allow a smaller group of between 8 and 15 people to provide their views and opinions of targeted baseline information ▪ Build relationships with neighbouring communities ▪ Use a focus group interview guideline to facilitate discussions ▪ Record responses
Surveys	▪ Neighbouring communities ▪ Vulnerable Groups ▪ NGO's and conservation organisations ▪ Local communities	▪ Gather opinions and views from individual stakeholders ▪ Gather baseline data ▪ Record data ▪ Develop a baseline database for monitoring impacts

SECTION 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

UNEP will be responsible for managing the mid-term review/evaluation and the terminal evaluation. The Project Management Unit and partners will participate actively in the process.

The project will be reviewed or evaluated at mid-term (tentatively in mm/yy as indicated in the project milestones). The purpose of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) or Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to provide an independent assessment of project performance at mid-term, to analyse whether the project is on track, what problems and challenges the project is encountering, and which corrective actions are required so that the project can achieve its intended outcomes by project completion in the most efficient and sustainable way. In addition, it will verify information gathered through the GEF tracking tools.

The project Steering Committee will participate in the MTR or MTE and develop a management response to the evaluation recommendations along with an implementation plan. It is the responsibility of the UNEP Task Manager to monitor whether the agreed recommendations are being implemented. An MTR is managed by the UNEP Task Manager. An MTE is managed by the Evaluation Office (EO) of UNEP. The EO will determine whether an MTE is required or an MTR is sufficient.

An independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) will take place at the end of project implementation. The EO will be responsible for the TE and liaise with the UNEP Task Manager throughout the process. The TE will provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. It will have two primary purposes:

(i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and
(ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and executing partners.

While a TE should review use of project funds against budget, it would be the role of a financial audit to assess probity (i.e. correctness, integrity etc.) of expenditure and transactions.

The TE report will be sent to project stakeholders for comments. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the EO in an open and transparent manner. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six-point rating scheme. The final determination of project ratings will be made by the EO when the report is finalized. The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and will be followed by a recommendation compliance process.

The direct costs of reviews and evaluations will be charged against the project evaluation budget

Project Inception Phase

A Project Inception Workshop (IW) will be held within the first two (2) months of project start-up with the participation of the full project team, relevant counterparts, co-financing partners, and the UNEP Focal Point, as appropriate. A fundamental objective of the IW will be to help the project team to understand and take ownership of the project's goal and objectives, as well as finalize preparation of the project's first annual work plan on the basis of the project results framework and the GEF Tracking Tool. This will include reviewing the results framework (indicators, means of verification, and assumptions), imparting additional detail as needed, and on the basis of this exercise, finalizing the Annual Work Plan (AWP) with precise and measurable performance indicators, and in a manner consistent with the expected outcomes for the project. Specific targets for the first-year

implementation progress indicators together with their means of verification will be developed at the inception workshop. These will be used to assess whether the implementation is proceeding at the intended pace and in the right direction and will form part of the Annual Work Plan.

Additionally, the purpose and objective of the IW will be to a) introduce project staff to project stakeholders that will support the project during its implementation; b) detail the roles, support services, and complementary responsibilities of UNEP staff in relation to the project team; c) provide a detailed overview of UNEP-GEF reporting and M&E requirements, with particular emphasis on the Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and related documentation, the Annual Project Report (APR), mid-term review, final evaluation and financial reporting. Equally, the Inception Workshop will provide an opportunity to inform the project team on UNEP project-related budgetary planning, budget reviews including arrangements for the annual audit, and mandatory budget re-phasings. The IW will also provide an opportunity for all parties to understand their roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project's decision-making structures, including reporting and communication lines and conflict resolution mechanisms.

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) for project staff and decision-making structures will be discussed again, as needed, in order to clarify each party's responsibilities during the project's implementation phase. A report on the Inception Workshop is a key reference document and must be prepared and shared with participants.

Monitoring Responsibilities and Events

A detailed schedule of project review meetings will be developed by the project management in consultation with project implementation partners and stakeholder representatives and incorporated in the Project Inception Report. Such a schedule will include: a) tentative timeframes for Project Steering Committee meetings (and other relevant advisory and/or coordination mechanisms); and b) project-related M&E activities.

Day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Lead Technical Expert based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. The Project Director will inform the UNEP, on behalf of the Executing Agency of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that the appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a timely and remedial fashion. The Project Director will fine-tune the progress and performance/impact indicators of the project in consultation with the full project team at the IW with support from UNEP Task Manager.

At the inception workshop, specific targets for the first-year implementation progress indicators together with their means of verification will be developed. Targets and indicators for subsequent years will be defined annually as part of the internal evaluation and planning processes undertaken by the project team. Measurement of impact indicators related to global benefits will be done during the annual evaluation.

Periodic monitoring of implementation progress will be undertaken by the UNEP Task Manager through six-monthly exchanges with the project implementation team, or more frequently as deemed necessary. This will allow parties to take stock of and to troubleshoot any problems pertaining to the project in a timely fashion to ensure the timely implementation of project activities. The UNEP Task Manager, as appropriate, will conduct yearly visits to the project's field sites, or more often based on an agreed upon schedule to be detailed in the project's Inception Report/AWP to assess first-hand project progress. Any other member of the Steering Committee can also take part in these trips, as

decided by the Steering Committee and as determined by project resources. A Field Visit Report will be prepared by the UNEP Task Manager and circulated no less than one month after the visit to the project team, all Steering Committee members, and UNEP-GEF.

Annual monitoring will occur through the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings. This is the highest policy-level meeting of the parties directly involved in the implementation of a project. The project will be subject to the Project Steering Committee meeting at least once every year.

The first such meeting will be held within the first twelve (12) months of the start of full implementation. The Project Lead Technical Expert will prepare an Annual Project Report (APR) and submit it to UNEP GEF Task Manager at least two weeks prior to the PSC for review and comments. The APR will be used as one of the basic documents for discussions Project Steering Committee meeting. The Project Lead Technical Expert will present the APR to the PSC, highlighting policy issues and recommendations for the decision of the PSC. The Project Lead Technical Expert will also inform the participants of any agreement reached by stakeholders during the APR preparation on how to resolve operational issues. Separate reviews of each project component may also be conducted if necessary. UNEP has the authority to suspend disbursement if project performance benchmarks are not met. Benchmarks will be conveyed by UNEP to project stakeholders at the IW, based on delivery rates and qualitative assessments of achievements of outputs.

The Terminal PSC Review is held in the last month of project operations. The Project Lead Technical Expert with support of M&E Officer and guidance from UNEP is responsible for preparing the Terminal Report and submitting it to UNEP GEF. It shall be prepared in the draft at least two months in advance of the PSC meeting in order to allow review and will serve as the basis for discussions in the PSC meeting. The terminal PSC review considers the implementation of the project as a whole, paying particular attention to whether the project has achieved its stated objectives and contributed to the broader environmental objective. It decides whether any actions are still necessary, particularly in relation to the sustainability of project results, and acts as a vehicle through which lessons learned can be captured to feed into other projects being implemented.

Project Monitoring Reporting

The Project Lead Technical Expert, with support from M&E officer and guidance from UNEP-GEF team, will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the following reports that form part of the monitoring process and that are mandatory.

- A **Project Inception Report (IR)** will be prepared immediately following the IW. It will include a detailed First Year/AWP divided in quarterly timeframes detailing the activities and progress indicators that will guide implementation during the first year of the project. This work plan will include the dates of specific field visits, support missions from the UNEP Task Manager or consultants, as well as timeframes for meetings of the project's decision-making structures. The IR will also include the detailed project budget for the first full year of implementation, prepared on the basis of the AWP, and including any M&E requirements to effectively measure project performance during the targeted 12-month timeframe. The IR will include a more detailed narrative on the institutional roles, responsibilities, coordinating actions, and feedback mechanisms of project-related partners. In addition, a section will be included on progress to date on project establishment and start-up activities and an update of any changed external conditions that may affect project implementation. When finalized, the IR will be circulated to project counterparts who will be given a period of one calendar month

in which to respond with comments or queries. Prior to the IR's circulation, the UNEP/GEF will review the document.

- The **Annual Project Report (APR)**. An APR will be prepared on an annual basis prior to the PSC Review, to reflect the progress achieved in meeting the project's AWP and assess performance of the project in contributing to intended outcomes through outputs and partnership work. The format of the APR is flexible but should include the following sections: a) project risks, issues, and adaptive management; b) project progress against pre-defined indicators and targets, c) outcome performance; and d) lessons learned/best practices.
- The **Project Implementation Review (PIR**) is an annual monitoring process mandated by the GEF. It has become an essential management and monitoring tool for project managers and offers the main vehicle for extracting lessons from on-going projects. Once the project has been under implementation for one year, a PIR must be prepared by the project management and submitted by UNEP to the GEF. The PIR should then be discussed in the PSC meeting so that the result would be a PIR that has been agreed upon by the project counterparts and the UNEP. The individual PIRs are collected, reviewed, and analysed by the UNEP Operational Focal Point prior to sending them to the GEF by UNEP-GEF Coordination Office.
- **Half year (July–December) Progress Reports** outlining main updates in project progress will be provided every six months to the UNEP/GEF Task Manager. The January – June progress report stands as the PIR described above.
- **Specific Thematic Reports** focusing on specific issues or areas of activity will be prepared by the project team when requested by UNEP-GEF or the project implementing partners. The request for a Thematic Report will be provided to the project team in written form by UNEP and will clearly state the issue or activities that need to be reported on. These reports can be used as a form of lessons learned exercise, specific oversight in key areas, or as troubleshooting exercises to evaluate and overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered. UNEP is requested to minimize its requests for Thematic Reports, and when such are necessary will allow reasonable timeframes for their preparation by the project team.
- **A Project Terminal Report** will be prepared by the project team during the last three (3) months of the project. This comprehensive report will summarize all activities, achievements, and outputs of the project; lessons learned; objectives met or not achieved; structures and systems implemented, etc.; and will be the definitive statement of the project's activities during its lifetime. It will also lay out recommendations for any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of the project's activities.
- **Publications/Technical reports.** The project intends to publish some documents covering specific themes. In the Inception Report, the project team will prepare a draft list of publications that are expected during the course of the project and tentative due dates. Where necessary, this publications list will be revised and updated, and included in subsequent APRs. Publications may also be prepared by external consultants and should be comprehensive and specialized analyses of clearly defined theme of research within the framework of the project. These publications will represent, as appropriate, the project's substantive contribution to specific issues, and will be used in efforts to disseminate relevant information at local, national, and international levels.

Project Evaluation

In-line with the UNEP Programme Manual and the Evaluation Policy the project will be subject to a Terminal Evaluation. The Evaluation Office will be responsible for the Terminal Evaluation (TE) and will liaise with Ecosystems Division and The Executing Agency throughout the process. The TE will

provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. It will have two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and executing partners. The direct costs of the evaluation will be charged against the project evaluation budget. The Terminal Evaluation will be initiated no earlier than six months prior to the completion of project activities and, if a follow-on phase of the project is envisaged, should be completed prior to completion of the project and the submission of the follow-on proposal.

The draft TE report will be sent by the Evaluation Office to project stakeholders for comment. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the Evaluation Office in an open and transparent manner. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six-point rating scheme. The final determination of project ratings will be made by the Evaluation Office when the report is finalized. The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and may be followed by a recommendation compliance process. The GEF Tracking Tools will also be verified during the final evaluation.

Learning and Knowledge Sharing

The GEF Knowledge Management (KM) strategy will guide the project's KM approach, which will be mainstreamed into the project's design, its M&E system and adaptive management, ensuring that risks are identified and addressed, and successes and failures are documented and shared. Activities to share learning among agricultural producers, NTFP harvesters, community forest managers, Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SMEs), political decision-makers and civil society organizations will include development and dissemination of communications materials, organization of exchange visits, and participation in national, regional and international conferences on Land Us Planning and sustainable land management. Cross-learning and experience-sharing will follow a two-tiered approach: Tier 1 will ensure that project learnings are captured, compiled and systematized Lastly, Tier 2 will ensure that project knowledge is shared with, and used by relevant stakeholders, thus promoting its scaling out to future projects, improved practices and policies.

While technical assistance enables change towards more sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, the project will dedicate time and resources to strengthen CSOs in their organizational capabilities. Organizational strengthening will provide continuity well beyond the lifetime of the project and allow CSOs to grow their impact within their field of expertise. Modules developed by the project will be handed over to CSOs to widen the reach of these activities, as well as shared within fora and among policy makers for a potential replication more broadly in Cameroon.

A project site will be created on Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development web-based intranet, which will serve as a repository of project documents in which evidence, reports and communication materials will be stored.

The field level activities of the project will be focused on a limited number of village areas in the two project locations (the Lac Tumba Landscape and the Grand Kivu). However, it is the vision of this project that once the community-based climate-smart land use and production approaches, SLM, BD management, and Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) approaches have been validated, they can be scaled up and replicated across the country as a whole. Also, lessons learned from the establishment and implementation of work with the Village Environment Committees, and experiences with the implementation of models of community-based management of natural resources, biodiversity and landscapes will be of relevance to other parts of the country, and countries in Sub-

Saharan Africa involved in the TerrAfrica program. As one of the country partners in the TerrAfrica program, The RoC will periodically participate in regional and continental meetings, and fora organized by TerrAfrica and also contribute to the development of the TerrAfrica Sub-Saharan Africa SLM Knowledge Base. This will allow RoC to share the lessons learned from project implementation with other countries enabling the successful SLM approaches and practices from the GEF component.

Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through a number of existing information sharing networks and forums. This includes networks, forums and events organized by the project itself as well as project-sponsored events (e.g. side events) at national and international fora. In addition, the project will participate, as relevant and appropriate, in UNEP-GEF sponsored networks, organized for Senior Personnel working on projects that share common characteristics.

UNEP-GEF Coordination Office has established an electronic platform for sharing lessons between the project managers. The project will identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to project implementation though lessons learned. The project will identify, analyse, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. Identifying and analysing lessons learned is an on-going process, and the need to communicate such lessons as one of the project's central contributions is a requirement to be delivered not less frequently than once every twelve (12) months. UNEP-GEF shall provide a format and assist the project team in categorizing, documenting, and reporting on lessons learned. Specifically, the project will ensure coordination in terms of avoiding overlap, sharing best practices, and generating knowledge products of best practices in the area of SLM.

SECTION 7: PROJECT FINANCING AND BUDGET

7.1. Overall project budget

The overall project budget is presented in detail in Appendix 1 (GEF budget by project components, by year and UN Environment budget lines) and Appendix 2 (co-financing by source and UN Environment budget lines).

7.2. Project co-financing

Co-financing by project lines is presented in Appendix 2.

7.3. Project cost-effectiveness

The project will seek to achieve a long term solution to peatland management, biodiversity protection and IWT, and to natural resources management in the Lac Télé landscape encompassing 48,500 km2, and constituted of a vast network of 4 protected areas (Lac Télé Community Reserve, Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, Odzala-Kokoua National Park, and Ntokou-Pikounda National Park). The project's resources will be dedicated to developing a comprehensive land use management plan that is respectful of biodiversity. The latter is reflected in the landscape level, and community-based approaches to the management of natural resources within the project. This approach will be implemented by providing support to the provincial government and local administrative officials to develop a land use plan (where these do not exist) or to formalize existing plans (where they already exist), that takes into consideration the value of the ecosystems and unique biodiversity contained in Lac Tele Landscape, both being key elements for sustainable economic and social development.

The project will also dedicate over half of its resources to developing, implementing, and promoting sustainable social and economic activities in communities that manage them of the Lac Télé Landscape in a bid to provide viable alternatives to over-reliance on natural resources extraction from

the forests and peatlands. The project is considered cost-effective for the following primary reasons: (i) By using project resources, to act on a larger scale, such as on land use planning processes, that are conducted at all levels (from community to the provincial and national), the project's investment and outreach will considerably multiply, rendering the project considerably cost- effective. (ii) By providing direct support to natural resource managers (including capacity building, organizational backing, and outreach) for the implementation of land use management plans that include including finding ways of strengthening financial independence. (iii) By enhancing economic activities of local communities that will enable communities to be self- sufficient (e.g. through micro-finance activities that will enhance local economies).
The project will complement and build upon the extensive baseline activities already underway in the sector (e.g. land use policies and planning processes currently underway; community based natural resources management legislation; build on community conservation areas; etc.). Wherever possible, the project will use the competencies and technical skills within the mandated Government and public institutions to implement project activities. Where applicable, project resources will also be deployed to strengthen and expand existing initiatives and programs to avoid duplication of effort.

Increased co-financing commitments will continue to be targeted by the project during the project implementation (e.g. co-financing of the private sector, co-financing of the NGOs involved in the management of protected areas, forest, peatlands, etc.). The project will seek to engage actively with the mining, oil and large scale agriculture sectors to promote partnerships and seek potential funding for the regional protected areas, forest, and peatlands system. The project will support the development and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility strategies that provide an enabling framework for private sector contributions to local social and economic development.

Project funding will build the capacity of the local, provincial and National Government, to integrate comprehensive biodiversity information, analyses, impact projections and sustainable management considerations within regional Land Use Plans. This will serve as a pilot project that will create the in country capacity, allowing to replicate such approaches in other regions of the country.

Additionally, the project will enable the government to advance legislation concerning community conservation areas and the management of key biodiversity areas by communities. This will lead to more effective protection of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the project area, reducing IWT, and enhancing prospects for biodiversity and ecosystem health. Healthy environments and ecosystems will in turn solidify the basis for the development of ecotourism – one of the cornerstone livelihood support mechanisms for the project area. In this light, this project will form a test case for the multiplication of this type of conservation model throughout the country – as well as serve as a lesson for similar initiatives in the Congo Basin region.

Much of the projects resources and support will be dedicated to building local capacity within the region; providing biodiversity land use planning tools; promoting dialogue and interactions among productive sectors, the government and civil society. This investment in institutions and local work dynamics, is considered key to the sustainability of the project's results beyond the duration of the project. In the long term this will save costs for future investments in PA protection in the Region, and guarantee the achievement of long-term results of the project.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Budget by project components and UN Environment budget lines

APPENDIX 1 - RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEF ACTIVITY BASED BUDGET AND UNEP BUDGET LINE (GEF FUNDS ONLY US$)													
Project title:		Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL											
Project number:		10298											
Project executing partner:		Ministry of Tourism and the Environment											
Project implementation period:		Expenditure by project component/activity (provide description)							*Insert actual year				
From:	Jun-21	Add additional components/activities as required							Add additional years as required				
To:	Jul-24	**Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement**	**Component 2: Community management of natural resources**	**Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism**	**Component 4: Engaging the private sector in conservation**	**Component 5: Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation**	**PMC**		**Expenditure by calendar year**				
UNEP Budget Line		**Comp 1**	**Comp 2**	**Comp 3**	**Comp 4**	**Comp 5**		**Total**	**2021***	**2022***	**2023***	**2024***	**Total**
10	**PERSONNEL COMPONENT**												
	1100 Project personnel												
	1101 Lead Technical Expert Peatlands and Community Natural Resources Management	200,000	75,000	200,000	75,000			**550,000**	137,500	137,500	137,500	137,500	550,000
	1102 Project Director						30,000	**30,000**	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	30,000
	1103 Project M/E officer (month 1-48)					130,000		**130,000**	32,500	32,500.00	32,500.00	32,500.00	130,000
	1199 Sub-total	**200,000**	**75,000**	**200,000**	**75,000**	**130,000**	**30,000**	**710,000**	177,500	**177,500**	**177,500**	**177,500**	**710,000**
	1200 Consultants	0	0	0	0	0	0	**-**	-				
	1299 Sub-total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	-	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
	1300 Administrative Support							**-**	-				
	1301 Project Administrative Assistant (month 1-48)						32,000	**32,000**	8,000	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	32,000
	1302 Project Driver/Clerk						32,000	**32,000**	8,000	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	32,000
	1303 Project Financial Officer (month 1-48)						65,000	**65,000**	16,250	16,250.00	16,250.00	16,250.00	65,000
	1399 Sub-total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**129,000**	**129,000**	32,250	**32,250**	**32,250**	**32,250**	**129,000**
	1600 Travel							**-**	-	**-**	**-**	**-**	
	1601 Travel on official business						50,000	**50,000**	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	50,000
	1602 Field missions logistics for technical delivery on components		50,000	50,000	30,055			**130,055**	32,514	32,513.75	32,513.75	32,513.75	130,055
	1699 Sub-total	**-**	**50,000**	**50,000**	**30,055**	**-**	**50,000**	**180,055**	**45,014**	**45,014**	**45,014**	**45,014**	**180,055**
1999	**Component total**	**200,000**	**125,000**	**250,000**	**105,055**	**130,000**	**209,000**	**1,019,055**	254,764	**254,764**	**254,764**	**254,764**	**1,019,055**
20	**SUB-CONTRACT COMPONENT**							**-**	-				
	2100 Sub-contracts (MOUs/LOAs for cooperating agencies)							**-**	-				
	2101							**-**	-				-
	2199 Sub-total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	-				**-**
	2200 Sub-contracts (MOUs/LOAs for supporting organizations)							**-**	-				
	2201 Sub contract with Université Marien Ngouabi on Peatlands Management , research and monitoring	257,000	25,000					**282,000**	70,500	70,500	70,500	70,500	282,000
	2202 Sub contract with World Conservation Society - Transboundary cooperation and legal framework for engaling IPLC	205,000		80,000	260,000			**545,000**	136,250	136,250	136,250	136,250	545,000
	2203 Subcontract with WWF: Legal framework for community, private sector engagement and operation modalities of current concessions	300,000	50,000					**350,000**	87,500	87,500	87,500	87,500	350,000
	Subcontract with REPALEAC: Livelihood mechanisms to implement LUP	500,000		1,500,000				**2,000,000**	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
	2203 Sub contract with United Nations Development Programme on sustainable tourism			440,000				**440,000**	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	440,000
	2204 Sub contract with Partners Ministère de l'Economie Forestière	200,000			80,000			**280,000**	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	280,000
	2299 Sub-total	**1,462,000**	**75,000**	**2,020,000**	**340,000**	**-**	**-**	**3,897,000**	974,250	**974,250**	**974,250**	**974,250**	**3,897,000**
	2300 Sub-contracts (for commercial purposes)							**-**	-				
	2301							**-**	-				-
	2399 Sub-total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**-**	-				**-**
2999	**Component total**	**1,462,000**	**75,000**	**2,020,000**	**340,000**	**-**		**3,897,000**	974,250	**974,250**	**974,250**	**974,250**	**3,897,000**
30	**TRAINING COMPONENT**							**-**	-				

To:			Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement	Component 2: Community management of natural resources	Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism	Component 4: Engaging the private sector in conservation	Component 5: Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation	PMC		Expenditure by calendar year				
	Jul-24													
UNEP Budget Line			**Comp 1**	**Comp 2**	**Comp 3**	**Comp 4**	**Comp 5**		**Total**	**2021***	**2022***	**2023***	**2024***	**Total**
	3200	Group training							**-**	-				
	3201	Peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM, transboundary cooperation (Activity 5)	120,000	100,000					**220,000**	55,000	55,000.00	55,000.00	55,000.00	220,000
	3202	GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) on peatlands (Activity 11)	80,000	50,000					**130,000**	32,500	32,500.00	32,500.00	32,500.00	130,000
	3203	Capacity building on incorporating best practices for effective management of resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (Activity 49)	50,000	50,000	30,000				**130,000**	32,500	32,500.00	32,500.00	32,500.00	130,000
	3204	Support the patrolling of protected area boundaries and monitoring of management issues and wildlife as a deterrence to IWT and physical encroachment into protected areas (Activity 18)	70,000		30,000	75,000			**175,000**	43,750	43,750.00	43,750.00	43,750.00	175,000
	3205	Capacity building to multi-stakeholder committees on systematic and participatory conservation management planning (Activity 14)	48,000	50,000	50,000				**148,000**	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	148,000
	3299	**Sub-total**	**368,000**	**250,000**	**110,000**	**75,000**	**-**	**-**	**803,000**	200,750	**200,750**	**200,750**	**200,750**	**803,000**
	3300	Meetings/Conferences							**-**	-				
	3301	Steering Committee					30,000		**30,000**	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	30,000
	3302	knowledge Management					20,000		**20,000**	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
	3303	Stakeholders consultations on Peatlands	70,000	50,000	20,000				**140,000**	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	140,000
	3399	**Sub-total**	**70,000**	**50,000**	**20,000**	**-**	**50,000**		**190,000**	47,500	**47,500**	**47,500**	**47,500**	**190,000**
3999	**Component total**		**438,000**	**300,000**	**130,000**	**75,000**	**50,000**	**-**	**993,000**	248,250	**248,250**	**248,250**	**248,250**	**993,000**
40	**EQUIPMENT AND PREMISES COMPONENT**								**-**	-				
	4100	Expendable equipment							**-**	-				
	4101	Office supply						15,000	**15,000**	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750	15,000
	4102	Internet						15,000	**15,000**	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750	15,000
	4103								**-**	-				-
	4199	**Sub-total**				**-**	**-**	**30,000**	**30,000**	7,500	**7,500**	**7,500**	**7,500**	**30,000**
	4200	Non-expendable equipment							**-**	-				
	4201								**-**	-	-	-	-	-
	4202	Field gadgets (Cameras, Compass, etc)						10,000	**10,000**	2,500	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	10,000
	4203	Computers, printers, data show, maintenance etc						42,000	**42,000**	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	42,000
	4299	**Sub-total**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**52,000**	**52,000**	13,000	**13,000**	**13,000**	**13,000**	**52,000**
4999	**Component total**		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**82,000**	**82,000**	20,500	**20,500**	**20,500**	**20,500**	**82,000**
50	**MISCELLANEOUS COMPONENT**								-	-				
	5100	Operation and maintenance of equipment							**-**	-				
	5101	Maintenance of vehicle							**-**	-				-
	5102	Maintenance of other equipment							**-**	-				-
	5103								**-**	-				-
	5199	**Sub-total**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**-**	-				**-**
	5200	Reporting costs							**-**	-				
	5201								**-**	-				-
	5202								**-**	-				-
	5203								**-**	-				-
	5299	**Sub-total**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**-**	-				**-**
	5300	Sundry							**-**	-				
	5301	Fuel							**-**	-				-
	5302	Vehicle insurance							**-**	-				-
	5303	Communication on the project					50,000		**50,000**	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	50,000

To:			Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement	Component 2: Community management of natural resources	Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism	Component 4: Engaging the private sector in conservation	Component 5: Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation	PMC		Expenditure by calendar year				
Jul-24														
UNEP Budget Line			**Comp 1**	**Comp 2**	**Comp 3**	**Comp 4**	**Comp 5**		**Total**	**2021***	**2022***	**2023***	**2024***	**Total**
	5399	**Sub-total**					**50,000**		**50,000**	12,500	**12,500**	**12,500**	**12,500**	**50,000**
	5400	Hospitality and entertainment							**-**	-				
	5401								**-**	-				-
	5402								**-**	-				-
	5403								**-**	-				-
	5499	**Sub-total**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**-**	-				**-**
	5500	Evaluation							**-**	-				
	5501	Mid Term Evaluation					30,000		**30,000**	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	30,000
	5502	Final evaluation					40,000		**40,000**	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
	5581								**-**	-				-
	5599	**Sub-total**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**70,000**		**70,000**	17,500	**17,500**	**17,500**	**17,500**	70,000
5999	**Component total**		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**120,000**	**-**	**120,000**	30,000	**30,000**	**30,000**	**30,000**	**120,000**
									-	-				
99	**GRAND TOTAL**		**2,100,000**	**500,000**	**2,400,000**	**520,055**	**300,000**	**291,000**	**6,111,055**	**1,527,764**	**1,527,764**	**1,527,764**	**1,527,764**	**6,111,055**

Appendix A: Indicative Project Budget Template

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDeq.)													Total (USDeq.)	Responsible Entity (Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency)[80]
		Component 1		*Component 2*		*Component 3*		*Component 4*		*Component 5*		*Sub- Total*	*M& E*	*P M C*		
		Outcome 1.1	*Outcome 1.2*	*Outcome 2.1*	*Outcome 2.2*	*Outcome 3.1*	*Outcome 3.2*	*Outcome 4.1*	*Outcome 4.2*	*Outcome 5.1*	*Outcome 5.2*					
Works	**N/A**											0.00			0.00	
Goods	Field gadgets (Cameras, Compass, etc)											0.00		10,000.00	10,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Computers, printers, data show, maintenance etc											0.00		42,000.00	42,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Vehicles												0.00			0.00	
Grants/ Sub- grants	N/A											0.00			0.00	
Revolving funds/ Seed funds / Equity	N/A											0.00			0.00	
Sub-contract to executing partner/ entity	Sub contract with Université Marien Ngouabi on Peatlands Management , research and monitoring	257,000.00		25,000.00								282,000.00			282,000.00	Université Marien Ngouabi
	Sub contract with World Conservation Society - Transboundary cooperation and legal framework for engaling IPLC	205,000.00				80,000.00		260,000.00				545,000.00			545,000.00	World Conservation Society
	Subcontract with WWF: Legal framework for community, private sector engagement and operation modalities of current concessions	300,000.00		50,000.00								350,000.00			350,000.00	WWF
	Subcontract with REPALEAC: Livelihood mechanisms to implement LUP	500,000.00				1,500,000.00						2,000,000.00			2,000,000.00	REPALEAC
	Sub contract with United Nations Development Programme on sustainable tourism					440,000.00						440,000.00			440,000.00	UNDP(if cleared by investigation process)
	Sub contract with Partners Ministère de l'Economie Forestière	200,000.00						80,000.00				280,000.00			280,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Contractual Services – Individual	**N/A**											0.00			0.00	
Contractual Services – Company	**N/A**											0.00			0.00	
International Consultants	**N/A**	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00						0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Local Consultants	**N/A**											0.00			0.00	
	N/A											0.00			0.00	
Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Lead Technical Expert Peatlands and Community Natural Resources Management	200,000.00		75,000.00		200,000.00		75,000.00				550,000.00			550,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Project M/E officer (month 1-48)									130,000.00		0.00	130,000.00		130,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Project Director											0.00		30,000.00	30,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Project Driver/Clerk											0.00		32,000.00	32,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Project Financial Officer (month 1-48)											0.00		32,000.00	32,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Project Administrative Assistant (month 1-48)											0.00		65,000.00	65,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Trainings, Workshops, Meetings	Peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM, transboundary cooperation (Activity 5)	120,000.00		100,000.00								220,000.00			220,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) and Université Marien Ngouabi
	GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) on peatlands (Activity 11)	80,000.00		50,000.00								130,000.00			130,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) and Université Marien Ngouabi
	Capacity building on incorporating best practices for effective management of resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (Activity 49)	50,000.00		50,000.00		30,000.00						130,000.00			130,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) and Université Marien Ngouabi

	Support the patrolling of protected area boundaries and monitoring of management issues and wildlife as a deterrence to IWT and physical encroachment into protected areas (Activity 18)	70,000.00				30,000.00		75,000.00				175,000.00			175,000.00	Ministry of Forest Economy
	Capacity building to multi-stakeholder committees on systematic and participatory conservation management planning (Activity 14)	48,000.00		50,000.00		50,000.00						148,000.00			148,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)/WCS/WWF
	Steering Committee									30,000.00		0.00	30,000.00		30,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	knowledge Management									20,000.00		0.00	20,000.00		20,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Stakeholders consultations on Peatlands	70,000.00		50,000.00		20,000.00						140,000.00			140,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Travel	Travel on official business											0.00		50,000.00	50,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Field missions logistics for technical delivery on components			50,000.00		50,000.00		30,055.00				130,055.00			130,055.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Office Supplies	Office supplies											0.00		15,000.00	15,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Internet											0.00		15,000.00	15,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
Other Operating Costs	Communication on the project									50,000.00		0.00	50,000.00		50,000.00	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE)
	Terminal Evaluation									40,000.00		0.00	40,000.00		40,000.00	UNEP through independent consultants coordinated through the UNEP Evaluation Office
	Mid-term Review/evaluation									30,000.00		0.00	30,000.00		30,000.00	UNEP through independent consultants coordinated through the UNEP Evaluation Office
	…											0.00			0.00	
Grand Total		2,100,000.00	0.00	500,000.00	0.00	2,400,000.00	0.00	520,055.00	0.00	300,000.00	0.00	5,520,055.00	300,000.00	291,000.00	6,111,055.00	

80 In exceptional cases where GEF Agency receives funds for execution, Terms of Reference for specific activities are reviewed by GEF Secretariat

Appendix 3: Incremental cost analysis

OUTCOME	BASELINE (A)	ALTERNATIVE (B)	INCREMENT (B) - (A)
COMPONENT 1. Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement			
1.1. The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape	The current institutional and policy environment is not aligned with strategic goals of sustainable peatland management, and the community model of co-management of natural resources	Development of a framework provides an enabling environment for community governance of natural resources, paving the way for the implementation of community-based model of peatland resources management Institutional and policy environment is strengthened and enabled to align goals with sustainable management of peatlands, and their ecosystems Capacity is built on governance and management of participatory decision-making structures in landscape management	While the TRIDOM initiative provided valuable lessons in the design and implementation of Land Use Management Plans (LUMPs), it did not have enough money to implement these land use plans. Tenure rights and community governance are among some of the lessons learned from the TRIDOM project. At least two (2) policy and national legal frameworks in support of local land tenure rights and community governance and management of forests and peatlands are developed and signed. The implementation of forest, peatland and biodiversity management at the local level benefit from a new policy and legal framework. This leads to 20,398,082 tCO_2eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years (see Supplement 3). The focus of Strengthening the management of wildlife and improving livelihoods in northern Republic of Congo project is on sustainable forest management, strengthening anti-poaching capacity at national and local level, development of sustainable livelihood options for local communities in the Ntokou-Pikounda project area. Local community groups and actors are essential elements for success in these initiatives. At least 90 personnel of key CSOs, NGOs, and other community representatives, as well as of public institutions at the provincial and local levels can support participatory governance in

			the management of peatland resources
COMPONENT 2. Community management of natural resources			
2.1. Local communities in the Lac Télé Landscape adopt integrated participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems	Natural resources management does not adequately engage local communities	A model of community-based management of natural resources engages local communities as co-managers and environmental stewards. A monitoring system is developed to support local communities in fighting against poaching, IWT, and the use of fire on peatlands and forests Research assesses peatland functions and values related to habitats, biodiversity, carbon storage, and climate change	At least one co-management contract is signed with each local community living within the vicinity of, or depending directly on peatland resources for livelihood sustenance. Building national capacity to fight IWT in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe transboundary area has been one of the main goals of the Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo project. Operationalizing this capacity to implement change at local level is essential for viable outcomes. At least one community based surveillance and monitoring unit is functioning in each local community living within the vicinity of, or depending directly on peatland resources. Scientific research and technical reporting provides a basis for data-driven decision-making on natural resources management at all levels in forest and peatland landscapes
COMPONENT 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism[170] and certified cacao			
3.1. Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment	Local communities and households lack viable alternatives to reduce their dependence on forest and peatland resources to support livelihoods	Local and national stakeholders design ecotourism pilot micro-projects and associated value chains. Capacity to engage in ecotourism service provision is built to local communities and entrepreneurs and an office at Impfondo serves as the first tourism information and	WCS has recently piloted a tourism test phase at the Nouabale-Ndoki park, and currently supports the communities the development of community tourism in Bomassa. This forms a blueprint for the current project to support at least 40 local businesses delivering ecotourism services or related products support alternative income generating activities for local communities. At least 140 local community members are trained on service provision and business

[170] Community-based ecotourism refers to lodges and tourism attractions that are owned by grassroots community conservation organizations. In these communities, tourism helps to conserve tropical forests, preserves local culture rather than destroying it, and helps farmers supplement their income so that they can stay on the land (http://keytocostarica.beablake.com/community/faq/what-is-community-based-ecotourism.html)

		resource centre Establish a value chain for NTFPs and support knowledge, and funding necessary to spur adoption A value chain for sustainable cocoa production is established and seed funding supports interested start-ups in the sector	opportunities in the ecotourism sector At least 60 local businesses engaged in the value addition on local NTFPs support employment and income generation in the project area The current *Forest and Economic Diversification Project (PFDE-2)* is developing a framework for the implementation of cocoa as one of the livelihood options to support communities, and reduce the reliance on forest resources. The current project will build on this framework and lessons learned to support at least 70 local farmers to engage in the organic cocoa value chain, hence providing alternative income generating activities for local communities.
COMPONENT 4. Engaging the private sector in conservation			
4.1. Private sector adopt sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the integrity of peatland ecosystems	The private sector has not been properly engaged in participating as a partner in the drive to achieve sustainable management of natural resources (including in forests, biodiversity, peatlands, and other natural resources sectors). Knowledge of and adherence to existing rules and regulations guiding natural resources use and management is insufficient among key stakeholders in the sector, and private sector adherence to sustainability standards is tepid. There are no incentive schemes to support sustainable practices among private sector operators in project	Training on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) equips private operators and local communities to recognize and monitor adherence to sustainability standards Weaknesses and gaps in legal and policy instruments for enforcing adherence to national sustainability standards are reviewed and corrected Incentives for private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area are developed	At least one (1) training per year targeting the private sector operating in the project landscape and representatives of local environmental groups builds the capacity to implement, identify and monitor sustainability standards At least two (2) legal and policy instruments to enforce compliance to sustainability standards of resources and landscape management are strengthened. The International Consortium to Combat Related Crime to Wildlife (ICCWC) has made priority recommendations to support efforts towards combating IWT. These recommendations will form the basis for the development and establishment of at least one (1) incentive scheme for private sector engagement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area.

	landscapes		
COMPONENT 5. Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation			
5.1. Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.	Knowledge and information on peatlands, their value, challenges, and implications for sustainable development in Congo remains very limited, especially in the project area	A communication strategy provides information relevant for public understanding and appreciation of the extend and value of peatlands in Congo	At least three scientific publications supports policy making on issues of peatlands, their management, their role in development of local communities, and their challenges in the context of global environmental challenges Regular mass media programs (television, radio, newspapers, and online) provide information on peatlands and the project to regular Congolese in an accessible language, throughout the life of the project

Appendix 4: Results Framework

Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL						
	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
Project Objective To promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the RoC Lac Télé Landscape.	Population of Western lowland gorillas living in the swamp forests of the sprawling Lac Télé Community Reserve [171]	Protected areas are under severe management threats that contribute to land degradation, decline in biodiversity, and a degradation in the value of ecosystem services	At least 440,000 hectares[172] of forest brought under improved protection and enhanced conservation.	Population of Western lowland gorillas living in the swamp forests of the sprawling Lac Télé Community Reserve increase to 125,000[173] as a result of project activities	Environmental monitoring studies and sampling surveys	■ No major infrastructure projects carried out without prior application of environmental impact assessments
	Interest of local businesses and investors in green productive value chains (organic cocoa; ecotourism; sustainable NTFPs extraction, etc.)	There are no initiatives for investments in green productive value chains in the Lac Tele Landscape	At least 5 businesses invested in the green productive value chains	At least 8 local businesses engaged in the green productive value chains	■ Business cases; ■ Project reports and records	Local businesses will find investments in the green productive value chains attractive.
	Number of indigenous people who are beneficiaries of alternative income generating activity projects funded by the project	There are very few alternative income generating activities outside smallholder subsistence production in the project area	At least 4 representatives of different indigenous community groups are represented in all key meetings and decision-making bodies of the project at the Lac Tele Landscape level	Representatives of the 7 largest indigenous community groups are represented in all key meetings and decision-making bodies of the project at the Lac Tele	■ Project reports and records	The broad stakeholder consultative processes initiated during the PPG phase of the project are continued during the implementation phase

[171] The western lowland gorilla (G. gorilla gorilla) is one of two subspecies of the western gorilla (Gorilla gorilla) that lives in montane, primary and secondary forests and lowland swamps in central Africa: , Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
[172] This is the area of the Lac Tele Community Reserve. Ben Evans (2019. Wild Places - Lac Télé Community Reserve. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Congo Program. Accessed on 12-02-2019. https://congo.wcs.org/Wild-Places/Lac-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9-Community-Reserve.aspx
[173] This is the population that was recorded in 2007 of this species as reported by USAID. This project will therefore strive to bring the population back to at least that number. https://carpe.umd.edu/sites/default/files/documentsarchive/CAFEC_Lac%20T%C2%82l%C2%82-%20Lac%20Tumba%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL						
	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
				Landscape level		
Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement						
Outcome 1.1 The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape	Number of sectors with revised regulatory frameworks on community governance and management of forest and natural resources adopted by the government of the RoC	Policies/incentives promoting sustainable forest resource and peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade suffer from implementation deficits at the local level	At least 3 regulatory frameworks promoting forest resource and sustainable peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade are applied in all districts of the Lac Tele Landscape	At least 6 regulatory frameworks promoting forest resource and peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade are applied in all districts of the Lac Tele Landscape	Provincial government reports	■ The government of the RoC ensures the effective implementation of policies and strategies relating to the sustainable management of forests and peatlands ■ No significant increase in environmental threats (land degradation, biodiversity loss)
	Percent of participating stakeholders at all levels contributing credible data to feed the database to monitor the peatlands resources.	Data availability on the state and changes in key environmental resources is very poor, making informed decision-making difficult	At least 40% of project participating stakeholders are contributing data to feed the database to monitor peatland resources	All project participating stakeholders (100%) are contributing data to feed the database to monitor peatland resources	■ Forests, peatlands, and biodiversity assessment report ■ Activity report indicating database specifications	All participating stakeholders in the project at all levels are willing to contribute existing data in the development of the database
	Percent of District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and representation of indigenous populations	Protected areas are under severe management threats as they lack comprehensive plans for management – contributing land degradation, decline in biodiversity, and	At least 50% of District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and	All District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and representation of	Provincial government reports	■ Decentralization policies and processes in relevant ministries to support the development and implementation of local level land use planning remain in place

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	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
		degradation in the value of ecosystem services.	representation of indigenous populations	indigenous populations		
	Investment leveraged financing to support implementation of land-use management plans.	Existing integrated land use plans to support planning and decision-making on productive forests and peatlands in the Lac Tele Landscape have not been legally approved and incorporated into existing policy processes	At least 600,000 $US is invested to support implementation of land-use management plans (see budget line 1206).	At least 1,500,000 $US is invested to support implementation of land-use management plans (see budget line 1206).	Local authorities yearly reports evaluations	The Government of the RoC is keen to support sustainable land use planning in the management of natural resources and landscapes of the country
1.1.1. National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption						
1.1.2. Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc.						
1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website.						
1.1.4. Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Tele landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism and made available for adoption.						
Component 2: Community management of natural resources						
Outcome 2.1: Local communities in the Lac Télé Landscape adopt integrated	Percent (%) of land users that undertake sustainable land management on peatlands in the project	None	■ At least 50% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the project	■ At least 85% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the	■ Technical progress reports and project evaluations	The immediate benefits of the implementation of sustainable management practices are substantial enough to spur adoption

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	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems'	area		area.	project area.		by local communities. Data on threats to peatland ecosystems of the RoC available to guide policy. A better understanding of management challenges as well as challenges associated with monitoring and addressing issues of IWT support better decision-making.
	Number of peer-reviewed publications published in relevant internationally recognized journals in threats to peatlands of the Congo Basin (with specific focus on the Lac Tele Landscape).	Information and data on threats to the peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape are inexistent	■ At least 2 peer reviewed papers published on climatic and management threats	■ At least 4 peer reviewed papers published on climatic, natural resources use, management, IWT, and threats with transnational characteristics.	■ Peer-reviewed publications shared among key stakeholders	
	Number of transboundary community based structures to manage peatlands with women in decision making positions	■ Capacity for management of sustainable forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management is limited in the project area. ■ There is a gender disparity (not in favour of women) in accessing information and opportunities for capacity-building in the country as a whole, and in the project area	Capacity for the sustainable management of peatlands provided to at least 150 members of local governmental and non-governmental environmental interest groups in the project area	At least 350 persons trained in implementing management of forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management (with a special attention to gender diversity and the representation of indigenous groups)	■ Training reports	
2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years						
2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production						
2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level						
2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted, 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted results documented						

Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL						
	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
and made available in the project site.						
Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism and certified cacao						
Outcome 3.1 Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment	Number of small producer organizations undertaking sustainable nature-based income-generating activities	Agricultural activities in the area are still carried out with methods and tools that are not optimised for high productivity and environmental protection.	At least one (1) producer organizations in each district of the project area has benefited from project financing through the small grants program and is practicing sustainable production of cocoa	At least eight (8) producer organizations in the Lac Tele Landscape benefit from project financing through the small grants program and is practicing sustainable production of cocoa	Socio-economic survey	The price of cocoa in the world market does not fall significantly Sufficient tourists arrive in the region
3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, results documented and made available in the project site						
3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site						
3.1.3. Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation.						
Component 4. Engaging the private sector in conservation						
Outcome 4.1. Private sector adopts sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the	Percent (%) of organic cocoa producers and ecotourism operators in the project area meeting the requirements of internationally recognized green Voluntary	■ The number of companies using certification standards to leverage green investments are very few. ■ Support for proactive engagement with the private sector to invest	At least 50% of businesses in at least two sectors are implementing production standards compatible with at least one internationally recognized	At least 75% of organic cocoa producers and 85% of ecotourism operators are registered with international certification bodies	■ Project field records, progress reports and evaluations	■ The government of the RoC redoubles support for public-private partnerships in investments on natural resources extraction and use.

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	Indicator	*4. Baseline*	*5. Mid-term target*	*6. End of project target*	**Sources of verification**	**Assumptions**
integrity of peatland ecosystems	Sustainability Standards (VSS)	in and leverage the benefits of green certification standards is limited	certification standard			
	Percent (%) of companies operating concessions in the Tele Lac Landscape signing commitments to adhere more strictly to prevailing legal and institutional frameworks	Operational modalities of logging and mineral extraction companies fail to adequately address challenges of biodiversity loss and sustainable peatland management	Operational modalities of logging logging and mineral extraction companies are revised to address key sustainable development challenges	All companies operating concessions in the Lac Tele Landscape sign a commitments to adhere more strictly to prevailing legal and institutional frameworks, as well as to submit to better monitoring of adherence	■ Project reports ■ Signed commitments uploaded in the project website	Lobbying from the private sector does not derail efforts towards reforms
4.1.1. Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem [174]						
4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption						
4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site						
Component 5. Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation						
Outcome 5: Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream	Percent (%) of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. Percent (%) of	None	At least 40% of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. At least 55% of	All key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape (100%) are contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. At least 95% of	A website with the peatland knowledge management system is up and running	The Scientific Committee of the project engages all relevant stakeholders to arrive at a versatile and representative knowledge management system

[174] The Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) Platform can serve as a model.

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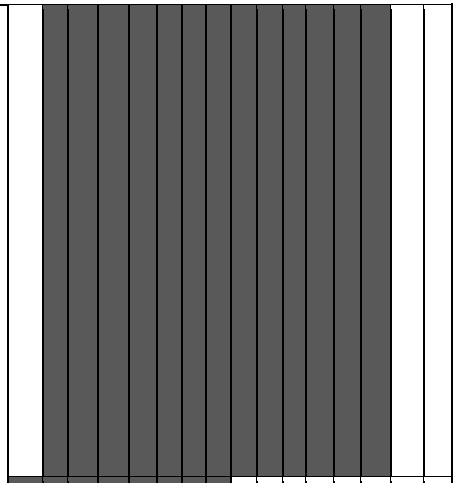
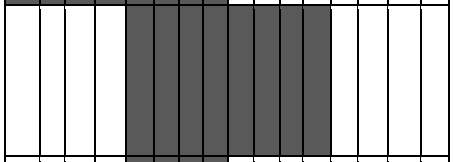
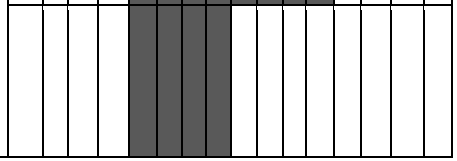
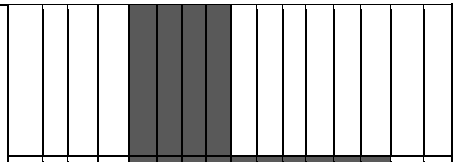
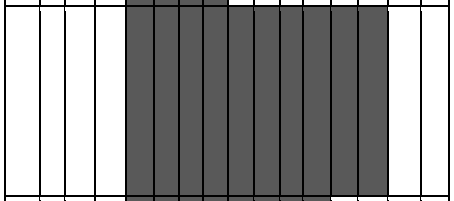
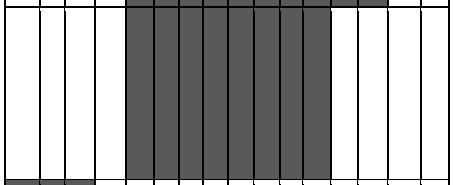
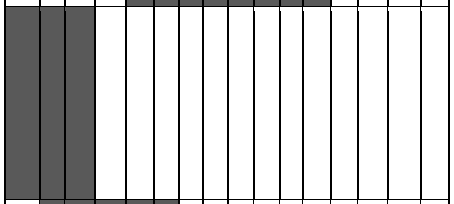
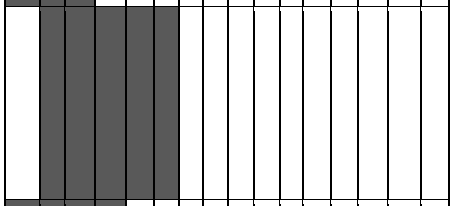
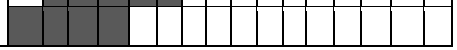
principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.	participants in project trainings that state in the training evaluation form that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate.		participants indicate that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate.	participants indicate that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate.		
5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation						
5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations						

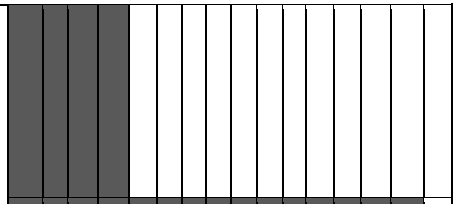
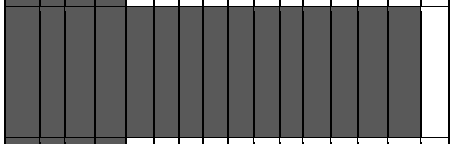
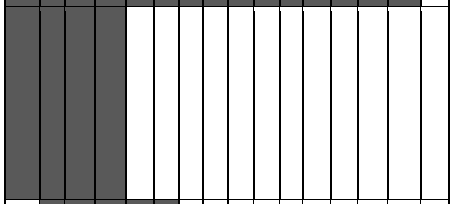
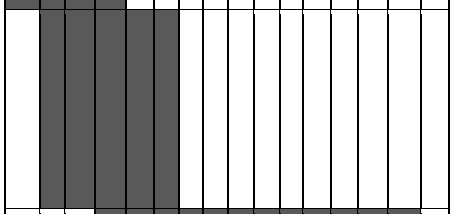
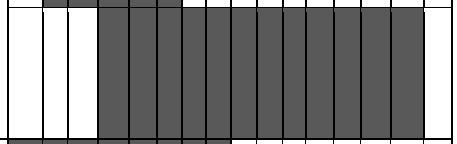
Appendix 5: Workplan and timetable

Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Activities	UNEP (Anubis budget lines)	Cost (USD)	PY1	PY2	PY3	PY4
1.1. The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape	1.1.1. National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption	*Activity 1:* Analyze national policy and legal framework related to the conservation sector and develop recommendations for revising, upgrading and harmonizing existing frameworks for peatland and biodiversity management frameworks (with special attention to IWT and threatened), as well as IWT legislation and policy frameworks						
		Activity 2: Present and discuss the findings of national policy and legal framework analysis; as well as draft recommended amendments in a stakeholder workshop						
		Activity 3: Work with relevant national administrative and political stakeholders to officially submit the agreed amendments to relevant political structures for adoption and enactment						
	1.1.2. Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory	*Activity 4:* Review and update existing training modules that have been developed in the Congo Basin Region on peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM projects and update as appropriate to align with current project case						

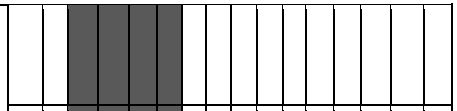
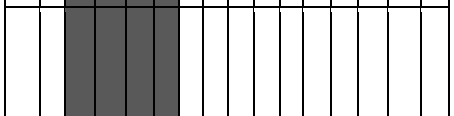
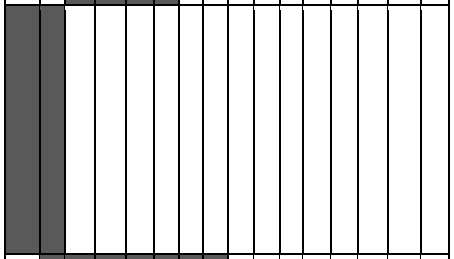
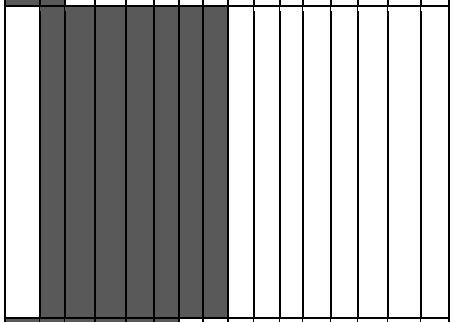
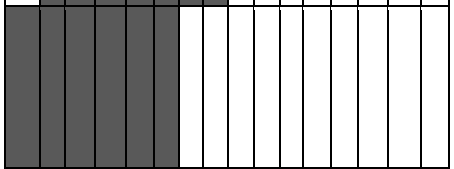
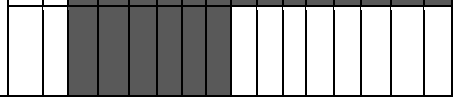
	decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc.	*Activity 5:* Deliver training on peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM, transboundary cooperation in NRM, cross-border IWT, etc. and assess training effectiveness			
	1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement	*Activity 6:* Assess the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands both in the project area and in the larger national landscape of the RoC.			
		Activity 7: Assess of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in targeted peatlands and develop a GHG emission baseline on peatlands of the RoC			
		Activity 8: Attend and present research findings in at least two international workshops on peatlands, and develop partnerships for future collaboration in research on Congo peatlands			
		Activity 9: Develop a system for peatland fire frequency, prediction and early warning (Fire Danger Rating System - FDRS)			

	protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website.	*Activity 10:* Develop Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires as well as guidelines and information/training materials on Integrated Fire Management			
		Activity 11: Build capacity on GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) on peatlands			
		Activity 12: Develop an information management and monitoring system on peatland resources			
	1.1.4. Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Tele landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands	*Activity 13:* Establishing multi-sectoral stakeholder committees (including Indigenous Peoples Land Committees - IPLCs as active rights-holders) for discussion, review, and validation of proposed measures for development of LUMPs (participation, steps, timelines, etc.)[175]			
		Activity 14: Train the multi-stakeholder committees on systematic and participatory conservation management planning – including in dealing with landscape-based (sector) developments (e.g. agriculture & water use, water & soil erosion, water pollution, eco-tourism), threats (e.g. IWT, deforestation) and opportunities (e.g. PES)[176]			
		Activity 15: Through collaborative processes, determine the			

[175] This is for cases where these LUMPs do not exist. Where they already exist, limited consultations will be used to revive community awareness, interest, and participation in the purpose and use of these plans. Hence where these LUMPs already exist, only the last activity in this Output will be warranted.
[176] This training will include capacity building on the technical and operational capacities of those responsible for different forms of land management (government, local communities, forest-dependent peoples) to monitor and enforce LUMPs in ways that respect the rights of local communities and forest dependent peoples,

	conservation and promotion of ecotourism and made available for adoption.	priority areas within and around the Lac Tele landscape for biodiversity and peatlands conservation and restoration[177]. In a participatory process involving local communities, demarcate these areas, identify potential threats stemming from human use and design voluntary practices for their sustainable management.			
		Activity 16: Organize activities to raise awareness of local communities about the values and functions of peatlands, and particularly the ecosystems and biodiversity of peatland mangroves within the Lac Tele.			
		Activity 17: Undertake consultations with local stakeholders are on activities related to land use planning and collaborate with the Congo IP to ensure methodological harmony in land use planning implementation			
		Activity 18: Develop Land Use Planning Framework specifically suited for the context of the Lac Tele Landscape			
		Activity 19: Implement and endorse land use zoning, as well as support efforts at all levels to achieve national adoption and anchoring of land use plans into relevant legal and political frameworks.			
2.1. Local communities in the Lac Télé Landscape adopt integrated participatory	2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of	*Activity 20:* Develop (with community inputs) Terms of Reference for community-based management of hunting, fire, fisheries and other activities that directly affect the health of conserved areas and peatlands in the project area			
		Activity 21: Develop and sign co-management contracts with local communities around protected areas and areas of ecological interest such as peatlands through community led participatory processes			

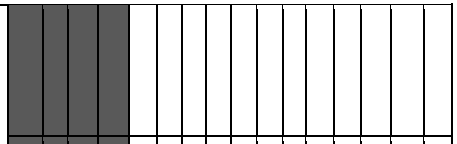
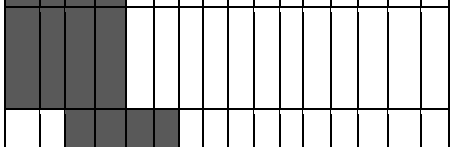
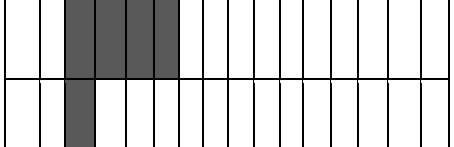
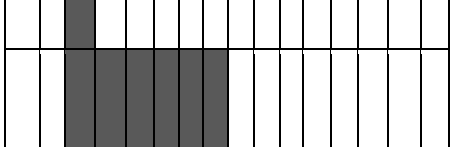
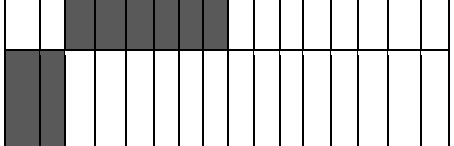
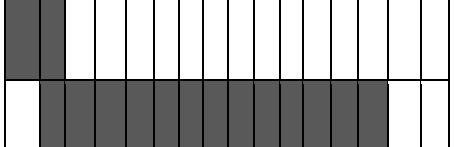
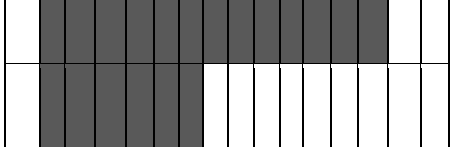
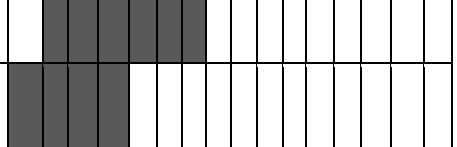
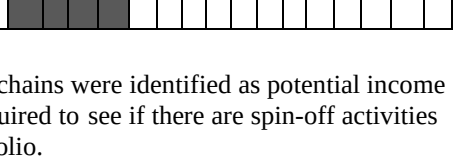
[177] Using the results of the assessment of peatlands, productive forests, protected areas and IWT under Output 1.1.2

conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems'	hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years	*Activity 22:* Support the creation of an integrated anti-poaching coordination committee established as well as its effective operation			
		Activity 23: Establish a system to monitor and evaluate impacts project impacts on hunting, poaching, IWT, and the use of fire; and develop an evaluation report on impact of practices and introduction to the stakeholders			
	2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production	*Activity 24:* Identify training gaps and priorities on the implementation of environmental projects, including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production; and develop materials suitable for both the local, sub-national and national levels			
		Activity 25: Deliver training to local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples, and evaluate as well as report on the training to relevant stakeholders through reports			
	2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to	*Activity 26:* Undertake surveys to assess peatland functions and values related to habitats, biodiversity, carbon storage, and climate change mitigation in the Lac Tele landscape and report on the opportunities and challenges of adaptive management and monitoring.			
		Activity 27: Present the findings in at least one inter-ministerial meeting that brings together key ministries and agencies involved in the Congo peatlands			
		Activity 28: Develop recommendations for actions (based on the action research) to improve management and			

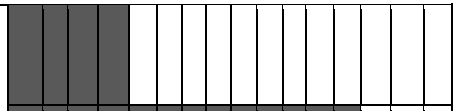
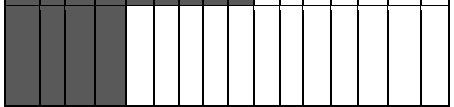
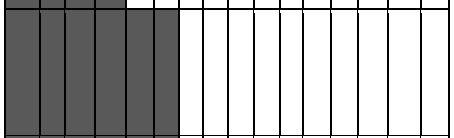
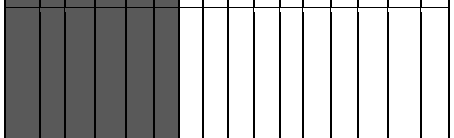
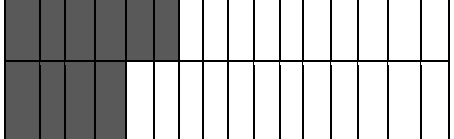
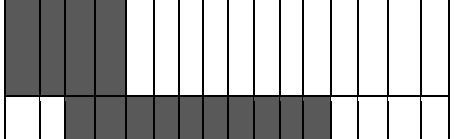
	peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level	monitoring outcomes of peatlands in the Lac Tele landscape with implications at the national and Congo Basin region.			
	2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted, 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted results documented and made available in	*Activity 29:* Identify key lessons, based on the findings of the peatland and IWT surveys and assessments, and the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot site activities			
		Activity 30: Prepare a concise summary document that combines experiences from the Lac Tele landscape with existing guidelines that have been developed in the region through prior peatland projects[178].			
		Activity 31: Make use of the project's regional workshops and cross-country exchanges to share and disseminate results of the document developed			

[178] This document should distil successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to support the development of transboundary initiatives for peatland restoration and conservation, as well as on IWT

	the project site.				
3.1. Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment	3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, results documented and made available in the project site	*Activity 32:* Work in consultation with relevant local and national stakeholders to design tourism development area plans for the Lac Tele landscape, and support the integration of these plans into relevant spatial planning documents and frameworks			
		Activity 33: Set up and equip a tourism information office at Impfondo, or support an existing structure (with physical and technical resources) to be better equipped and functioning more effectively.			
		Activity 34: Support the establishment of ecotourism pilot micro-projects to introduce best practices at Impfondo; as well as introduce and validate the packages of pilot micro-projects, criteria and procedures for selection partners with stakeholders (CBO/local farmers) for implementation of ecotourism pilot projects.			
		Activity 35: Select partners for implementation of the pilot ecotourism projects and implement the community based ecotourism enterprises.			
		Activity 36: Set up independent technical and financial audit of the pilot micro-projects.			
	3.1.2. Sustainable	*Activity 37:* Identify sustainable income generating activities suitable for the Lac Tele landscape through			

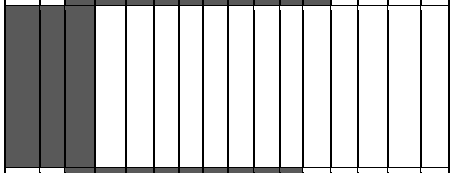
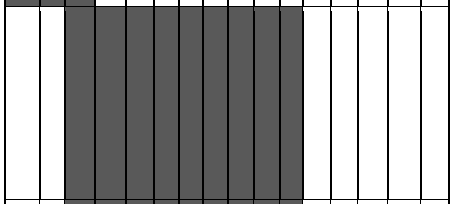
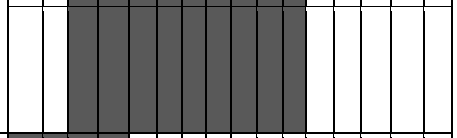
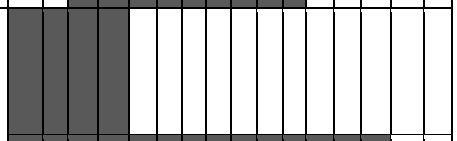
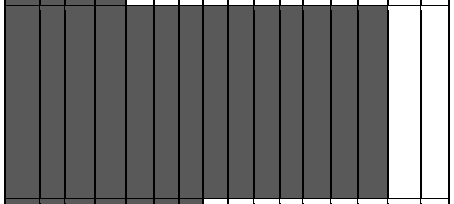
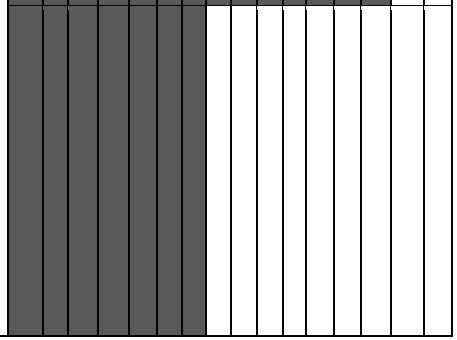
	income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site	participatory processes[179], and investigate optimum conditions to make them a success at local level (produce a report indicating potential flagship activities that can benefit from project support)			
		Activity 38: Assess capacity needs and provide training to address capacity gaps on principles, methods and practices of cocoa and NTFP value chains as necessary			
		Activity 39: Analyze and address production, technical, and marketing barriers to mainstreaming certified cocoa as well as NTFPs			
		Activity 40: Purchase and set up required processing plants for NTFP and cocoa value addition in local communities			
		Activity 41: Prepare demand-side mechanisms to scale-up certified NTFPs and organic cocoa – certify, find markets, and link local producers to them			
	3.1.3. Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation.	*Activity 42:* Assess and identify capacity needs (through inclusive and collaborative processes) on the identification of ecotourism potentials and market niches, the development of ecotourism business enterprises and value chains, and ecotourism best-practices			
		Activity 43: Develop training packages and deliver training to local community organized structures			
		Activity 44: Assess the impact of training in ecotourism business models and practice with attention to the impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups and report on training outcomes to relevant stakeholders			
4.1. Private sector adopts	4.1.1. Training and technical	*Activity 45:* Identify relevant potential beneficiaries of capacity building on Voluntary Sustainability Standards			

[179] During the engagements supporting the development of this document, organic cocoa, ecotourism, and NTFP value chains were identified as potential income generating activities to be supported. Further engagements with communities during project implementation will be required to see if there are spin-off activities that can associate these with minimal or no extra cost. These will be added into the livelihood support mechanism portfolio.

sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the integrity of peatland ecosystems	assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem	(VSS) targeting existing concessions conducted to protect the integrating of peatlands ecosystem as well as capacity needs			
		Activity 46: Based on the needs assessment, develop targeted capacity building program, and deliver it to the relevant beneficiaries and assess the impact of the training			
		Activity 47: Support the implementation of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in the project area			
	4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption	*Activity 48:* Identify local, provincial, and national capacity needs for effective management of resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem[180].			
		Activity 49: Based on identified capacity needs, formulate training programs incorporating best practices (including indigenous technical knowledge) and deliver training[181].			
		Activity 50: Assess the training outcomes and make training programs available to other regions with similar land degradation issues			
	4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project	*Activity 51:* Undertake a study to assess the effectives, strengths, and challenges of the legislative, administrative, and operational modalities, and develop a report for consultation and action targeting relevant local and national level stakeholders			
		Activity 52: Support the revision of operational modalities of companies operating concessions based on findings of the study and consultations form relevant bodies and the			

[180] This should include gaps in the ability to reduce conflicts over peatland resources; considering traditional knowledge and resource governance systems to formulate conflict resolutions strategies; incorporate institutional best practice approach integrity of peatland ecosystem models

[181] The training should be professionally formulated, designed and presented to also serve as a reference guide for the incorporation of peatland resources management into higher and technical education systems in the RoC.

	area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site	adoption of these revisions into relevant legal structures and plans			
		Activity 53: Review and analyze of existing community and private sector participation systems in use – identify existing structures on which the current project can build on if they exist, or propose viable models of private sector partnerships if they don't			
		Activity 54: Synthesize recommendations on incentives for private sector commitment to sustainable peatlands landscape management are identified and implemented – present these recommendations to relevant stakeholders and support their incorporation into relevant legal and policy frameworks			
		Activity 55: Implement the model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area			
5.1. Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communicati on strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.	5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community –	*Activity 56:* Develop a project portal on the project host's website to communicate project activities and outcomes			
		Activity 57: Share the concise summary document that distils successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to support the development of transboundary initiatives for peatland restoration and conservation, as well as on IWT with relevant stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels			
		Activity 58: Develop a strategy for mainstreaming principles of adaptive peatland management and IWT into national and regional programs through knowledge management (KM); including: ▪ conducting a collaborative review of regional development programs related to peatland management and IWT to identify their strengths, lessons learned and concerns in relation to peatland management and IWT and to identify opportunities for integration of SLM lessons learned, best practices and guidelines			

	based peatlands and natural resources conservation	▪ Develop mechanisms for managing information flows from identified sources (government, multilateral, NGOs, indigenous organizations, academic, corporate and other) accessing data online, through a communication and training strategy. ▪ Work with regional program managers to develop peatland management and IWT criteria for eligibility of fundable activities ▪ Conduct targeted peatland management and IWT training workshops for regional program staff, technical services, and NGOs; including training on the development of quality project proposals for peatland management and IWT projects			
		Activity 59: Undertake regular communication activities at all levels in order to disseminate/share project's progress and approaches: ▪ develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT rural radio communications programs targeting farmers and herders throughout the south ▪ develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT policy briefs per year targeting regional and provincial decision makers ▪ publish and disseminate peatland management and IWT newsletter (based on bi-annual peatland management and IWT reviews) targeting regional programs, NGOs, and communal, regional and provincial authorities and technical services			
	5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are	*Activity 60:* Identify key stakeholders to participate in the exchanges and collaborate with these stakeholders in determining the content, structure and intended outcomes of an exchange visit. Also share relevant material to support learning, discovery, and knowledge exchanges during the exchange meeting.			

	actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations	*Activity :* Organize exchange visits and document experience and lessons learned. Produce a report on these exchanges and share with relevant stakeholder, as well as undertake a follow-up to ensure that results from these exchange visits contribute to decision-making on issues of peatland sustainability and IWT where appropriate.			

Appendix 6: Key deliverables and benchmarks

Components/ Outcomes/Outputs	Activities	Deliverables	Benchmarks
Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement			
Outcome 1.1: The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape			
1.1.1. National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption	*Activity 1:* Analyze national policy and legal framework related to the conservation sector and develop recommendations for revising, upgrading and harmonizing existing frameworks for peatland and biodiversity management frameworks (with special attention to IWT and threatened), as well as IWT legislation and policy frameworks	Report on policy and legal framework analysis including recommendations for further improvement is elaborated, discussed and agreed by stakeholders. Copies of adopted legal amendments	***By Q 2, Y 1***
	Activity 2: Present and discuss the findings of national policy and legal framework analysis; as well as draft recommended amendments in a stakeholder workshop	Minutes of the workshop with agreed recommendations	***By Q 3, Y1***
	Activity 3: Work with relevant national administrative and political stakeholders to officially submit the agreed amendments to relevant political structures for adoption and enactment	Report on policy and legal framework analysis including recommendations for further improvement is elaborated, discussed and agreed by stakeholders. Copies of adopted legal amendments	***By Q 4, Y 1***
1.1.2. Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and	*Activity 4:* Review and update existing training modules that have been developed in the Congo Basin Region on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities (especially within the context of peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM) and update as appropriate to align with current project case	300 copies of well-designed educational booklet are disseminated in project municipalities	***By Q 2, Y 1***
	Activity 5: Deliver training on peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM, transboundary cooperation in NRM, cross-border IWT, etc. and assess training effectiveness	- List of trained persons. - Post training assessment reports (based on questionnaires)	***By Q 2, Y 4***

conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc			
1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land–use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website.	*Activity 6:* Assess the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands both in the project area and in the larger national landscape of the RoC.	At least two peer-reviewed publications published in an internationally recognized scientific journal	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 7: Assess of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in targeted peatlands and develop a GHG emission baseline on peatlands of the RoC	At least one peer-reviewed publications published in an internationally recognized scientific journal	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 8: Attend and present research findings in at least two international workshops on peatlands, and develop partnerships for future collaboration in research on Congo peatlands	Conference activity report	***By Q 4, Y 3***
	Activity 9: Develop a system for peatland fire frequency, prediction and early warning (Fire Danger Rating System - FDRS)	Technical report, including collected data and results of analysis shared to relevant stakeholders	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 10: Develop Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires as well as guidelines and information/training materials on Integrated Fire Management	Technical report, including collected data and results of analysis shared to relevant stakeholders	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 11: Build capacity on GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) on peatlands	Training report with gender aggregated analysis	***By Q 2, Y 4***
	Activity 12: Develop an information management and monitoring system on peatland resources	Report describing the database (structure, location, access, contents and plans for updating)	***By Q 4, Y 3***

1.1.4. Land–use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac Tele landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism and made available for adoption.	*Activity 13:* Establishing a multi-sectoral stakeholder committees (including Indigenous Peoples Land Committees – IPLCs as active rights-holders) for discussion, review, and validation of proposed measures for development of LUMPs (participation, steps, timelines, etc.) [182]	- List of members/participants in the task force - Terms of Reference developed for the management of critical habitats - Schedules developed for team deployment	***By Q 3, Y 1***
	Activity 14: Train the multi-stakeholder committees on systematic and participatory conservation management planning – including in dealing with landscape-based (sector) developments (e.g. agriculture & water use, water & soil erosion, water pollution, eco-tourism), threats (e.g. IWT, deforestation) and opportunities (e.g. PES)[183]	- List of trained persons. - Post training assessment reports (based on questionnaires)	***By Q 2, Y 2***
	Activity 15: Through collaborative processes, determine the priority areas within and around the Lac Tele landscape for biodiversity and peatlands conservation and restoration[184]. In a participatory process involving local communities, demarcate these areas, identify potential threats stemming from human use and design voluntary practices for their sustainable management.	Activity report outlining the outcome of community engagement in the outcome of management plans and the application of Access Restriction Mitigation Process in the achievement of outcomes	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 16: Organize activities to raise awareness of local communities about the values and functions of peatlands, and particularly the ecosystems and biodiversity of peatland mangroves within the Lac Tele.	- Activity reports - List of participants	***By Q 3, Y 4***
	Activity 17: Undertake consultations with local stakeholders are on activities related to land use planning and collaborate with the Congo IP to ensure methodological harmony in land use planning implementation	Activity reports	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 18: Develop Land Use Planning Framework specifically suited for the context of the Lac Tele Landscape	Activity report showing framework shared with relevant stakeholders, data collected to support framework, etc.	***By 2 4, Y 2***
	Activity 19: Implement and endorse land use zoning, as well as support efforts at all levels to achieve national adoption and anchoring of land use plans into relevant legal and political frameworks.	Activity report showing number of zoning plans implemented, activities undertaken to support national efforts	***By Q 3, Y 4***

[182] This is for cases where these LUMPs do not exist. Where they already exist, limited consultations will be used to revive community awareness, interest, and participation in the purpose and use of these plans. Hence where these LUMPs already exist, only the last activity in this Output will be warranted.
[183] This training will include capacity building on the technical and operational capacities of those responsible for different forms of land management (government, local communities, forest-dependent peoples) to monitor and enforce LUMPs in ways that respect the rights of local communities and forest dependent peoples,
[184] Using the results of the assessment of peatlands, productive forests, protected areas and IWT under Output 1.1.2

		towards anchoring plans, etc.	
Component 2: Community management of natural resources			
Outcome 2.1: Local communities in the Lac Télé Landscape adopt integrated participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems			
2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years	*Activity 20:* Develop (with community inputs) Terms of Reference for community-based management of hunting, fire, fisheries and other activities that directly affect the health of conserved areas and peatlands in the project area	Terms of Reference developed Schedules developed for team deployment	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 21: Develop and sign co-management contracts with local communities around protected areas and areas of ecological interest such as peatlands through community led participatory processes	Co-management contracts	***By Q 2, Y 2***
	Activity 22: Support the creation of an integrated anti-poaching coordination committee established as well as its effective operation, establish terms of reference, and support their legal recognition	Activity report	***By Q 2, Y 2***
	Activity 23: Establish a system to monitor and evaluate impacts project impacts on hunting, poaching, IWT, and the use of fire; and develop an evaluation report on impact of practices and introduction to the stakeholders	Report on impact of practices. Evaluation report	***By Q 2, Y 2***
2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production	*Activity 24:* Identify training gaps and priorities on the implementation of environmental projects, including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production; and develop materials suitable for both the local, sub-national and national levels	Technical report	***By Q 2, Y 1***
	Activity 25: Deliver training to local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples, and evaluate as well as report on the training to relevant stakeholders through reports	Post training assessment reports Questionnaires for assessment of training effectiveness. List of trained persons. Elaborated indicators	***By Q 4, Y 2***
2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the	*Activity 26:* Undertake surveys to assess peatland functions and values related to habitats, and especially the social science dimension of ecosystem service provision related to local livelihoods in the Lac Tele landscape and report on the opportunities and challenges of adaptive management and monitoring.	At least one peer-reviewed scientific paper published in a recognized international journal	***By Q 2, Y 2***

government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level	*Activity 27:* Present the findings in at least one inter-ministerial meeting that brings together key ministries and agencies involved in the Congo peatlands	List of stakeholders with which findings are shared	***By Q 4, Y 4***
	Activity 28: Develop recommendations for actions (based on the action research) to improve management and monitoring outcomes of peatlands in the Lac Tele landscape with implications at the national and Congo Basin region.	Minutes of meetings Report outlining recommendations	***By Q 4, Y 2***
2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted results documented and made available in the project site.	*Activity 29:* Identify key lessons, based on the findings of the peatland and IWT surveys and assessments (Output 1.1.2), and the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot site activities (Output 2.1.3)	Technical report	***By Q 2, Y 3***
	Activity 30: Prepare a concise summary document that combines experiences from the Lac Tele landscape with existing guidelines that have been developed in the region through prior peatland projects[185].	Document shared with relevant trans-boundary partners and initiatives	***By Q 2, Y 3***
	Activity 31: Make use of the project's regional workshops and cross-country exchanges to share and disseminate results of the document developed	Workshop report	***By Q 4, Y 4***
Component 3: Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism[186]and certified cacao			
Outcome 3.1: Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment			
3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business	*Activity 32:* Work in consultation with relevant local and national stakeholders to design tourism development area plans for the Lac Tele landscape, and support the integration of these plans into relevant spatial planning documents and frameworks.	Activity report explaining the tourism development area plans for the Lac Tele landscape	***By Q 4, Y 1***

[185] This document should distil successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to support the development of transboundary initiatives for peatland restoration and conservation, as well as on IWT.

[186] Community-based ecotourism refers to lodges and tourism attractions that are owned by grassroots community conservation organizations. In these communities, tourism helps to conserve tropical forests, preserves local culture rather than destroying it, and helps farmers supplement their income so that they can stay on the land (http://keytocostarica.beablake.com/community/faq/what-is-community-based-ecotourism.html)

model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, results documented and made available in the project site	*Activity 33:* Set up and equip a tourism information office at Impfondo, or support an existing structure (with physical and technical resources) to be better equipped and functioning more effectively.	Activity report	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 34: Support the establishment of ecotourism pilot micro-projects to introduce best practices at Impfondo; as well as introduce and validate the packages of pilot micro-projects, criteria and procedures for selection partners with stakeholders (CBO/local farmers) for implementation of ecotourism pilot projects.	Report outlining micro-projects chosen and pilot communities Minutes of the validation process and participants	***By Q 4, Y 2***
	Activity 35: Select partners for implementation of the pilot ecotourism projects and support the implementation of the community based ecotourism enterprises.	Activity report	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 36: Set up independent technical and financial audit of the pilot micro-projects.	Independent technical & financial audits available that analyze effectiveness of project, including pilot project's social and environment impacts	***By Q 2, Y 2***
3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made	*Activity 37:* Identify sustainable income generating activities suitable for the Lac Tele landscape through participatory processes[187], and investigate optimum conditions to make them a success at local level (produce a report indicating potential flagship activities that can benefit from project support)	Technical report	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 38: Assess capacity needs and provide training to address capacity gaps on principles, methods and practices of cocoa and NTFP value chains as necessary		***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 39: Analyse and address production, technical, and marketing barriers to mainstreaming certified cocoa as well as NTFPs	Activity report	***By Q 2, Y 2***

[187] During the engagements supporting the development of this document, organic cocoa, ecotourism, and NTFP value chains were identified as potential income generating activities to be supported. Further engagements with communities during project implementation will be required to see if there are spin-off activities that can associate these with minimal or no extra cost. These will be added into the livelihood support mechanism portfolio.

available in the project site	*Activity 40:* Purchase and set up required processing plants for NTFP and cocoa value addition in local communities	Activity report	***By Q 3, Y 1***
	Activity 41: Prepare demand-side mechanisms to scale-up certified NTFPs and organic cocoa – certify, find markets, and link local producers to them	Monitoring/evaluation reports on pilot income-generating activities implemented	***By Q 4, Y 2***
3.1.3. Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation.	*Activity 42:* Assess and identify capacity needs (through inclusive and collaborative processes) on the identification of ecotourism potentials and market niches, the development of ecotourism business enterprises and value chains, and ecotourism best-practices	Technical report	***By Q 2, Y 1***
	Activity 43: Develop training packages and deliver training to local community organized structures	Training modules Questionnaires for assessment of training effectiveness.	***By Q 2, Y 4***
	Activity 44: Assess the impact of training in ecotourism business models and practice with attention to the impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups and report on training outcomes to relevant stakeholders	Post training assessment reports (based on questionnaires), List of trained persons. Elaborated indicators.	***By Q 3, Y 2***
Component 4: Engaging the private sector in conservation			
Outcome 4.1: Private sector adopt sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the integrity of peatland ecosystems			
4.1.1. Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem	*Activity 45:* Identify relevant potential beneficiaries of capacity building on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) targeting existing concessions conducted to protect the integrating of peatlands ecosystem as well as capacity needs	Activity report showing identified capacity needs Questionnaires for assessment of training effectiveness.	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 46: Based on the needs assessment, develop targeted capacity building program, and deliver it to the relevant beneficiaries and assess the impact of the training	Post training assessment reports (based on questionnaires), List of trained persons. Elaborated indicators.	***By Q 1, Y 4***
	Activity 47: Support the implementation of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in the project area	Activity report	***By Q 1, Y 3***

4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption	*Activity 48:* Identify local, provincial, and national capacity needs for effective management of resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem[188].	Activity report showing identified capacity needs Questionnaires	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 49: Based on identified capacity needs, formulate training programs incorporating best practices (including indigenous technical knowledge) and deliver training[189].	Training report	***By Q 2, Y 2***
	Activity 50: Assess the training outcomes and make training programs available to other regions with similar land degradation issues	Post training assessment reports (based on questionnaires), List of trained persons. Elaborated indicators. List of regional stakeholders shared	***By Q 2, Y 2***
4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site	*Activity 51:* Undertake a study to assess the effectives, strengths, and challenges of the legislative, administrative, and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions in the RoC, and develop a report for consultation and action targeting relevant local and national level stakeholders	Technical report	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 52: Support the revision of operational modalities of companies operating concessions based on findings of the study and consultations form relevant bodies and the adoption of these revisions into relevant legal structures and plans	Technical report on revised modalities and analysis of their effectiveness and appropriateness	***By Q 4, Y 3***
	Activity 53: Review and analyse of existing policies on private sector participation systems in use – identify existing structures on which the current project can build on if they exist, or propose viable models of private sector partnerships if they don't	Report on existing models and analysis of their effectiveness and appropriateness	***By Q 3, Y 1***
	Activity 54: Synthesize recommendations on incentives for private sector commitment to sustainable peatlands landscape management are identified and implemented – present these recommendations to relevant stakeholders and support their incorporation into relevant legal and policy frameworks	Report on recommendations	***By Q 3, Y 3***

[188] This should include gaps in the ability to reduce conflicts over peatland resources; considering traditional knowledge and resource governance systems to formulate conflict resolutions strategies; incorporate institutional best practice approach integrity of peatland ecosystem models

[189] The training should be professionally formulated, designed and presented to also serve as a reference guide for the incorporation of peatland resources management into higher and technical education systems in the RoC.

	Activity 55: Support the implementation of incentives for private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area	Activity report	***By Q 3, Y 3***
Component 5: Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation			
Outcome 5.1: Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.			
5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community – based peatlands and natural resources conservation	*Activity 56:* Develop a project portal on the project host's website to communicate project activities and outcomes	High quality web-portal for project integrated into ministry website. Links of the web-portal are placed on websites of related ministries and agencies[190].	***By Q 4, Y 1***
	Activity 57: Share the concise summary document that distils successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to support the development of transboundary initiatives for peatland restoration and conservation, as well as on IWT with relevant stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels	Documents shared	***By Q 2, Y 4***
	Activity 58: Develop a strategy for mainstreaming principles of adaptive peatland management and IWT into national and regional programs through knowledge management (KM); including: ▪ conducting a collaborative review of regional development programs related to peatland management and IWT to identify their strengths, lessons learned and concerns in relation to peatland management and IWT and to identify opportunities for integration of SLM lessons learned, best practices and guidelines ▪ working with regional program managers to develop peatland management and IWT criteria for eligibility of fundable activities ▪ conducting targeted peatland management and IWT training workshops for regional program staff, technical services, and NGOs; including training on the development of quality project proposals for peatland management and IWT projects	Action plan shared with relevant stakeholders	***By Q 3, Y 2***

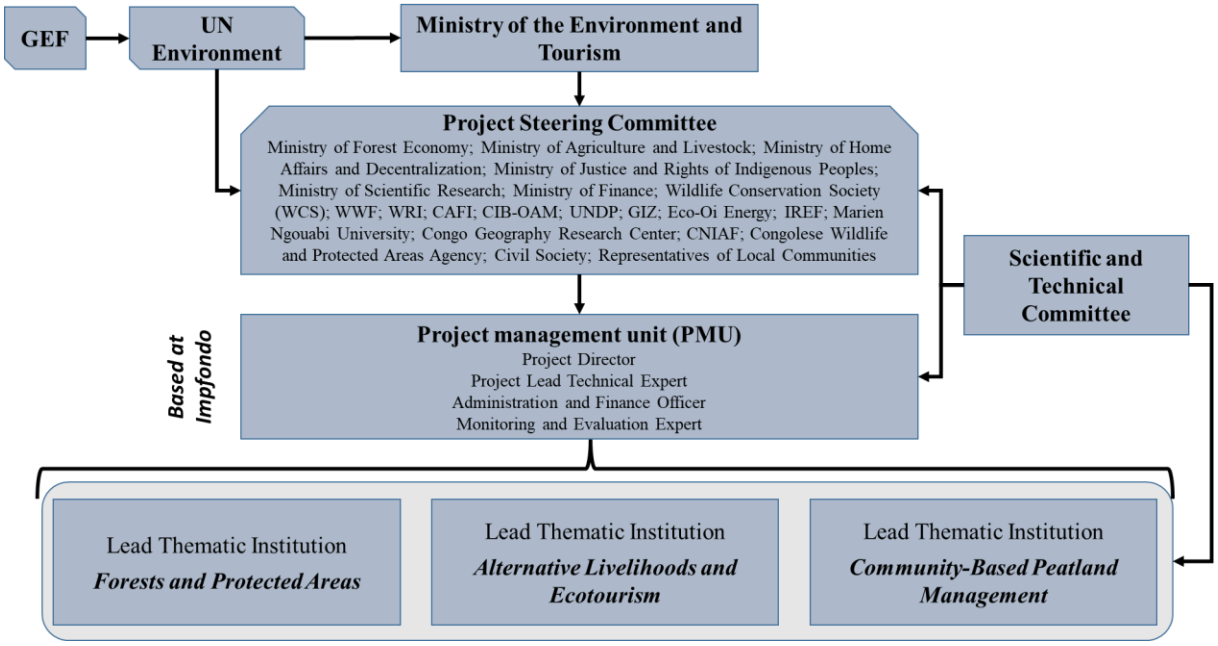
[190] Website showcases project activities and progress, project news and events and made available on key documentation and lessons learned.

	Activity 59: Undertake regular communication activities at all levels in order to disseminate/share project's progress and approaches: ▪ develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT rural radio communications programs targeting farmers and herders throughout the south ▪ develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT policy briefs per year targeting regional and provincial decision makers ▪ publish and disseminate peatland management and IWT newsletter (based on bi-annual peatland management and IWT reviews) targeting regional programs, NGOs, and communal, regional and provincial authorities and technical services	Records of the radio/TV reports. Copies of published articles Published newsletters Policy briefs	***By Q 4, Y 4***
5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations	*Activity 60:* Identify key stakeholders to participate in the exchanges and collaborate with these stakeholders in determining the content, structure and intended outcomes of an exchange visit. Also share relevant material to support learning, discovery, and knowledge exchanges during the exchange meeting.	Activity report	***By Q 4, Y 4***
	Activity 61: Organize exchange visits and document experience and lessons learned. Produce a report on these exchanges and share with relevant stakeholder, as well as undertake a follow-up to ensure that results from these exchange visits contribute to decision-making on issues of peatland sustainability and IWT where appropriate.	Report on impact of practices. Minutes of the workshop.	***By Q 4, Y 4***

Appendix 7: Costed M&E plan

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget from GEF	Budget co-finance	Time Frame
Inception Meeting	Project Management Unit (PMU) UNEP	20,000	30,000	Within 2 months of project start-up
Inception Report	PMU	0	3,000	1 month after project inception meeting
Measurement of project indicators (outcome, progress and performance indicators, GEF tracking tools) at national and global level	Project Lead Technical Expert PMU/ Project team	54,005	25,000	Outcome indicators: start, mid and end of project Progress/perform. Indicators: annually
Semi-annual Progress/ Operational Reports to UNEP	Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners	0	2,000	Within 1 month of the end of reporting period i.e. on or before 31 January and 31 July
Project Steering Committee meetings	Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP	80,000	120,000	Once a year minimum
Reports of PSC meetings	Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners	0	2,000	Annually
PIR	Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP	0	2,000	Annually, part of reporting routine
Monitoring visits to field sites	Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP	55,000	55,000	As appropriate
Middle Term Review	UNEP TM/ UNEP Evaluation Office PMU	40,000	50,000	After 2 years of implementation
Terminal Evaluation	UNEP TM/ UNEP Evaluation Office PMU	50,000	125,000	Within 6 months of end of project implementation
Audit	PMU		50000	Annually
Project Final Report	Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners	0	2,000	Within 2 months of the project completion date
Co-financing report	Project Lead Technical Expert and input from other co-financiers	0	2,000	Within 1 month of the PIR reporting period, i.e. on or before 31 July
Publication of Lessons Learnt and other project documents	Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners		25,000	Annually, part of Semi-annual reports & Project Final Report
Total M&E Plan Budget		300,000	494,000	

Appendix 10: Decision-making flowchart and organizational chart



Appendix 11: Terms of Reference

Project Director

Duties and responsibilities

- Supervise and coordinate the production of project outputs to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost as outlined in the project document.
- Mobilize all project inputs in accordance with procedures for nationally implemented projects.
- Supervise, guide and coordinate the work of the Project Implementation Unit (PMU), all project staff, consultants and activity/sub-project contractors.
- In close liaison with the Project Lead Technical Expert, prepare and revise project work and financial plans.
- Liaise with relevant government agencies, and all implementing partners for effective coordination of all project activities.
- Oversee and ensure timely submission of the Inception Report, Combined Project Implementation Review/Annual Project Report (PIR/APR), quarterly technical reports, quarterly financial reports, and other reports as may be required by UN Environment/UNEP and other oversight agencies.
- Disseminate project reports and respond to queries from stakeholders.
- Report progress of project to the PSC.
- Coordinate activities closely with related national projects under the Congo IP in which this project is implemented, as well as oversee the exchange and sharing of experiences and lessons learned with these and other relevant conservation and sustainable development projects nationally and internationally.
- Assist relevant government agencies and implementing partners with development of essential skills through training workshops and on the job training, thereby upgrading their institutional capabilities.
- Carry out regular, announced and unannounced inspections of all sites and activities.

Qualifications

- A university degree in Environmental Management; a post-graduate degree is preferred
- At least 10 years of experience in natural resource planning and management
- Prior experience in a senior management role
- Working experience with the project stakeholder institutions and agencies
- Ability to effectively coordinate a multi-stakeholder project
- Ability to administer budgets, lead a team, train and work effectively with counterpart staff at all levels, and interact effectively with all groups involved in the project
- Excellent communication skills and effective interpersonal and negotiation skills, proven through successful interactions with all levels of stakeholder groups, including senior government officials, business executives and local people/communities
- Strong writing, presentation and reporting skills

- Strong computer skills
- A good knowledge of French and a working knowledge of English is a requirement

Project Lead Technical Expert/International Technical Adviser

Duties and Responsibilities

- Support project execution as required
- Advising the Project Director on the development of project stakeholder outreach and engagement strategies; supporting the Project Director with operationalizing the strategy and on-going monitoring of its performance.
- Supporting in the organization of required stakeholder (including community) meetings and other participatory consultations.
- Working closely with the Project Director, various ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGO), Community-Based Organizations (CBO) and other partners, for stakeholder participation in the design, implementation and operation of detailed project activities.
- Assessing implementation of the stakeholders including communities' participation strategy at each project site and assisting in preparation of reports with estimates of the stakeholders' overall contribution, including data on the cost of co-financing
- Monitor partnership agreements undertaken by the project, manage the relevant risk mitigation strategy, and report directly to the PSC including on an ad hoc basis as required
- Advising on the design and supporting the execution of beneficiary assessments to be conducted.
- Provide clearance and approval of any project commitment and act as cosignatory of checks
- Performing other related duties as may be assigned by the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism but which are in line with project approved objectives and outputs

Qualifications and Skills

- At least Master's degree related to environment/biodiversity or in sociology, rural development, or another closely related field.
- Previous experience of project coordination, ideally some exposure to GEF.
- Strong knowledge of the stakeholder context of the project, developed through a track record of related work (e.g. within government or NGOs).
- Strong understanding of primary industries and extractive sectors, with track record of working constructively with private sector partners
- Five years' relevant project experience working with rural communities and in the application of participatory methods.
- Good written and oral communication skills and proficient computer skills.
- Native French fluency, as well as fluency in English. Facility with one or more of the vernacular languages of the project sites would be preferred.

Monitoring and Evaluation Expert - Regional

The M&E Expert is responsible for setting up/updating and managing the M&E framework of the Project, and is expected to contribute to the four-year project level monitoring and evaluation. The functions of the M&E Expert will include (i) Develop and implement a system for results-based monitoring and evaluation for tracking project results and performance. (ii) Collection and analysis of data on key project inputs and their results and seek synergies with the government monitoring system. (iii) Facilitation of knowledge sharing with relevant stakeholders and partners.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop a system/mechanism of tracking project results and performance;
- Identify data sets to be collected in line with the project outcome and output indicators;
- Identify the data collection sources (primary/secondary) and methods (e.g. user satisfaction surveys, public perception surveys, observations, focus group discussions, etc.) and their frequency;
- Develop relevant questionnaires, sampling and analytical approaches for data collection;
- Maintain database and filing; as well as IT tools for data collection and tracking performance;
- Develop a system/mechanism of analysing evidence to inform management decision-making;
- Provide inputs to the project annual and quarterly planning;
- Provide cost estimations of data collection/monitoring activities;
- Produce regular monitoring reports to feed into quarterly, annual project reports and the project final report;
- Undertake analyses of project effects on institutional capacity development and sustainability;
- Capture and document lessons learnt during project monitoring – a lessons learnt log can be used in this regard
- Mainstream gender aspects in the project M&E processes and reporting;
- Assist in undertaking of independent project and outcome evaluations;
- Assist and provide inputs to UNEP regional level monitoring and evaluation;
- Support partnerships activities at project level;
- Be familiar with the activities of other development projects in the sector/area, establish contact and keep up-to date with their work;
- Create and maintain partnerships with local institutions;
- Regular exchange of information/experience with other projects, cross-learning and sharing results and good practices;
- Participation in regular internal meetings;
- Participation in training events, communities of practice, codifying and sharing knowledge;
- Facilitation and organization of training for project staff to enable them to perform at the required level.

Key competencies

- Experience in supporting a Ministry of Environment on a GEF project (development or implementation) in a country of the Congo Basin region, especially in the Republic of Congo.
- Ability to lead strategic planning, results-based management and reporting
- Ability to lead formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects
- Ability to implement new systems and affect staff behavioural change
- Excellent knowledge of Results Management Guide and Toolkit
- UN experience, especially in managing or supporting project monitoring on sustainable management of tropical peatlands and natural resources
- Builds strong relationships with clients, focuses on impact and result for the client and responds positively to feedback
- Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude
- Demonstrates good oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrates openness to change and ability to manage complexities
- Bachelor degree in law, public administration and management relevant field - Master's degree in relevant field will be an asset
- Specialized training in Project Management, monitoring and evaluation, social statistics is an asset
- Fluent in both English and French (spoken and written)

Communication and awareness raising Expert – National

- In charge of implementation of the project Communication and awareness raising Strategy
- Lead development of Communication and knowledge Management tools and products
- Support the Project Director for the project publication
- Liaise with media and communication enterprise for the project communication
- Support any other activity related to communication, awareness raising and Knowledge Management

Finance and Administrative Officer - National

The Financial Officer provides project administration and financial support to the Project Management Unit. Specific tasks would include:

Provision of administrative services:

- Set up and maintain project files
- Collect project related information data
- Update plans
- Support the quality review process
- Support Project Steering Committee meetings

- Take lead in the project procurement of equipment and services

Project documentation management:

- Administer project revision control
- Establish document control procedures
- Compile, copy and distribute all project reports
- Lead development and respect of project financial and administrative procedures manual

Financial Management, Monitoring and Reporting:

- Assist in the financial management tasks under the responsibility of the Project Lead Technical Expert
- Provide support in the use of UNEP templates for financial monitoring and reporting
- Assisting in annual/periodic action plans development and implementation
- Ensure project financial monitoring and utilization according to the approved project activities

Others: Execute any other activities in relation to his/her function as requested by Project Director or through UNEP

Qualifications and Skills

- University degree in accounting, finance or related field;
- Solid experience of budgeting, planning and reporting on a donor-funded project. Ideally some exposure to GEF and/or UNEP.
- Knowledge in administrative and accounting procedures of the Government
- Good computer skills in common word processing (MS Word), spreadsheet (MS Excel), and accounting software.
- Fluency in French and English, and excellent command of at least one local languages.

Scientific and Technical Committee

Role and Responsibilities of the Scientific and Technical Committee

The Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) is the scientific and technical advisory and support body of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Its role consists in assisting the PSC in its supervision mission of Project activities by providing it with the necessary scientific and technical backing. STC will also play an advisory scientific and technical role for the RPMU and the national components on major issues relating to the implementation of the Project or as requested by the Congo IP manager, but shall not substitute for either RPMU or the technical staff of the Project. The members of the STC shall be senior scientists and technicians, including from relevant higher education and research institutions, governmental research agencies, and from technical non-governmental organizations. The STC may also call on other resource persons to consider issues for which STC estimates it does not have the necessary skills. The STC shall in particular be responsible for:

- Providing input on the scientific and technical aspects of the Project implementation, including all reports and the annual work plans prepared by the PMU.
- Providing technical notes at the request of PSC and PMU.

Organization and functioning

- The STC shall meet prior to each PSC meeting and also at the request of either the Chairperson of
- PSC or the Regional Coordinator.
- The Chairperson of STC shall be a person who has been elected by the members of the Committee.
- The STC shall internally decide on its organization and internal functioning.
- The views of STC shall be transmitted to the PSC in the form of technical notes.
- The STC shall write an annual report at the end of each activity year.

Terms of Reference Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee will:

- Ensure that there is coherent project organization at both the National, Provincial and District levels
- Following agreement, set tolerances in the Annual Work Plans and other plans as required with the Project Lead Technical Expert, with the involvement of the Project Director (as necessary)
- Monitor and control the progress of the project activities at a strategic level considering the changes influenced by the project on any baseline investments
- Ensure that risks are being tracked and mitigated as effectively as possible
- Organize Project Steering Committee meetings, to be chaired by the Project Director, on a regular basis to be defined by the Board in agreement with the Project Director and Project Lead Technical Expert. Normally these meetings will take place quarterly.
- Review and assess progress towards achieving the outputs is consistent from a project supplier perspective
- Promote and maintain focus to deliver the outputs from the project
- Ensure that the resources from the project supplier are readily available
- Arbitrate on, and ensure resolution of any supplier priority or resource conflicts
- Ensure that the expected project outputs and related activities of the project remains consistent with the perspective of project beneficiaries
- Be informed of meetings relevant to overall Congo IP implementation, including any regional activities conducted in partnership
- Facilitate national policy and institutional changes necessary to engender success in project activities.
- Annually review project progress and make Coordinatorial and financial recommendations as appropriate, including recruitment for the Project Management Unit, review and approval of annual reports, budgets and workplans.

Appendix 12: Co-financing commitment letters from project partners

N° 00175/CD/CN/REPALEAC/20 Brazzaville, le 16 DEC 2020

Le coordonnateur National du Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Communautés Locales pour le Developpement Durable et la Gestion des Ecosystèmes des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale(REPALEAC) Congo.

A

Madame la Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement

A

BRAZZAVILLE

bjet : Réponse de la lettre n°2217/MTE-CAB-20.

O

Madame la Ministre,

Nous accusons réception de votre correspondance ci-haut référencié, relative au cofinancement du projet intitulé ***« Conservation Communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières et promotion de l'éco tourisme dans le paysage du Lac Télé de la république du Congo ».***

En réponse je vous envoie notre « Lettre de Cofinancement » signée.

Veuillez- Croire ***Madame la Ministre****, en l'expression de nos sentiments de profond respect.*

Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement
SECRETARIAT CENTRAL
COURRIER ARRIVEE
Le: 21 DEC 2020
Enregistré S/N°: 3510

Parfait DIHOUKAMBA

Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Communautés Locales pour le Développement Durable et la Gestion des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (REPALEAC-CONGO).Siège Social : 175, Rue Soweto, Centre-Ville ***BRAZZAVILLE*** *(Derrière la D.E.C-Générale). Arrondissement I Makélékélé.*
Contact (+242) 068996586(WhatsApp) / 066694204 / 066274190. E-mail : repaleaccongo17@gmail.com / pdihoukamba@gmail.com .
REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO

Lettre de Cofinancement

A: Kelly West, PhD
Gestionnaire de programme senior et
Coordonnateur du Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial
Division des Services Généraux
ONU Environnement

Objet: Lettre de Cofinancement pour le projet « **Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL** ».

En ma qualité de Coordonnateur National du Réseau des communautés autochtones et locales pour la gestion des écosystèmes forestiers en Afrique centrale (REPALEAC) Congo, j'accueille avec une grande satisfaction le développement du projet « **Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL** » financé par le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) à travers le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) comme Agence du FEM et dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du Programme a Impact sur la Gestion Durable des Paysages du Bassin du Congo.

Le projet en développement cadre bien avec les objectifs du REPALEAC et il vient renforcer les nombreuses initiatives en cours. Ces initiatives sont particulièrement le renforcement des capacités des organisations des populations autochtones et leur implication effective dans la gestion des ressources naturelles. Le REPALEAC s'est associée à diverses organisations internationales pour mener de nombreuses activités visant la promotion du bien-être des populations autochtones, notamment dans le cadre du CACOREDD+ , la plateforme visant à coordonner l'engagement des organisations de la société civile et les groupes de populations autochtones dans le processus REDD +.

Votre projet en développement offre une grande opportunité de synergie et de complémentarité avec les activités du REPALEAC et du CACOREDD+ ; qui contribueront à l'ensemble du projet et plus particulièrement à la Composante 1 visant à soutenir le développement et la mise en œuvre des plans de gestion des terres pour les aires protégées dans le paysage du Lac Télé en mettant l'accent sur la garantie et la formalisation de la participation communautaire, et la Composante 2: Gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles

Eu égard de ce qui précède, j'annonce un cofinancement de $.....158.....million de dollar pour votre projet. Ce montant de $.....158.....million de dollar représente les investissements de nos projets cités ci-dessus dans le cadre de nos activités en République du Congo.

La présente lettre de cofinancement est élaborée avec l'entendement que sa signature ne signifie en aucun cas un engagement de notre part à fournier des ressources financières directes à votre projet.

Fait à Brazzaville, le 16/12/2020

REPALEAC-CONGO
1 COORDINATEUR NATIONAL
REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO

Le Coordonnateur

Parfait MOUKAMBA

Co-financing Letter

To : Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Object : Co-funding letter for the project " **Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL**".

In my capacity as National Coordinator of the Network of Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC), Congo, I welcome with great satisfaction the development of the project: " Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL", funded by the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), serving as the GEF Agency and as part of the implementation of the Congo Basin sustainable landscapes Impact Program.

The project in development fits well with the objectives of the REPALEAC and it strengthens several ongoing initiatives.These Initiatives are, in particular, the strengthening of the capacities of organizations of indigenous populations and their effective involvement in the management of natural resources. REPALEAC has joined forces with various international organizations to carry out numerous activities aimed at promoting the well-being of indigenous populations, notably within the framework of CACOREDD +, the platform aiming to coordinate the commitments of civil society and groups of indigenous populations in the REDD + process.

Your project under development offers a great opportunity for synergy and complementarity with the REPALEAC and CACOREDD+ activities, which will contribute to the overall project and more particularly to Component 1 aimed at supporting the development and implementation of land management plans for protected areas in the Lac Télé landscape with an emphasis on ensuring and formalizing community participation, and Component 2: on Community management of natural resources.
In view of the above, I am announcing a co-funding of $ 15 million dollars for your project. This amount of $ 15 million represents the investments of our projects listed above as part of our activities in the Republic of Congo

This co-funding letter is prepared with the understanding that signing it does not in any way signify a commitment on our part to provide direct financial resources to your project.

Done at …Brazzaville……., On December 16th…… 2020

The Coordinator
Parfait DHOUKAMBA

MINISTERE DU TOURISME
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

CABINET

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO
Unité * Travail * Progrès

Brazzaville, le 10 DEC 2020

N° 2237 /MTE-CAB.20

Dossier suivi par :

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La Ministre

A

Madame **Kelly West,**
Coordonnatrice du Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial,
Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, PO Box 30552,00100 Nairobi, Kenya,
Email : Kelly.West@UNEP.ORG/ Kelly.west@un.org

- Nairobi - KENYA

Objet : **Lettre de cofinancement entrant dans le cadre du projet de mise en œuvre de la Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL.**

Madame la Coordonnatrice,

Dans le cadre de l'exécution du projet visant la mise en œuvre de la Conservation communautaire intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du lac Télé, en République du Congo, le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement marque son accord pour son cofinancement.

A cet effet, j'ai le plaisir de confirmer que les différents versements de la contrepartie pour l'exécution du projet, évalués à **22,706,000** USD, seront effectués au titre des exercices budgétaires, dans la durée du projet.

Cette initiative correspond aux priorités et aux engagements souscrits par le Gouvernement congolais dans le cadre de l'Initiative Mondiale sur les tourbières.

Veuillez agréer, **Madame la Coordonnatrice,** l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. /-

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO * MINISTERE DU TOURISME ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT * La Ministre

Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT. -

Co-financing Letter

To : Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Object : Co-funding letter for the project " **Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL**".

Madam Coordinator

As part of the execution of the project “integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL", the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment agrees for its co-financing.

To this end, I am pleased to confirm that the various disbursements of the counterpart for the execution of the project, estimated at 22, 706,000 US dollars, will be made under the budget year’s period, during the duration of the project.

This initiative corresponds to priorities and commitments made by the Congolese government within the framework of the Global Peatlands Initiative.

Yours sincerely

Done at …Brazzaville……., On December 10th…… 2020

The Minister of Tourism and Environment
Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT

14 JAN 2021
0127

PNUD

N/Réf. : Pro. Env./001/2021/01

V/Réf. : N°2218/MTE-CAB.20

Brazzaville, le 13 Janvier 2021

Objet : Demande de lettre de cofinancement

Monsieur le Gestionnaire de programme,

Le PNUD en République du Congo exprime son intérêt et son engagement à participer au projet PNUE-FEM « *Conservation communautaire intégrée des tourbières et promotion de l'écotourisme dans le paysage du lac télé de la République du Congo* » ; financé par le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM), dans le cadre de sa septième phase opérationnelle.

A ce titre, compte tenu de la valeur ajoutée de ce projet à la gestion durable de la biodiversité et à la préservation de l'environnement, notamment dans la partie Congolaise du Paysage Lac-Télé, Lac Tumba, abritant les sites d'intervention du PNUD, je voudrais vous assurer du soutien du PNUD au dit projet à travers l'appui au développement des micro-projets de réduction de la pauvreté. Les activités de ce projet permettront également de baisser la pression sur la biodiversité, pour la promotion de l'écotourisme et la valorisation des produits forestiers non ligneux.

La contribution du PNUD sous forme de cofinancement à travers ses projets en cours et dont les objectifs sont complémentaires au présent est évalué à cinq cent cinquante mille dollars (550 000) USD.

Vous en souhaitant bonne réception, je vous prie de croire Monsieur le Gestionnaire de programme l'assurance de notre disponibilité à renforcer notre partenariat avec le PNUE et pour un appui conjoint efficace aux efforts de développement du Gouvernement de la république du Congo.

Maleye Diop
Représentant Résident

Monsieur Kelly WEST
Gestionnaire de programme senior et
Coordonnateur du Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial
Division des Services Généraux du PNUE
Nairobi, République du Kenya

Cc : Madame Arlette Soudan Nonault
Ministre du Tourisme et l'Environnement
Poin Focal Politique GEF
République du Congo

Co-financing Letter

To : Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Object : Request for Co-funding letter

UNDP in the Republic of Congo expresses its interest and commitment to participate in the UNEP-GEF project**: "Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL**", funded by the Global Environment Facility, as part of the implementation of its 7th operational phase.

As such, given the added value of this project for the sustainable management of biodiversity and the preservation of the environment, particularly in the Congolese part of the Lac tele Lac Tumba landscape, which houses UNDP intervention sites, I would like to assure you of UNDP's support for the said project through support for the development of poverty reduction micro-projects. The activities of this project will also reduce the pressure on biodiversity through the promotion of ecotourism and the valuation of non-timber forest products.

UNDP' contribution in the form of cash co-financing through its ongoing projects and whose objectives are complementary to this project is estimated at Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand US dollars: USD 550,000.

Wishing you good reception, we would like to assure you of our readiness to strengthen our partnership with UNEP for effective joint support to the development efforts of the government of the Republic of Congo.

Done at …Brazzaville……., On January 13th …… 2021

Resident Representative
Maleye DIOP

Wildlife Conservation Society
Programme Congo
(WCS-Congo)

B.P. 14537
Brazzaville, République du Congo
Téléphone 00242 05747 21 21
Email:wcscongobrazza@wcs.org

International Programs
2300 Southern Blvd
Bronx, NY 10460
Tel: 718–2201387

N°/réf : 559/ RM/WCS-2020

A

Kelly WEST, PhD
Gestionnaire du programme senior et
Coordonnateur du Fonds pour
l'Environnement Mondial
Division des Services Généraux
ONU Environnement

Objet : Lettre de Cofinancement pour le projet **« Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes des tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo-ICOBACPE/PELATEL ».**

En ma qualité de Directeur pays de Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) en République du Congo, j'accueille avec une grande satisfaction le développement du projet **« Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes des tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo-ICOBACPE/PELATEL »** finance par le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) à travers le programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) comme agence du FEM et dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du programme a Impact sur la Gestion Durable des Paysages du Bassin du Congo.

Le projet en développement cadre bien avec les objectifs de la Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) en République du Congo et il vient renforcer les nombreux projets et initiatives en matière de conservation de ressources naturelles. Ainsi, la Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) en République du Congo met en œuvre les activités et projet comme par exemple :

1- Gestion de la réserve communautaire du Lac Télé pour un montant de **01 million dollars** pour la période allant de 2021 à 2024 avec pour objectif la gestion durable des ressources naturelles de la réserve communautaire.

2- Le Projet de gestion des écosystèmes en périphérie du Parc National de Nouabalé Ndoki (PROGEPP) finance à hauteur de **1,4 million dollars** pour la période allant du 2021 au 2024 avec pour objectif de soutenir la gestion de la faune dans les

trois concessions forestières certifiées du Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Pokola, Loundoungou et Kabo

3- Elaboration d'une stratégie pour évaluer et promouvoir le potentiel du tourisme communautaire du Lac Télé à partir de 2021.

Votre projet en développement offre une grande opportunité de synergie et de complémentarité avec les projets et initiatives ci-dessus. Nos projets et initiatives vont contribuer particulièrement à la Composante 1 sur la gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles et à la Composante 3 sur la diversification des sources de revenus des communautés, par ex. par la promotion de l'écotourisme, de votre projet, la Composante 2 relative à la Gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles, la Composante 3 sur la Diversification des sources de revenus des communautés, par ex. par la promotion de l'écotourisme et la Composante 4 visant à Impliquer le secteur privé dans la conservation .

Eu égard de ce qui précède, j'annonce un cofinancement de **$ 2,4 millions** de dollar pour votre projet. Ce montant de **$ 2,4 millions** de dollar représente les investissements de nos projets cites ci-dessus dans le cadre de nos activités en République du Congo.

La présente lettre de cofinancement est élaborée avec l'entendement que sa signature ne signifie en aucun cas un engagement de notre part à fournir des ressources financières directes à votre projet.

Fait à Brazzaville, le ..... 21 DEC 2020 2020

Le Directeur du Programme

Richard MALONGA

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY
WCS CONGO
CONGO PROGRAM

Co-financing Letter

To : Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Object : Co-funding letter for the project " **Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL**".

In my capacity as Country Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in the Republic of Congo, I welcome with great satisfaction the development of the new initiative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in support of the implementation of the 7th phase of the Global Environment Facility through the Congo Basin Sustainable Landscape Impact Program and his national project mentioned above, for which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the GEF Agency.

The project in development fits well with the objectives of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in the Republic of Congo and it strengthens several ongoing projects and initiatives in the conservation of natural resources. Thus, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in the Republic of Congo is implementing activities and projects such as:

1. Management of the Lac Télé community reserve for an amount of 01 million Dollars for the period from …2021… to …2024…. With the objective of sustainable management of natural resources of the community reserve
2. Management of ecosystems on the outskirts of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (PROGEPP) funded up to …1.4 millions…. dollars for the period from ……2021… to …2024 .with the aim of supporting wildlife management in the three Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified forest concessions Pokola, Loundoungou and Kabo
3. Development of a strategy to assess and promote the potential of community tourism at Lac Télé as from 2021

Your project under development offers a great opportunity for synergy and complementarity with the activities of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); which will contribute to several project components and more particularly to Component 1 aimed at supporting the development and implementation of land management plans for protected areas in the Lac Télé landscape with an emphasis on ensuring and formalizing community participation, Component 2: on Community management of natural resources and Component 3 on the Diversification of sources of income for communities, e.g. by promoting ecotourism.
In view of the above, I am announcing a co-funding of $ 2.4 million dollars for your project. This amount of $ 2.4 million represents the cash investments of our projects listed above as part of our activities in the Republic of Congo

This co-funding letter is prepared with the understanding that signing it does not in any way signify a commitment on our part to provide direct financial resources to your project.

Done at …Brazzaville…….., On December 11th…… 2020

The Country Director
Richard Malonga

WWF Gabon
Programme Congo
Immeuble MTN
2 avenues de la base
Brazzaville, Congo

Tel: +242 06 968 86 18
Email: csepulcre@wwf.panda.org
Website: www.panda.org

WWF together possible.

Terrence EKANJE
Directeur National a.i.
WWF Gabon – Programme Congo

A

Kelly West, PhD
Gestionnaire de Programme Senior et
Coordonnateur du Fonds Mondial pour l'Environnement
Division des Services Spéciaux

N/Réf : WWF-GCPO/FY21/168/GM/TE

Objet : Lettre de Cofinancement pour le projet **Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo-ICOBACPE / PELATEL.**

En ma qualité de Directeur du programme Afrique Centrale du WWF, j'accueille avec une grande satisfaction le développement du projet Conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo-ICOBACPE / PELATEL financé Fonds Mondial pour l'Environnement (FME) à travers le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) comme Agence du FME et dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du Programme à Impact sur la Gestion Durable des Paysages du Bassin du Congo.

Le projet en développement cadre bien avec les objectifs du Programme Afrique Centrale du WWF en République du Congo et il vient renforcer les activités du projet en cours. Ces activités sont particulièrement liées à la gestion durable des ressources naturelles, à la protection de la biodiversité, à la lutte contre le braconnage etc., avec des financements de divers bailleurs de fonds. Aussi, en République du Congo, le Programme Afrique centrale du WWF travaille sur les projets suivants :

1. La cogestion du Parc National de Ntokou-Pikounda avec le Ministère de l'Economie Forestière avec pour objectif la conservation et de gestion responsable des ressources naturelles, l'application de la loi faunique et la lutte contre le commerce illicite des espèces de la faune et de la flore sauvages, l'appui au développement communautaire, la conservation inclusive.

2. La gestion de l'interzone Congo du Trinational Dja- Odzala- Minkébé (TRIDOM) (ETIC) avec le Ministère de l'Economie Forestière avec pour objectif la conservation et la gestion durable des ressources naturelles de l'ensemble de l'interzone, l'application de la loi faunique et la lutte contre le

commerce illicite des espèces de la faune et de la flore sauvages, l'appui au développement communautaire, la conservation inclusive.

Votre projet en développement offre une grande opportunité de synergie et de complémentarité avec les projets ci-dessus. Nos projets vont contribuer particulièrement à la Composante 1 visant à soutenir le développement et la mise en œuvre des plans de gestion des terres pour les aires protégées dans le paysage du Lac Télé en mettant l'accent sur la garantie et la formalisation de la participation , la composante 2 sur la gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles et la composante 3 sur la diversification des sources de revenus des communautés, par ex. par la promotion de l'écotourisme, de votre projet.

Eu égard de ce qui précède, j'annonce un cofinancement de **$1.6 millions de dollars** pour votre projet. Ce montant de **$1.6 millions** de dollar représente les investissements de nos projets cités ci-dessus dans le cadre de nos activités en République du Congo.

La présente lettre de cofinancement est élaborée avec l'entendement que sa signature ne signifie en aucun cas un engagement de notre part à fournir des ressources financières directes à votre projet.

Fait à LBV le 14 december 2020

Terrence EKANJE
Directeur National a.i
WWF Gabon- Programme Congo

Co-financing Letter

To : Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Object : Co-funding letter for the project " **Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL**".

In my capacity as Director of the WWF Central Africa program, I welcome with great satisfaction the development of the project: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL, funded by the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), serving as the GEF Agency and as part of the implementation of the Congo Basin sustainable landscapes Impact Program.

The project in development fits well with the objectives of WWF Central Africa Program in the Republic of Congo and it will strengthens several ongoing activities such as those linked to the sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity protection, fight against poaching etc. - with are funded by various donors. Thus, in the Republic of the Congo, the WWF Central Africa Program is working on the following projects:

1. Co-management of the Ntokou-Pikorinda National Park with the Ministry of Forestry Economy with the objective to support the conservation and responsible management of natural resources, the application of the wildlife law and the fight against the illicit trade in species of wild fauna and flora, support to community development, inclusive conservation;
2. The management of the Congo interzone of the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé trinational (TRIDOM) (ETfC) with the Ministry of Forestry Economy with the objective to support the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources of the entire interzone, the application of wildlife law and the fight against the illicit trade in species of wild fauna and flora, support for community development, inclusive conservation;

Your project under development offers a great opportunity for synergy and complementarity with the activities outlined above, and will contribute more particularly to Component 1 aimed at supporting the development and implementation of land management plans for protected areas in the Lac Télé landscape with an emphasis on ensuring and formalizing community participation, Component 2: on Community management of natural resources and Component 3 on the Diversification of sources of income for communities, e.g. by promoting ecotourism.

In view of the above, I am announcing a co-funding of **$1.6 million dollars** for your project. This amount represents the cash investments of our projects listed above as part of our activities in the Republic of Congo.

This co-funding letter is prepared with the understanding that signing it does not in any way signify a commitment on our part to provide direct financial resources to your project.

Done at …Libreville……., On December 14th…… 2020

The Country Director
Terrence Ekanje

Appendix 13: Endorsement letters of GEF National Focal Points

MINISTERE DU TOURISME
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

CABINET

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO
Unité- Travail- Progrès

N° 0726 /MTE-CAB.19

Brazzaville, le 04 AVR 2019

To:

Kelly West, PhD
Senior Programme Manager &
Global Environment Facility Coordinator
Corporate Services Division
UN Environment

Subject: Endorsement for the project: **"Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL"**

In my capacity as GEF Operational Focal Point for Republic of Congo, I confirm that the above project proposal (a) is in accordance with my government's national priorities and our commitment to the relevant global environmental conventions; and (b) was discussed with relevant stakeholders, including the global environmental convention focal points.

I am pleased to endorse the preparation of the above project proposal with the support of the GEF Agency(ies) listed below. If approved, the proposal will be prepared and implemented by The Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) with technical, financial and administrative support of UNDP Brazzaville Office and WCS Congo[1]. I request the GEF Agency(ies) to provide a copy of the project document before it is submitted to the GEF Secretariat for CEO endorsement.

The total financing (from GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF) being requested for this project is US$ 6811050, inclusive of project preparation grant (PPG), if any, and Agency fees for project cycle management services associated with the total GEF grant. The financing requested for Republic of Congo is detailed in the table below.

Source of Funds	GEF Agency	Focal Area	Amount (in US$)			
			Project Preparation	Project	Fee	Total
GEF TF	UNEP	Biodiversity	51,401	2,282,544	210055	2,544,000
GEF TF	UNEP	Land Degradation	20,144	894,535	82321	997,000
GEF TF	UNEP	Climate Change	20,198	896,958	82544	999,700
GEF TF	UNEP	Multifocal Area	45,872	2,037,018	187460	2,270,350
Total GEF Resources			137,615	6,111,055	562380	6,811,050

[1] According to the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed by the MTE and UNDP and WCS;

[Where the source of funding is GEF Trust Fund only (i.e. excluding LDCF, SCCF) and the focal area falls under the STAR model, include the following:

I consent to the utilization of Republic of Congo's allocations in GEF-7 as defined in the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).]

Sincerely,

Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT,
Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement
Point Focal Politique et Opérationnel FEM
Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Copy to: Republic of Congo Convention Focal Point for UNFCCC
Republic of Congo Convention Focal Point for UNCBD
Republic of Congo Convention Focal Point for UNCCD

Appendix 16: Linkage between the UNEP/GEF GEF Regional Project - Child Project RoC – Child Project DRC - IKI

Activity	GEF regional project (RP)	GEF child project RoC	GEF child project DRC	IKI	Remarks
Integrated land-use plans	To provide land use planning methodology through a consultative process and other land use planning tools made available to support national child projects	There is clear link with the LUP mmethodology and other tools for land use planning to be made available to Child Project to develop ILUMP.	There is clear link with the LUP mmethodology and other tools for land use planning to be made available to Child Project to develop ILUMP.	Management plan to be developed for the Central Peatlands	- For GEF RoC Lac Tele: LUP to be developed for selected districts (not yet selected) - For IKI: The management plan to be developed for the Central Peatlands should be coordinated with GEF RoC, and RP in terms of methodology, geographical focus and economy of scale
	Endorsement of free, prior informed consent documents for ILUMPs by IPLCs Assessment of land tenure in IPLC areas covered by ILUMPs Advocacy materials for recognition of land tenure rights and role of IPLCs on SFM	Aligned with outcome 1.1. on adopting national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights	REPALEAC /DRC to be involved in the Systematic implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	No mention of REPALEAC. However, IKI to be involved in ILUMPs processes which required FPIC and REPALEAC	RP to ensure its support to REPALEAC on FPIC, land tenure and advocacy is coordinated with decentralized structure of REPALEAC in DRC and RoC as well as with IKI Project

Mainstreaming Natural Capital (NC) in Land Management	RP to provide Child Project: protocols and Training for Ecosystem services and natural capital assessment and integration into ILUMPs.	NC Assessment (NCA) targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape to be conducted to collect data to inform ILUMPs for selected districts - Collaboration with RP for Protocols and Training articulated	DRC will collaborate with the RP on Training and protocols for integration of ecosystem services NCA in ILUMPs	Ecosystem valuation to be conducted, and peatland-friendly private sector solutions and investment opportunities identified	IKI: It is suggested that IKI builds on NCA protocols developed by the RP, and collaborate with RoC and DRC Child Projects RoC and DRC Child projects: NCA seems to be focusing on terrestrial assets (PAs, surrounding landscape) and to some extend to the Blue/Terrestrial assets; Complementarity between GEF projects and IKI project can be enhanced here through adopting: (i) same protocols for NCA, (ii) an approach whereby GEF and IKI projects focusses either on specific Geographic areas of the landscape, or the GEF Projects focusses on Terrestrial assets and IKI on Blue assets.
Peatlands Research	Downscaled climate models including scenario planning developed for and applied to the priority landscapes Species and habitat suitability analysis modelling prepared and made available with the objective to	Assessment of the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands Develop an information management and monitoring system on peatland	For DRC: CRREBaC will be the main go-to resource for scientific grounding of project outputs. It will among other things: (i) Implement training- aimed at effecting practical	Key development and climate change threats are identified, and their potential impacts described The peatland monitoring	DRC Child project is collaborating with CRREBaC, which is a partner institution of the IKI project RoC Project is collaborating with University Marien Ngouabi which is a partner institution of the IKI Project Some of the research topic proposed in the RoC project such as Assessment of the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of

	ascertain how climate change impact infer future habitat suitability maps for a selection of priority species of conservation significance and derived livelihoods	resources Assessment of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in targeted peatlands and develop a GHG emission baseline on peatlands of the RoC Develop a system for peatland fire frequency, prediction and early warning (Fire Danger Rating System - FDRS) Develop Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires as well as guidelines and information/training materials on Integrated Fire Management Build capacity on GHG emission Measurement, Reporting and	solutions to pressing land use-climate change challenges; (ii) Collect reliable data through efficient sampling methods for the peatland's biodiversity; (iii) Analyse the functioning and dynamics of the wetlands including peatlands of the study sites to develop a better understanding of the Climate-Forest-Water Nexus; and (iv); Provide consistent guidelines to enable societal resilience to detrimental impact of environmental change	system is established, and its sustainable operations is secured Comprehensive analysis of the hydrology of the Central Peatland is conducted, its results reflected in the developed hydrological Decision Support System and disseminated A risk reduction framework for the peatland ecosystem is developed and its implementation supported.	peatlands is the current focus of the University of Leeds project/GPI Project. **CRREBaC involvement in DRC and IKI Project**: The analysis of the hydrology to be conducted by the IKI project in coordination with CRREBaC is overlapping with activities such as the following one: Analyse the functioning and dynamics of the wetlands including peatlands to be conducted by the same institution (CRREBaC) with the DRC Project: Alignment is requested

		Verification (MRV) on peatlands			
Livelihood	Market access of and private sector investments in sustainably produced palm oil and **cocoa** scaled up Joint IPLC-private sector Supply chain development and financing plan	Institutional and technical support are provided to communities to develop **community-based tourism enterprises** Sustainable income-generating - **Economic diversification such as certified cacao production**, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation Local community organized structures **trained on the promotion of ecotourism** and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment	In the Lac Tumba Landscape: Development of **multi-purpose tree plantations for fuelwood, fodder** using native species, development of value chains for NTFPs **(edible caterpillars, honey, etc.)** **NTFP value chains** for fumbwa (Gnetum africanum), caterpillars, cola nuts, lianas (rattans), wild honey and Marantaceae leaves based Community-based sustainable production systems	Communities are trained in **sustainable agricultural practices, eco-tourism** etc.	The RP can support the RoC child project in Identifying and promoting public-private partnerships i with the aim of achieving 100% traceability to the farm for the cocoa; Potential overlap between IKI Project. and GEF Project: There is a need to clarify which project is doing what? As an example, in RoC landscape segment: IKI could focus its training on sustainable agriculture practices, whereas the GEF could focus on eco-tourism.

		Micro-loans / Small Grant schemes for CBOs, NGOs, villages and districts to support sustainable wildlife management projects, including community-based trophy and bushmeat hunting, Support to local communities to add value to **NTFPs** by undertaking pre-processing or full processing			
Knowledge management	Tools and knowledge resources relevant to Congo IP child projects are harvested, captured and/or created and made available A Congo Basin IP knowledge management platform (KM Platform) is created and operational Congo IP online Community of	KM to be developed in coordination with the RP	KM to be developed in coordination with the RP	Knowledge management system is created for collection and sharing of knowledge, best practices, methods and lessons learned.	**Economy of scale / complementarity**: Since the GEF RP is setting up KM platform, Congo online CoP, resources from GEF and IKI can be aggregated to support staffing, equipment's required. Perhaps a KM platform financed by both resources from IKI and GEF resources under ECCAS/COMIFAC/OFAC umbrella could be an option to consider to anchor both project in political regional institutional landscape.

	Practice (CoP) Regional capacity development through training and knowledge sharing workshops, and online training events				
Transboundary and South-South exchanges	Field visits and study tours	Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted	Field trips and exchange of experiences between project beneficiaries and related on-going initiatives	Transboundary and South-South exchanges	Better coordination can take place between the projects during implementation phase to ensure economy of scale and cost effective use of resources

Appendix 17 : Institutions consulted during the PPG

Institutions	Noms	Email	Téléphones
Délégation de l'Union Européenne en République du Congo	Camille PUBILL	camille-joelle.pubill@eeas.europa.eu	(+242) 05 500 24 13 / (+242) 06 834 27 71
Université Marien Ngouabi	Averti IFO SUSPENS	averti.ifosuspens@umng.cg	±242068029720
l'Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC)	Serge Florent DZOTA Hilaire ELENGA	sdzota@gmail.com cc : elengajeanhill@gmail.com	+242055561891/065561891 +242055833668/066623161
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Cyril BRÛLEZ	brulezc@afd.fr	+242 06 937 31 11
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Appendix 18: - Report of the High-Level Meeting with the Private Sector

MINISTERE DU TOURISME
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Phase Préparatoire du Projet soutenu par le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement-Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial sur la « conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL »

Rapport de la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé

4 Juin 2020
Brazzaville, République du Congo

Sous le Patronage de
Madame Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT
Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement

Contexte

Sous le patronage de ***Madame Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT, Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement***, il s'est tenu à Brazzaville le 4 juin 2020, une Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec les responsables du secteur privé exerçant dans la zone du Lac Télé.

Cette rencontre, organisée par le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement avec l'appui du Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) s'inscrit dans le cadre des consultations entre les différentes parties prenantes de la phase préparatoire des projets du FEM.

En effet, le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial a approuvé une subvention de préparation de projet (PPG) pour la République du Congo afin de produire un descriptif de projet et une demande d'approbation du Directeur Général du FEM (à l'aide des modèles appropriés) sous la direction du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE) et en étroite collaboration avec le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement, ainsi que des représentants clés du Gouvernement, des donateurs, des ONG, des organisations communautaires et du secteur privé.

Ce projet qui s'inscrit dans le cadre du Programme à Impact du FEM pour la gestion durable des paysages du Bassin du Congo, a été budgétisé pour être financé à 6.083.151 USD par le FEM et 41.770.855 USD par un cofinancement à mobiliser auprès de différents partenaires. Le projet vise à promouvoir un modèle de conservation intégrée et de gestion des aires protégées appliquée aux tourbières et à son écosystème forestier dans le paysage du Lac Télé en République du Congo.

L'implication des entreprises du secteur privé exerçant dans la zone d'intervention du projet, est considérée comme un gage de réussite du processus de conservation intégrée des tourbières et des ressources naturelles dans le paysage du Lac Télé.

Objectifs de la rencontre

La rencontre de haut niveau entre le Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement et le secteur privé présent dans la zone du paysage du Lac Télé visait à informer les responsables et chefs d'entreprises du secteur privé concernés, du projet PNUE-FEM encours de préparation mais aussi à appeler à leur implication dans les efforts du Gouvernement de la République du Congo pour une conservation effective des tourbières et des ressources naturelles dans la zone du projet.

Plus spécifiquement, les objectifs suivants ont meublés la rencontre:

- Informer les acteurs du secteur privé de l'initiative du Gouvernement de la République du Congo dans la zone du Lac Télé pour la conservation à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières
- Introduire les buts, objectifs, résultats et activités du projet en lien avec le secteur privé;

- Présenter les grands axes du document du projet aux responsables du secteur privé et les différentes interventions qui les concernent dans le cadre du projet;
- Présenter les actions/initiatives que le projet a prévu de faire à l'endroit du secteur privé pour les accompagner dans la compréhension et l'application des standards internationaux dans la conservation des tourbières et la gestion durable des ressources naturelles.
- Recueillir les avis, observations et commentaires du secteur privé sur les objectifs du projet en lien avec leur implication.
- Obtenir les engagements de collaboration du secteur privé pour une mise en œuvre efficace du projet.

Grands axes de la rencontre

I. Ouverture officielle

❖ ***Allocution de Madame Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT, Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement***

Dans son intervention, Madame la Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement a commencé son propos en adressant ses vifs remerciements aux Directeurs Généraux des entreprises privées évoluant dans les Départements de la Likouala et de la Sangha ou leurs représentants ayant répondu présent à son appel. Puis elle a salué les représentants des administrations publiques qu'elle a tenu à inviter dans la cadre de l'approche participative dans la préparation et la mise en œuvre des projets qui a toujours été la sienne. Madame la Ministre a manifesté sa reconnaissance au FEM et au PNUE pour l'appui et le soutien que les deux organisations apportent à la République du Congo dans la cadre de la conservation des tourbières.

L'allocution de Madame la Ministre s'est poursuivie par un rappel de la genèse de la découverte récente des tourbières de la cuvette centrale du Bassin du Congo avant de

rappeler que malgré la fragilité de ces écosystèmes de tourbières, ils ont une importance globale pour la biodiversité et le climat mondial. Madame la Ministre a rappelé qu'il était de la responsabilité de la République du Congo de veiller à leur conservation. Cela se manifeste par les engagements pris au plus haut niveau de l'Etat et les nombreuses initiatives qui sont menées avec l'appui des partenaires tels que le FEM et PNUE.

Madame la Ministre a aussi rappelé la grande importance qu'elle accorde à l'implication des entreprises du secteur privé dans les activités de conservation des tourbières, car ces entreprises se doivent d'intégrer la responsabilité sociétale dans leurs.

Madame la Ministre a clôturé son allocution en rappelant la réponse que le Gouvernement de la République du Congo apporte à la pandémie du Covid-19, et célébration de la Journée Mondiale de l'Environnement qui se tenait le lendemain de la rencontre.

Voir Annexe 1 - Pour plus de détails sur l'allocution de Madame la Ministre

- ***Autres articulations de la séance d'ouverture***

A la fin de son allocution, Madame la Ministre a rappelé aux participants non seulement l'importance des tourbières pour la République du Congo, mais aussi la particularité de ces tourbières. En effet, Madame la Ministre a fait savoir que les tourbières en République du Congo sont très sensibles et nécessitent une attention très particulière, car elles dépendent de la pluviométrie et des eaux de pluie, contrairement aux tourbières qu'on retrouve en République Démocratique du Congo, qui elles dépendent des eaux des cours d'eau courant. Ainsi donc Madame la Ministre a réitéré aux participants l'importance de faire attention à la dégradation des forêts dans la zone du projet, car cela influencera la pluviométrie avec le risque de voir les tourbières s'assécher et libérer le carbone stocké depuis des années. Un tel scénario aura bien évidemment de graves conséquences climatiques et écologiques pour l'ensemble de la planète.

Par la suite, Madame la Ministre a donné la parole au Consultant Technique du PNUE. Ce dernier a partagé avec Madame la Ministre et les participants des informations sur l'état d'avancement de la rédaction du document du projet et des autres documents nécessaires à la soumission au FEM, ainsi que de la préparation du projet.

Après cette intervention, Madame la Ministre a invité les participants à une séance de photo de groupe, qui a ainsi clôturé la cérémonie d'ouverture de la rencontre.

II. Progrès du développement du projet ICOBACPE /PELATEL et les axes d'intervention visant le secteur privé

La suite de la cérémonie a été coordonné par le Directeur Général du Développement Durable du Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement, qui a fait un rappel de la séance d'ouverture, rappelé les grands axes de la rencontre et aussi rappelé l'importance des tourbières et la nécessité d'impliquer le secteur privé dans la conservation et la gestion durable des ressources naturelles.

- ***Intervention du gestionnaire de programme du PNUE***

Pour des raisons techniques, l'intervention du gestionnaire de programme du PNUE n'a pu avoir lieu en direct. Cependant, ce dernier a transmis les notes de son intervention pour être partagées avec les participants.

Ainsi, le gestionnaire de programme du PNUE a remercié Madame la Ministre pour cette initiative de réunir autour d'elle les représentants du secteur privé pour les informer du projet PNUE-FEM et surtout de son invitation à voir le secteur privé s'impliquer dans la gestion des tourbières en République du Congo. Il a également grandement remercié Madame la Ministre pour avoir présidée personnellement la séance d'ouverture.

Le gestionnaire du programme a axé son intervention sur les directives du FEM en matière d'implication du secteur privé dans les projets de conservation et de gestion durable des ressources naturelles.

Le gestionnaire de programme du PNUE a rappelé que le FEM a toujours prôné la collaboration avec le secteur privé et que dans sa dernière stratégie adoptée en février 2020, cette nécessité de collaboration devra davantage être renforcée. Dans sa stratégie, le FEM plaide pour l'implication prioritaire du secteur privé dans les projets et initiatives visant la résolution des grands problèmes de l'environnement mondial.

Cette exigence de l'implication du secteur privé se justifie par le fait que les entreprises privées dominent les activités économiques et qu'il est de ce faut crucial d'affecter au mieux les ressources publiques, qui sont limitées, vers des approches viables au plan environnemental.

Pour finir, le gestionnaire de programme du PNUE a une fois de plus adressé ses remerciements à Madame la Ministre pour l'initiative de l'organisation de cette rencontre de haut niveau et a appelé les représentants du secteur privé exerçant dans la zone du projet à collaborer avec le PNUE et le FEM dans le cadre du projet encours de développement pour la conservation des tourbières et la gestion durable des ressources naturelles dans le paysage du Lac Télé.

Avec cette intervention, l'ouverture officielle s'est terminée. Il était prévu une séance de photo en groupe, mais qui a dû être annulé en respect aux mesures de distanciation sociale en vigueur dans le pays, pour cause de la Covid-19.

❖ ***Présentation du projet PNUE – FEM et axes impliquant le secteur privé***

Le projet sur la « conservation intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL » a été présenté par le Consultant Technique du PNUE.

Le Consultant Technique a informé les participants sur les grands axes du projet à savoir :

- La genèse de la mise en évidence des tourbières en République du Congo et les principales contraintes entravant les efforts actuels de conservation des tourbières et de la biodiversité dans la pays
- Les objectifs du projet qui inclut d'améliorer la gestion durable des écosystèmes de tourbières, de préserver la diversité biologique et de réduire les émissions de GES ; la promotion d'un modèle de conservation intégrée et appliquer la gestion durable des Aires Protégées aux écosystèmes forestiers des tourbières dans du paysage du lac Télé de la République du Congo et assurer la gestion durable des tourbières par l'implication des communautés locales, à sécuriser les stocks de carbone et à conserver la biodiversité tout en améliorant le niveau de vie des communautés locales.
- Les principales composantes du projet, les résultats de chaque composante et les produits à délivrer par chaque composante

S'agissant spécifiquement de la composante portant sur l'implication du secteur privé dans la conservation, qui faisait l'objet principal de la rencontre du jour, le Consultant Technique a donné plus de détails afin d'attirer l'attention des représentants du secteur privé sur les activités qui seront menées, les mécanismes de leur implication tel qu'envisagé dans le cadre du projet et également les contributions que le secteur privé peut apporter aux efforts de conservation dans la zone du projet.

Le Consultant Technique a relevé que le projet travaillera les responsables du secteur privé afin d'assurer leur implication dans promotion des pratiques de gestion durable des tourbières et des ressources naturelles.

Pour relever l'importance que le projet accorde au secteur privé, le Consultant Technique a relevé objectifs envisagés:

- Promotion et formation sur les normes volontaires de durabilité.
- Renforcement des capacités et assistance technique sur les meilleures pratiques d'exploitation des ressources qui garantissent l'intégrité de l'écosystème des tourbières.
- Révision des modalités/procédures opérationnelles des sociétés exploitant des concessions.

A la fin de son intervention, le Directeur Général du Développement Durable a ouvert la séance des discussions, pendant lesquelles les entreprises présentes devaient se présenter, donner leur secteur d'activité, parler des efforts de conservations en place et enfin dire ce qu'elles attendraient du projet PNUE-FEM à venir.

III. Les entreprises du secteur privé présent à la rencontre

Nom de l'entreprise	Activité	Politique de gestion durable	Participation des populations	Attentes envers le projet PNUE-FEM
Société Petroleum	Exploration pétrolière – Hydrocarbure (Détenteur du permis Ngoki qui s'étend sur 9392 km2)	Tel que défini dans le contrat avec l'Etat et exigence d'une étude d'impact environnemental est requis à chaque étape de l'activité: Exploration; construction, exploitation, démantèlement. Petroleum applique également les normes internationales	Défini dans le contrat avec l'Etat, mais l'entreprise mène des actions sociales au profit des populations (construction des écoles,	La Société Petroleum a exprimé le vœu de collaborer avec le projet pour la mise en œuvre de la responsabilité sociétale des entreprises
Société SEFYD Située dans la Sangha	Exploitation forestière et transformation (sur place) du bois	La société a un plan d'aménagement qui est adopté et mis en œuvre conformément aux exigences de l'Etat. L'entreprise développement en ce moment une étude d'impact environnemental	Diverses actions sociales au profit des populations sont menées	La Société SEFYD souhaite un appui du projet PNUE-FEM pour le renforcement des capacités en matière de responsabilité sociétale et reste ouvert aux propositions de l'équipe du projet pour collaborer
CIB OLAM – Congolaise Industrielle de Bois Situation : Likouala et la Sangha	Exploitation de bois avec des usines de transformation	L'entreprise travaille sur la base des concessions obtenues de l'Etat et travaille selon le cahier de charges de ses concessions. Un plan d'aménagement est adopté avec la participation des	CIB OLAM avait souvent été attaqué pour ses actions par des ONG, mais depuis la visite de Greenpeace mais sur le terrain, la réalité a été rétablie.	CIB OLAM aimerait bénéficier du projet pour renforcer ses efforts de conservation de la biodiversité. CIB OLAM aimerait également être appuyé dans les activités de

		populations et autorités locales. Comme le veut la procédure, tout plan d'aménagement est transmis au Conseil de Ministres pour validation puis soumis à l'Assemblée Nationale pour adoption. Après adoption le plan d'aménagement a force de loi et l'exécution obligatoire	L'entreprise a mis en place depuis 2006 un fonds de développement communautaire géré en partenariat avec les populations. Le fonds reçoit 200 frs /m3 de bois commercialisable au profit des projets de développement des populations.	reboisement et régénération. CIB OLAM souhaiterait également un appui du projet pour assurer le fonctionnement du fonds le développement communautaire.
ECO – OIL ENERGIE S.A Située dans les départements de la Sangha et Cuvette	Agro-industrie et production d'huile de palme.		La société possède un programme éco-plus qui vise à fournir des semences aux populations locales qui en retour vendent les récoltes à la société.	ECO-OIL ENERGIE S.A aimerait bénéficier d'un appui en renforcement des capacités dans le domaine de la responsabilité sociétale.
Société THANRY Congo Située dans la Likouala	Exploitation du bois			Collaboration pour la restauration et au reboisement. Renforcement des capacités pour l'encadrement et l'éducation des populations dans la gestion des fonds de développement mis en place par les entreprises.

IV. Résultats

Avant la clôture des travaux, des discussions ont été engagées avec l'ensemble des participants pour recueillir leurs avis et impressions. Les responsables du secteur privé ont exprimés leur satisfaction de l'approche collaborative et ont promis de contribuer pour la conservation des tourbières.

Certains participants ont apportés des clarifications supplémentaires à certaines questions que soulevaient les responsables du secteur privé lors de la rencontre, par exemple :

- Définition et étendue des tourbières en République du Congo : Le Professeur Ifo Suspens de l'Université Marien Ngouabi a présenté la carte des tourbières tel que connu à ce jour et a donné une définition des tourbières.
- Les questions relatives à l'hydrologie et à la météorologie dans la zone du projet ont été éclaircies par le représentant de l'Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC).
- Des questions relatives aux aspects transfrontaliers des tourbières entre les deux Congo ont bénéficié des éclaircissements du représentant du PNUD.

De façon générale, les résultats suivants ont été atteints :

- Les responsables du secteur privé ont été informés du projet PNUE – FEM et ont compris le besoin de conservation des tourbières ;
- Les responsables du secteur privé ceux sont engagés à soutenir les efforts de conservation des tourbières du Gouvernement de la République du Congo, conduit par Madame la Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement;
- Le secteur privé a exprimé les besoins et attentes du projet.

ANNEXES

I – Allocution de Madame la Ministre

MINISTERE DU TOURISME
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
=-=-=-=-=-=
CABINET
=-=-=-=

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO
Unité*Travail*Progrès
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Allocution de Madame Arlette Soudan-Nonault,
Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement
à l'occasion de la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé
dans le Cadre de la Phase Préparatoire du Projet PNUE-FEM sur la « conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du lac Télé en République du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL »
-=-=-=-=-

GHS Hôtel

Brazzaville le 4 juin 2020

Mesdames et Messieurs les Directeurs Généraux des Entreprises privées évoluant dans les départements de la Likouala et la Sangha ;
Messieurs les Conseillers, membres de mon Cabinet ;
Messieurs les Directeurs Généraux ;
Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Administrations publiques ;
Distingués invités ;
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi avant tout propos d'exprimer mes vifs remerciements à tous les Directeurs Généraux des Entreprises privées évoluant dans les Départements de la Likouala et de la Sangha ou leur représentant qui ont bien voulu prendre part à cette rencontre de haut niveau que nous avons convoqué dans le cadre de la préparation du projet sur la « conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières et la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du lac Télé en République du Congo »

Je remercie également les représentants des administrations publiques présents dans cette salle et qui ont été invités à cette réunion dans la cadre de l'approche participative dans la préparation et la mise en œuvre des projets qui a toujours été la nôtre.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

De découvertes récentes, les tourbières de la cuvette centrale du Bassin du Congo qui s'étendent sur près de 145 500 km^2 entre la République du Congo et la République Démocratique du Congo, font l'objet d'une attention particulière de la communauté Internationale.

Cet intérêt appuyé pour cet écosystème fragile est essentiellement dû au fait que ce dernier est le berceau d'une biodiversité riche et unique mais aussi un important puit de carbone avec environ 30 milliards de tonne de carbone séquestrés, ce qui l'échelle mondiale représente 2 à 3 ans d'émissions de Gaz à Effet de Serre ou 20 années d'émission des Etats Unis.

En effet, l'importance des quantités de carbone emprisonnées révèle que nous ne pourrions atteindre les objectifs de l'Accord de Paris sur le climat si cet écosystème n'était pas géré de manière durable.

Consciente de cette responsabilité historique, la République du Congo a abrité en mars 2018 la troisième réunion des partenaires de l'Initiative Mondiale sur les Tourbières à l'issue de laquelle a été signée la Déclaration de Brazzaville pour une gestion durable des tourbières.

La volonté de notre pays, exprimée au plus haut niveau est de préserver nos tourbières par la mise en œuvre des mécanismes inclusifs et participatifs qui contribueront à leur conservation

et leur gestion durable. C'est dans la droite ligne de ces engagements que le Président de la République Son Excellence Denis Sassou-NGESSO a accepté de prendre la destinée de la Commission Climat de l'Afrique Centrale dédiée au changement climatique et à la sauvegarde de l'écosystème du bassin du fleuve Congo. Aussi, le Président de la République est également à la tête du Fonds bleu, qui est le bras financier de cette Commission Climat. Il vous souviendra que ce fonds lancé en 2017 par une douzaine de pays de la région et le Maroc, a été défendu lors de la COP22 de Marrakech en novembre 2016 avec l'appui de la Fondation Brazzaville pour la paix et la préservation de l'environnement.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Plusieurs partenaires se sont engagés à collaborer avec notre pays afin de nous appuyer dans nos efforts de préservation de nos tourbières.
C'est ainsi qu'avec l'appui du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) et le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) notre pays développe un projet visant à assurer la conservation de manière intégrée des écosystèmes de tourbières et des ressources naturelles dans les paysages du Lac Télé.

Le paysage du Lac Télé, situé dans le département de la Likouala abrite un certain nombre d'espèces animales dont les gorilles de plaine et les éléphants de forêt, avec des densités parmi les plus élevées jamais enregistrées dans la région.

Il abrite également des tourbières tropicales parmi les plus importante au monde tel qu'évoqué plus haut.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le projet en préparation avec l'appui du PNUE et du FEM pour lequel je vous ai convié, vise à développer une approche intégrée pour la gestion des tourbières du paysage du Lac Télé par le biais d'un modèle de gouvernance local et pertinent.

Cette approche intégrée que j'ai personnellement recommandée dès la préparation de la note conceptuelle du projet, exige une réelle implication du secteur privé dans les efforts de conservation.

Ceci se fera par la promotion des pratiques de gestion durable des tourbières et des ressources naturelles dans le paysage du Lac Télé.

Comme vous le savez, une dégradation des écosystèmes et la perte de services qui en découlerait représentent un grand danger pour vos activités économiques.

La pression sur les écosystèmes du paysage pour différents usages est grandissante à travers les activités menées par les entreprises du secteur privé exerçant dans les domaines de l'exploitation forestière, du développement des plantations agro-industrielles, de l'exploration minière et des hydrocarbures dans la périphérie du paysage.

De plus, le développement de ces différentes activités et de processus de transformation des produits au niveau local, ainsi que l'amélioration des transports, demandent la mise en place d'infrastructures importantes.

En adoptant une approche intégrée et en mettant au centre de ses actions la participation communautaire, le renforcement des capacités pour le développement local, la promotion des options alternatives de régénération des revenues pour les communautés locales notamment les femmes et les jeunes et la promotion de la participation du secteur privé pour un mode de production et de consommation durable ; le projet est en droite ligne avec le projet de société 2016 – 2021 « la Marche vers le Développement » de Son Excellence le Président de la République Denis Sassou-NGUESSO. Ce projet est une modeste contribution de mon département ministériel à l'Axe 1 : Mettre les femmes et les hommes au cœur du développement de ce projet de Société.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le secteur privé exerçant dans le paysage du Lac Télé en particulier et dans le Bassin du Congo en général, doit exercer ses activités en tenant compte des pratiques de responsabilité sociétale et des enjeux du développement durable.

Comme vous le savez, en fonction de vos secteurs d'activité, des labels, chartes et codes volontaires ont été développés.

Le projet en préparation travaillera avec vous pour identifier les mesures incitatives d'assistance politique et technique pour vos entreprises afin de mieux vous impliquer dans la protection de l'intégrité des tourbières et des ressources naturelles dans le paysage du Lac Télé.

Ceci se fera par la promotion des standards de durabilité volontaires et l'analyse de la possibilité de vous amener à appliquer le modèle de la plateforme agriculture nutrition et environnement durable pour la protection des tourbières dans vos activités encours ou à venir.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je sais pouvoir compter sur vous pour que l'approche intégré du projet en préparation soit un modèle gagnant-gagnant entre vos activités et les efforts du Gouvernement du Congo dans la conservation durable des écosystèmes de tourbières dans le paysage du Lac Télé, de la Cuvette, de l'ensemble du territoire national et du Bassin du Congo.

J'ose croire que les échanges au cours de vos travaux permettront d'aboutir une compréhension des enjeux de l'heure et l'expression des attentes clairement formuler par vous-mêmes dans le cadre du développement de ce projet en tenant compte de vos intérêts, de ceux du pays et de la communauté internationale.

Je profite de cette opportunité pour vous rappeler que dans le cadre de la gestion de la Pandémie du COVID 19 qui je le sais vous affecte aussi, le Gouvernement a mis en place un Fonds COVID 19 et un Fonds de Solidarité pour aider à faire face à « l'incidence très alarmante de cette crise sanitaire ravageuse » de cette pandémie pour emprunter les mots du Chef de

l'Etat. Les voies les plus autorisées vous diront certainement merci pour votre contribution à ses fonds, cependant, je souhaiterais faire un plaidoyer pour les acteurs locaux avec lesquels vous travailler sur le terrain et qui constituent la majorité silencieuse qui subit les conséquences de cette crise qui affecte leur survie au quotidien. Le projet prendra en compte cette nouvelle donne pour ses premières actions sur le terrain.

Pour terminer, je vous invite tous à célébrer demain 5 Juin avec la communauté internationale, la Journée Mondiale de l'Environnement dont le thème cette année, est « **La biodiversité** : c'est un appel à l'action pour lutter contre la perte accélérée d'espèces et la dégradation du monde naturel ». Un million d'espèces végétales et animales sont menacées d'extinction, en grande partie à cause des activités humaines. La Journée mondiale de l'environnement nous invite à repenser la manière dont nos systèmes économiques ont évolué et l'impact qu'ils ont sur l'environnement. Notre projet contribue à cette dynamique.

Je vous remercie.

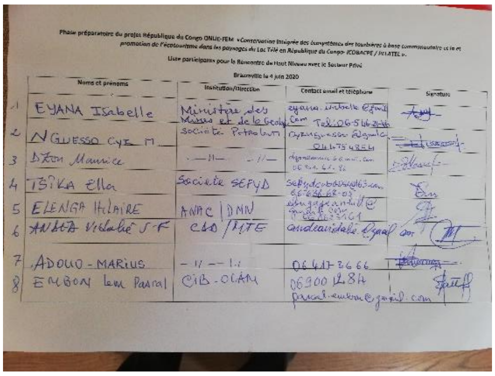
Arlette SOUDAN-NONAULT.

II - *Couverture médiatique de l'évènement*

L'évènement a été couvert par plusieurs média. Ci-dessous, quelques liens de journaux en ligne :

- **Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale** : « *Ecotourisme : la conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières fait l'objet d'une rencontre à Brazzaville* », disponible sous le lien suivant : http://www.adiac-congo.com/content/ecotourisme-la-conservation-integree-base-communautaire-des-ecosystemes-de-tourbieres-fait?fbclid=IwAR3QAzb5qsgIDNkAsQ7_ZXfu5CP938RF-4YvHtYE7RhLjhnHGwRvuwjfbBo (Publié le 6 Juin 2020 - 16:42 et consulté le 8 juin 2020 – 10 :43)
- **SEN 360 SN** : « *Congo-Brazzaville: La conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières fait l'objet d'une rencontre à Brazzaville* », disponible sous le lien suivant : https://news.sen360.sn/afrique/actualite/congo-brazzaville-la-conservation-integree-a-base-communautaire-des-ecosystemes-de-tourbieres-fait-l-039-objet-d-039-une-rencontre-a-brazzaville-1266573.html (Consulté le 08 juin 2020 – 12 :30)
- **Agence Congolaise d'Information** : « *Congo/Environnement: Le secteur privé appelé à exercer ses activités dans le respect des enjeux du développement durable* » https://www.aci.cg/congo-environnement-le-secteur-prive-appele-a-exercer-ses-activites-dans-le-respect-des-enjeux-du-developpement-durable/ (Consulté le 08 juin 2020 – 12 :33)
- **Afropages** : « *Ecotourisme : la conservation intégrée à base communautaire des écosystèmes de tourbières fait l'objet d'une rencontre à Brazzaville* » https://www.afropages.fr/adiac/ecotourisme-la-conservation-integree-a-base-communautaire-des-ecosystemes-de-tourbieres-fait-l-objet-d-une-rencontre-a-brazzaville#&ts=undefined (publié le 5 juin 2020 - 18:42 et consulté le 8 juin 2020 – 12 :29).

II – Liste des participants



Phase préparatoire du projet République du Congo ONUE-FEM «Conservation intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières à base communautaire et la et promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL ».

Liste participants pour la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé

Brazzaville le 4 juin 2020

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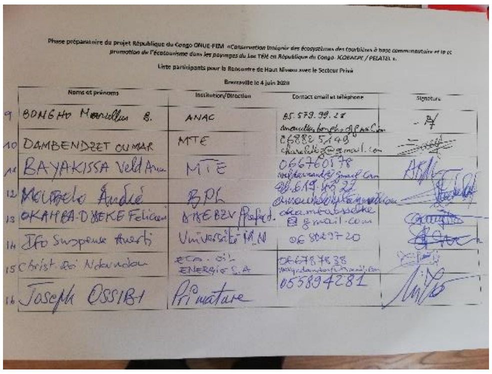

Phase préparatoire du projet République du Congo ONUE-FEM «Conservation intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières à base communautaire et la et promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL ».

Liste participants pour la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé

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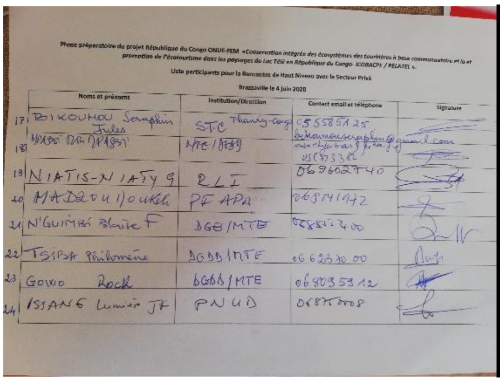

Phase préparatoire du projet République du Congo ONUE-FEM «Conservation intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières à base communautaire et la et promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL ».

Liste participants pour la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé

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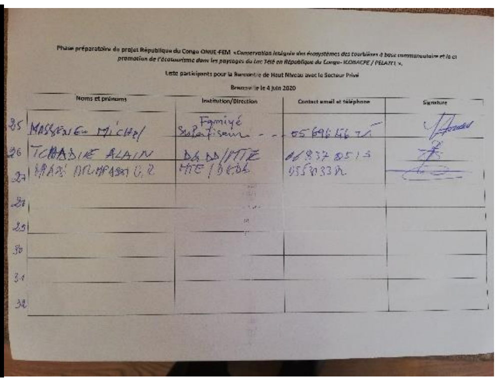
22	TSIPSA Philomène	DGDD / MTE	06 623 70 00	[illegible]
23	GOMO Rock	DGDD / MTE	06 809 59 12	[illegible]
24	ISSANE Lumière JF	PNUD	06 875 00 08	[illegible]



Phase préparatoire du projet République du Congo ONUE-FEM «Conservation intégrée des écosystèmes des tourbières à base communautaire et la et promotion de l'écotourisme dans les paysages du Lac Télé en République du Congo- ICOBACPE / PELATEL ».

Liste participants pour la Rencontre de Haut Niveau avec le Secteur Privé

Brazzaville le 4 juin 2020

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27	[illegible]	MTE / DGDL	05 5[illegible] 33 [illegible]	[illegible]
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Appendix 19: RoC Carbon Savings Calculations

Calculation of carbon emissions (tCO_2eq) avoided

Project title: *Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL*

EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool - EX-ACT

The EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT) is a model developed by FAO to provide ex-ante estimates of the impact of agriculture and forestry development projects on GHG emissions and carbon sequestration, indicating its effects on the carbon-balance (Bernoux et al. 2010; Bockel et al. 2010), which is selected as an indicator of the mitigation potential of the project (Bernoux et al. 2011). This is a land-based accounting system, estimating C stock changes (i.e. emissions or sinks of carbon) as well as GHG emissions per unit of land, expressed in equivalent tons of carbon per hectare and year. It is capable of covering the range of projects relevant for the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. It can compute the carbon-balance by comparing two scenarios: "*without project*" (i.e. the "*Baseline*") and "*with project*". The main output of the tool consists of the C-balance resulting from the difference between these two alternative scenarios (Bockel et al. 2010).
This tool has been widely used in the assessment of implications of land use and land cover changes around the world, and continue to serve as a policy and decision support tool for land use planning at different geographical scales[1]. The model takes into account both the implementation phase of the project (i.e. the active phase of the project commonly corresponding to the investment phase – see Figure 1), and the "capitalization phase" (i.e. a period where project benefits are still occurring as a consequence of the activities performed during the implementation phase) (Bernoux et al. 2011).

Model setup

In this project, the carbon benefits from the project are estimated in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years - the durations of implementation phase and the capitalization phase are defined as 4 years and 16 years, respectively (see Figure 1). To assess the carbon emissions that would be avoided through the implementation of this project, the following are the sources of calculation data, their interpretation and their operationalization within the EX-ACT Carbon Calculator model.

Project Name	Integrated community-based conservation of	
Continent	Africa	
Climate	Tropical	
Moisture regime	Moist	
Dominant Regional Soil Type	LAC Soils	
Duration of the Project (Years)	Implementation phase	4
	Capitalisation phase	16
	Duration of accounting	**20**

Figure 1. Model setup and calibration

[1] See some of the publications that have made use of the Ex-Ante tool here.

Tool used:	FAO-EXACT Tool version 8.5.6
Continent:	Africa
Climate:	Tropical Moist
Soil type:	LAC
Project implementation phase:	4 years
Capitalization phase:	16 years
Duration of accounting:	20 years

Assumptions and model inputs

Module 2: LUC; Section 2.1 Deforestation

The first calculation is made on the 440,000 hectares of forest that is brought under enhanced management – reducing potential deforestation and degradation (see mid-term target of project objective to protect lowland gorillas). It is assumed that at 20,000 hectares(as a minimum) would be deforested in the next 20 years if nothing is done (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Type of vegetation deforested:	Forest Zone 1
Final use after deforestation:	Perennial/Tree Crop
Fire use:	Yes
Area:	20,000 hectares of 440,000 hectares (area over which deforestation will be avoided)

HWP# (tDM/ha)	Fire Use? (y/n)	Final use after deforestation	Forested area (ha) Start	Without	*	With	*	Deforested area (ha) Without	With	Total Emissions (tCO2-eq) Without	With	Balance
0	YES	Perennial/Tree Crop	440,000	420,000	D	440,000	D	20,000	0	15,291,941	0	-15,291,941
0	NO	Select Use after deforestation	0	0	D	0	D	0	0	0	0	0

Module 5: Management; Section 5.2 Drainage and Management of Organic Soils (peatlands); Section 5.2.1 Drainage of Organic Soils (peatlands)

Here the assumption is that through LUPs emissions from drained/draining peatlands can be avoided. The land use planning is expected to cover about 20% of the total landscape of 5.4 million hectares, which is about 1 million ha (**Error! Reference source not found.**). In the w/o project scenario, 1% of this area could have potentially been affected by drainage of peatlands (with the project, there will be no risk of drainage of peatlands).

Type of vegetation:	Forest
Drained organic soil (Start):	0 hectares
Drained organic soils w/o project:	10,800 ha (1% of 1 million hectares affected by drainage)
Drained organic soils with project:	0 hectares (i.e., project avoids any drainage)

5.2. Degradation and management of organic soils (peatlands)

5.2.1. Drainage of organic soils

Type of vegetation concerned by drainage	Surfaces of drained organic soils (ha) At the end Start	Without	*	With	*	Percentage (area) of ditches At the end Start	Without	With	Total Emissions (tCO2-eq) Without	With	Balance
Forest	0	10 800	D	0	D	2%	5%	1%	5 358 141	0	-5 358 141
Plantation	0	0	D	0	D	5%	5%	5%	0	0	0

Results

Based on the analysis of land use changes above, the carbon benefits from the project estimated in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years are 20,398,082 tCO_2eq (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Components of the project	Gross fluxes Without	With	Balance
	All GHG in tCO2eq		
Land use changes	Positive = source / negative = sink		
Deforestation	15,291,941	0	-15,291,941
Afforestation	0	0	0
Other LUC	0	0	0
Agriculture			
Annual	0	0	0
Perennial	-252,000	0	252,000
Rice	0	0	0
Grassland & Livestocks			
Grassland	0	0	0
Livestocks	0	0	0
Degradation & Management			
Forest degradation	0	0	0
Peat extraction	0	0	0
Drainage organic soil	5,358,141	0	-5,358,141
Rewetting organic soil	0	0	0
Fire organic soil	0	0	0
Coastal wetlands	0	0	0
Inputs & Investments	0	0	0
Fishery & Aquaculture	0	0	0
Total	20,398,082	0	-20,398,082

References

Bernoux M, Branca G, Carro A, Lipper L, Smith G, Bockel L (2010) Ex-ante greenhouse gas balance of agriculture and forestry development programs Scientia Agricola 67:31-40

Bernoux M, Tinlot M, Bockel L, Branca G, Gentien A (2011) Ex-ante carbon balance tool (EX-ACT): Technical Guidelines for Version 3.0 FAO, Rome 84

Bockel L, Smith G, Bromhead M, Bernoux M, Tinlot M, Matieu H, Branca G (2010) Mainstreaming carbon balance appraisal of agriculture projects and policies? Policy brief by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO Rome, Italy, 19p