Final Report:

Midterm Review of the Project "Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin"

Prepared for:
WWF-GEF Agency

Prepared by:
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In collaboration with
Nature Plan &
Lacy Consulting Services

28 November 2025

Eco Markets & Measures

Project Data Sheet

PROJECT DATA	
Project/Program Title	Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin
GEF Project ID	10287
WWF-US (Agency) Project ID	G0021
Implementing Agency(s)	WWF-US
Executing Agency	Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)
Executing Partner(s)	WWF Cameroon, AAFEBEN, PADI-DJA, ONACC, BACUDA, AWF, RACOPY, Tropical Forest RD, ROSE, UCLA, and TUBE AWUE
Countries	Cameroon
Focal Area(s)	BD, SFM Congo
GEF Operational Program	GEF-7
Total GEF Approved Budget	$9,608,257
Total Co-financing Approved	$74,329,704
RELEVANT DATES	
CEO Endorsement/ Approval	9/10/2021
Agency Approval Date	3/23/2022
Implementation Start	4/28/22
Project Completion Date (proposed or actual)	09/30/2028
Period to Be Evaluated	8/6/21 to time of review

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Acknowledgements

The evaluation team extends its sincere appreciation to WWF-US and the Project Management Unit (PMU) for the opportunity to contribute to conservation and sustainable development efforts in the Congo Basin. We are especially grateful to the PMU for its dedicated coordination and exceptional support throughout the evaluation – from preparation and field logistics to stakeholder engagement and follow-up. The commitment of the PMU Project Manager and his team to ensuring an open, inclusive, and well-organized process was critical to the success of this evaluation.

We also thank the Government of Cameroon, particularly the Ministries of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), and Social Affairs (MINAS), for their active participation. We are grateful for the valuable contributions of senior officials and technical staff both in Yaoundé and in the field. Special thanks go to Minister Pierre Hélé (MINEPDED) for his personal engagement with the evaluation team.

The evaluation team acknowledges with thanks the valuable support of ROSE and AAFEBEN, along with all other implementing and executing partners, including Tropical Forest, RACOPY, BACUDA, WWF-Cameroon, AWF, PADI-DJA, UCLA, and TUBE AWUE. Their collaboration ensured that the team had access to accurate information and meaningful connections across the Project's landscapes.

Most importantly, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the community-based organizations and the local populations across the three landscapes. Their voices, experiences, and perspectives were at the heart of this evaluation. Their openness, hospitality, and willingness to share both achievements and challenges offered rich insight into the realities on the ground. The dedication and resilience shown by these communities are a testament to the

importance of inclusive and locally grounded conservation efforts. This evaluation would not have been complete without their full participation.

Statement of Independence/Conflict of Interest

In alignment with the GEF Policy on Monitoring and Evaluation of GEF-financed activities, Eco Markets & Measures (EMM) affirms its complete independence from both the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and WWF-US. EMM has had no prior involvement in the design, implementation, or execution of the Project under evaluation.

EMM further confirms that it holds no business or institutional affiliations, nor engages in any relationships – financial or otherwise – with any entity or organization that may have a vested interest in the subject matter of this evaluation. EMM declares the absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

EMM fully adheres to the ethical standards, principles, and safeguards outlined by both GEF and WWF-US for conducting evaluations, particularly with respect to integrity, impartiality, and stakeholder engagement.

All methods, findings, and conclusions presented in this evaluation are the sole responsibility of Eco Markets & Measures.

Executive Summary

The WWF-GEF Project "Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin" was launched in 2022 with the goal of strengthening sustainable forest management across three key transboundary landscapes: Sangha Tri-national, the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkébé, and Campo Ma'an. The Project seeks to conserve biodiversity, enhance livelihoods through non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and other value chains, and improve governance through inclusive land use planning, stakeholder engagement, and safeguards. The Project duration is six years (2022–2028) with a budget of USD 9.6 million, managed by WWF-US as the GEF implementing agency, in partnership with government, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), and private sector actors.

This Midterm Review, carried out between June and September 2025, assessed Project progress, effectiveness, and sustainability at the midpoint. It included a comprehensive document review, 16 days of data collection in the field, and extensive consultations with stakeholders. The evaluation applied standard GEF criteria and WWF-US evaluation guidelines.

Overall Progress and Performance

The Project has rebounded strongly from initial delays. Implementation has accelerated, outputs are being delivered across components, and meaningful alignment has been achieved with national, regional, and global priorities. Stakeholder engagement has been a consistent strength, with government, community, and partner buy-in supporting broad ownership. Adaptive management by the Project Management Unit (PMU), with strong WWF GEF Agency support, has enabled course corrections and responsiveness to field realities.

At the same time, feasibility challenges are evident. The project's wide scope, complex theory of change, and gaps in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system constrain the ability to demonstrate outcomes and long-term impact. Sustainability remains uncertain, with heavy reliance on Project financing and limited evidence of durable institutionalization of results. Safeguards and grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) exist on paper but face implementation gaps, particularly in reaching remote and Indigenous communities.

Key Findings

- **Relevance & Coherence:** The project is well aligned with Cameroon's Vision 2035, COMIFAC Convergence Plan, and GEF strategies. Country ownership is strong, and stakeholder engagement is broad-based. Coherence across landscapes and partners is a notable strength.
- **Effectiveness & Efficiency:** Foundational outputs (land use plans, disease surveillance systems) are in place. Capacity building of Executing Partners has been successful, although extensive and time consuming. However, efficiency has improved

since early delays, though budget execution remains uneven. Results frameworks and indicators both insufficiently showcase the achievements, while at the same time unevenly overestimate the value addition and sustainability of the work.

- **Impact & Sustainability**: Early impacts include strengthened community based organizations, increased women's participation, and conservation gains. However, sustainability pathways are underdeveloped, with few mechanisms in place for long-term financing, institutionalization, or market resilience.
- **Adaptive Capacity & Cross-cutting Issues:** Adaptive management at PMU level has been proactive, but the M&E and knowledge management systems are weak. Gender mainstreaming shows progress, but youth engagement and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities are unreported and inconsistent. Safeguards and GRM remain underutilized and poorly trusted.

Assessment of Project Outcomes

As per GEF evaluation requirements, the Project Outcomes were evaluated according to four criteria – relevancy, coherence, effectiveness and cost-efficiency. The following table shows the ratings as of this Midterm Review. The ratings per outcome are provided within the report.

Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	***Rating***[1]
Were project outcomes ***Relevant*** when compared to focal area/operational program strategies, country priorities, beneficiary needs, mandates of WWF GEF and partners, and WWF priorities?	Moderately Satisfactory
Is the project ***Coherent*** or compatible with / supported by other relevant projects and programs in the recipient country or countries? Does the project have alignment among the theory of change, governance structure, activities and M&E system? Is there alignment with GEF policies, guidelines and is there integration of lessons from similar projects?	Satisfactory
What is the ***Effectiveness*** of project outcomes (e.g., were ex-ante targets met)? Did the project make the expected contributions to global environmental benefits? Were there unintended consequences of the project that added to or negated project benefits?	Moderately Satisfactory
What is the ***Cost-efficiency*** of project outcomes? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compare to that of a similar project?	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	***Rating***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the achievement of the Project outcomes. This assessment should analyze both the achievement and shortcomings of these results as stated in the project document.	**Moderately Satisfactory**

Assessment of Executing Entities and M&E System

Additionally, as per GEF evaluation requirements, the Project was evaluated both in terms of the performance of the executing entities as well as its M&E design and implementation. The following tables show the results, for which further justifications are provided within the report.

[1] Rating system is provided in Annex 7.

Rating of Executing Entities, per GEF Requirements

Implementation and Execution Rating Against Responsibilities	*Rating*[2]
WWF GEF Agency implementation	Satisfactory
Executing Agency execution	Satisfactory

Rating of M&E Design & Implementation, per GEF Requirements

Assessment of M&E Systems	*Rating*[3]
M&E Design	Moderately Unsatisfactory
M&E implementation	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Rating of M&E	
An overall rating for M&E during project design /implementation.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**

Assessment of the Risk to the Sustainability of Project Outcomes

Furthermore the Project outcomes were evaluated in terms of the risks to their sustainability, as per GEF requirements. The results are shown in the following table and detailed within the full report.

Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes, per GEF Requirements

Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes	Rating[4]
Financial Risks	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Sociopolitical Risks	Likely (L)
Institutional Framework and Governance Risks	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Environmental Risks	Likely (L)
Other risks	n/a
Overall Rating of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes	
Overall Rating	**Moderately Unlikely (MU)**

Principal Recommendations

Based on the analysis, numerous recommendations were detailed throughout the report. In brief, the evaluation team recommends the following:

- **Refine the M&E System and Strategic Plan**
  - Develop results chains to clarify strategies, ssimplify causal pathways, ensure outputs are realistically linked to outcomes, focus remaining funding effectively, and improve the results framework and M&E plan.
  - Prioritize fewer, higher-impact strategies where resources are limited.
  - Revise the M&E Plan taking into consideration detailed recommendations mentioned within this report, such as revising indicators to be SMART and outcome-oriented and systematically track and disaggregate by gender, youth, and indigenous people and local communities.

[2] Rating system is provided in Annex 10.
[3] Rating system is provided in Annex 12.
[4] Rating system is provided in Annex 11.

- Improve data management systems, including version control and centralized repositories.
- Use qualitative methods (case studies, stories) to capture social change and narratives to justify attribution to the Project.

- **Enhance Safeguards and Cross-Cutting Integration**
  - Embed safeguards and GRM into results chains as well as the results framework.
  - Provide extended training on safeguards and GRM to Executing Partners and other relevant stakeholders, especially for future projects, and broaden outreach efforts to ensure remote IPLC) are included. Strengthen partnerships with health and social service organizations for gender-based violence and community safety risks.

- **Build Sustainability Pathways**
  - Develop a comprehensive exit strategy and refined component specific risk mitigation plan to better solidify the sustainability of the outcomes.
  - Strengthen institutional linkages and policy uptake to embed Project results.
  - Expand private sector partnerships to sustain value chains beyond Project funding.

- **Optimize Efficiency and Resource Use**
  - Review financial protocols to avoid under- or overspending by components.
  - Shift funding to component 5 – M&E to ensure coverage for the entire project duration.

- **GEF-Level Considerations for Future Projects**
  - Increase budgets for M&E and Knowledge Management to ensure adequate tracking of outcomes and reporting on lessons learned.
  - Allow for greater flexibility in collaborative arrangements when working with trusted partners, such as WWF country offices, particularly in complex contexts where their teams have demonstrated proven expertise and strong implementation capacity. This could include the addition of dedicated technical staff to both (a) provide strategic guidance and mentorship to the Project Management Unit (PMU), and (b) offer direct support for on-the-ground implementation.
  - Encourage the design of projects with a clear focus, avoiding an overly ambitious scope that spans multiple thematic areas or geographic landscapes, to ensure greater depth, effectiveness, and sustainability of outcomes.

These adjustments would significantly strengthen adaptive management, reduce delays, and enhance the effectiveness of large, complex projects operating in challenging field contexts.

Conclusion

This WWF-US GEF Project is at a critical juncture. It has achieved notable progress in strengthening governance, livelihoods, and biodiversity management, but structural weaknesses in design, M&E, and sustainability strategies limit its ability to demonstrate long-

term impact. The second half of the project presents an opportunity to consolidate gains, refine strategy, and ensure durable results.

At the same time, the evaluation highlights important systemic lessons for the **Global Environment Facility**. More flexible staffing arrangements and more robust M&E budgets are essential for projects of this scale and complexity. These adjustments would not only ease implementation challenges but also ensure that projects can capture and communicate their full impact. By strengthening project-level design and addressing GEF-level structural constraints, future initiatives will be better positioned to deliver lasting conservation and community resilience across the Congo Basin and beyond.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAFEBEN	*Appui à l'Auto Promotion de la Femme de Boumba et Ngoko*
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
BACUDA	Bagyélis Cultural and Development Association
CBI	Congo Basin Institute
CBSL IP	Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program
CMNP	Campo Ma'an National Park
COMIFAC	Central African Forests Commission
EMM	Eco Markets & Measures
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanisms
IMET	Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
KII	Key Informant Interview
KM	Knowledge Management
LNP	Lobéké National Park
LUP	Land Use Plan/Planning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MINAS	Ministry of Social Affairs / *Ministère des Affaires Sociales*
MINEPDED	Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development / *Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et du Développement Durable*
MINFOF	Ministry of Forests and Wildlife / *Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune*
MINEPAT	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development / *Ministère de l'Économie, de la Planification et de l'Aménagement du Territoire*
MOU	Memorandums of Understanding
MTR	Midterm Review (evaluation)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ONACC	*Observatoire National sur les Changements Climatiques*
PADI-DJA	*Programme d'Aménagement et de Développement Intégré* (Dja mining loop)
PLADDT	Local Land Use and Sustainable Development Plans / *Plan Locaux d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable du Territoire*
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNDP	*Programme National de Développement Participatif* (National Participatory Development Program)
ProDoc	Project Document

RACOPY	Pygmy Concerted Action Research Network/ *Réseau Recherches Actions Concertées Pygmées*
ROSE	*Réseau des ONG locales du Sud est du Cameroun*
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TNS	Sangha Tri-National
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRIDOM	Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
WWF-US	World Wildlife Fund, Inc.
WWF-Int'l	World Wide Fund for Nature

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I. Introduction to Evaluation

This document details the result of a Midterm Review conducted for the WWF-US GEF Project entitled "Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin" (the Project). The evaluation took place between June and September 2025. It included extensive review of documentation, observations in the field over the course of a 16-day period, interviews both virtually and in person, and focus group discussions with beneficiaries of the Project. The evaluation methodology, project background, findings, and recommendations are detailed within.

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

In accordance with World Wildlife Fund, Inc. (WWF-US) policies and procedures, all full-sized projects financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are required to undergo a Midterm Review (MTR). As this Project meets the criteria, WWF-US initiated a competitive procurement process to select an independent evaluator. Through this process, Eco Markets & Measures LLC was contracted to carry out the MTR.

The principal objectives of the MTR are to:

- Assess progress toward Project objectives, outputs, and outcomes;
- Examine the extent, magnitude, sustainability and potential for Project impacts to date;
- Identify any Project design problems and challenges; and
- Draw lessons learned that can improve the project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Project benefits.

The terms of reference (TOR; without annexes) for this MTR are included in Annex 1.

1.2 Methodology

In line with WWF-US Evaluation Guidelines[5], GEF Terminal Evaluation[6], and GEF Ethical Guidelines[7], this MTR has taken a comprehensive look at the Project in its entirety from design through three years of implementation (2022-2025). The evaluation lens (key evaluation criteria) as well as the evaluation approach are presented in turn.

1.2.1 Evaluation Lens

The key evaluation criteria, as put forth in the TOR for this assignment, included the following:

[5] WWF Evaluation Guidelines , published on the WWF Program Standards public website.

[6] Evaluation Policy, Monitoring Policy, and GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidelines.

[7] GEF Ethical Guidelines as published on GEF website.

- **Relevance:** Do programs address beneficiary needs? Has programming adjusted to changes in circumstances/need?
- **Coherence:** Do project activities fit with other interventions? Are they complementary to other programs of WWF-US and/or other implementing partners and external programs (government or other entities) in the Congo Basin?
- **Efficiency:** How well has the project delivered results in an economic and timely manner? Have resources been used wisely?
- **Effectiveness:** Have the project's approaches achieved its objectives and its projected outcomes to date?
- **Impact:** What difference have the project's approaches and activities made? What positive, negative, intended or unintended, impacts have been made?
- **Sustainability:** Are the benefits of the project activities to date expected to continue? To what extent are the net benefits expected to endure?
- **Adaptive capacity:** To what extent does the project use monitoring and evaluation, lessons learned, and adaptive management to meet targets and mitigate project issues?

In addition to these criteria, the evaluation team has analyzed **cross-cutting issues**, including social and environmental safeguards, grievance redress mechanisms, gender equality and mainstreaming, and stakeholder engagement. The evaluation team has considered whether relevant cross-cutting issues were integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring and follow-up of activities and whether measures were undertaken (such as training/support) to Project staff to improve the integration of various cross-cutting issues into their work.

The evaluation matrix utilized for this evaluation is presented in Annex 2. The results are presented based on these criteria.

1.2.2 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation team took a systematic approach to the design and implementation of this MTR. The evaluation took place in three phases: (1) Inception, (2) Fieldwork/Data Collection, and (3) Analysis and Reporting Phases. Both qualitative and quantitative information was sought, reviewed, analyzed and compiled, resulting in distinct recommendations for the second half of this project. Data collection included:

- Review of more than 100 documents, as provided by WWF-GEF Agency; See Annex 3 for a list of documents reviewed.
- 16-day fieldwork from the capital of Yaoundé to each of the three critical landscapes of the Project; See Annex 4 for a map of the Project area and Annex 5 for the final fieldwork itinerary.
- 41 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), which took place in August and September 2025, both virtually and in person; See Annex 6 for a complete list of persons interviewed.

- 31 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which also took place in person during the fieldwork; See Annex 6 as well.

Results were triangulated to the best extent possible by cross checking documentation with interviews, focus groups, and observations. Outliers and discrepancies are noted within, if/where applicable.

1.2.3 Ethical Considerations

This MTR was conducted in adherence with ethical guidelines and standards, ensuring that the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants were protected throughout the process. Key ethical protocols included informed consent, confidentiality and data protection, minimizing harm (approaching sensitive topics with care), cultural sensitivity and respect, transparency and accountability.

A gender-responsive approach was central to stakeholder engagement throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation team aimed to ensure that the diverse needs, perspectives, and experiences of all stakeholders – particularly women, youth, and other marginalized groups – were recognized, valued, and meaningfully integrated. As the team engaged stakeholders, the evaluation aimed to challenge gender stereotypes, promote equity, and ensure that findings can be used to inform gender-responsive feedback and programming. This gender-responsive approach aims to ensure that the evaluation not only reflects diverse lived experiences but also contributes to more equitable and inclusive outcomes.

1.3 Limitations of the Evaluation

Conducting an evaluation of this scale – both geographically and in terms of the financial and technical complexity of the Project from its design through implementation – requires a substantial investment of time and resources. While the evaluation team worked diligently to deliver a comprehensive and high-quality assessment, it is recommended that future budgets for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including both midterm and terminal evaluations, be more closely aligned with the scope and ambition of such initiatives.

To meet the full requirements of the evaluation – including analysis across multiple sites, components, and stakeholders – the five-member team voluntarily extended their time commitment beyond what was originally planned. This flexibility and dedication are commendable and reflect a strong commitment to the quality and integrity of the process. Nevertheless, to reduce reliance on such extraordinary efforts, both GEF and WWF-US may wish to consider allocating increased resources for M&E activities going forward.

1.3.1 Fieldwork Constraints

Several logistical challenges emerged during the field phase of the evaluation. Travel between sites was often time-consuming, and accommodations and food availability along

the routes were limited. These factors created a demanding work environment for both the evaluation team and Project staff. In future evaluations, allocating additional time for fieldwork would help ensure that data collection can proceed at a pace consistent with standard working conditions, while still allowing for meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

1.3.2 Knowledge Management and Document Access

Timely access to well-organized and finalized documentation is essential for an efficient and effective evaluation. For this assignment, the evaluation team was given access to over 100 documents via a shared drive. While initial folder structures were clearly labeled, several folders were found to be empty, and key documents – such as the updated M&E plan and latest financial reports – were either missing or only made available late in the evaluation process. In some cases, the most relevant documents were located in unexpected folders or were only available in draft form.

For future evaluations, it would be beneficial to ensure that the shared documentation includes only the most up-to-date and finalized versions, clearly labeled in accordance with the TOR. Providing a concise set of essential documents at the outset, with additional materials supplied upon request, would enhance the efficiency and accuracy of the evaluation process.

II. Project Description & Development Context

2.1 Project Duration

This project is a six-year initiative which began at the end of April 2022 and according to the current terms of the agreement, will be completed at the end of September 2028.

2.2 Summary of the Project with Expected Results

The Project aims to improve the management of Cameroon's vital forest landscapes in the Congo Basin. It seeks to protect biodiversity and reduce deforestation while supporting the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Over six years, the Project aims to address the root causes of forest degradation by implementing four main strategies:

- Promoting inclusive and informed land use planning,
- Strengthening conservation and governance of key forest areas and protecting endangered species,
- Supporting sustainable forest-based value chains involving the private sector and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs),
- Sharing best practices to encourage wider adoption and learning.

The Project is structured around five components:

Component 1: Integrated Land Use Planning

- Develops participatory land use plans across 1.2 million hectares in the TRIDOM landscape.

Component 2: Forest Conservation and Governance

- Improves the management of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké National Parks through inclusive governance.
- Strengthens forest and wildlife management in nearby areas through stakeholder engagement and fair agreements.
- Enhances disease monitoring systems to reduce zoonotic disease risks in and around the parks.

Component 3: Sustainable Forest Management and Value Chains

- Builds sustainable non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains that benefit at least 30 IPLC communities.
- Expands the Ebony Project to create a socially responsible hardwood value chain with restoration and income benefits.

Component 4: Sustainable Tourism

- Develops a sustainable tourism sector involving IPLCs and the private sector, generating income while protecting biodiversity.

Component 5: Monitoring, Learning, and Coordination

- Tracks project results and shares lessons to support adaptive management and sustainable forest management (SFM) at national and regional levels.

2.3 Geographic Scope of the Project

The Project operates across three priority transboundary landscapes in Cameroon: Sangha Tri-national (TNS), the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkébé (TRIDOM), and Campo Ma'an. Each plays a critical role in regional biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and community livelihoods.

Sangha Tri-national Landscape (TNS)
Located in southeastern Cameroon and extending into the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, the TNS includes three contiguous national parks: Lobéké (Cameroon), Nouabalé-Ndoki (Republic of Congo), and Dzanga-Ndoki (Central African Republic). TNS represents one of Central Africa's most intact forest ecosystems and serves as a key stronghold for wildlife conservation and carbon storage. The landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage site, benefits from a well-established transboundary management framework and includes significant community engagement and scientific monitoring.

Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Landscape (TRIDOM)
Situated in southern Cameroon and crossing into Gabon and the Republic of Congo, TRIDOM encompasses large areas of dense rainforest. Key protected areas include the Dja Faunal Reserve (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Minkébé National Park (Gabon), and Odzala-Kokoua National Park (Republic of Congo). This landscape is particularly important for forest elephants and great apes and supports numerous endemic species. TRIDOM is a long-standing regional landscape where governments and partners focus on maintaining ecological connectivity, strengthening anti-poaching efforts, and promoting sustainable forest use.

Campo Ma'an Landscape
Located in southwestern Cameroon, along the Atlantic coast and bordering Equatorial Guinea, this landscape is anchored by Campo Ma'an National Park (CMP) – covering approximately 264,000 hectares. The area features lowland tropical forests, mangroves, and swamp ecosystems. Its surrounding buffer zones include community forests and timber concessions, designed to support both biodiversity and sustainable land use. The landscape is home to key species such as forest elephants, western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, and a variety of endemic plants.

Together, these three landscapes form the ecological backbone of Cameroon's southern forest region and represent critical components of the wider Congo Basin. Their protection and sustainable management are central to the Project's goals of conserving biodiversity, enhancing climate resilience, and supporting community well-being.

2.4 Project Oversight and Execution

The **WWF-GEF Agency** is part of WWF-US and includes an international team of specialists responsible for managing and overseeing projects funded by the Global Environment Facility

(GEF). The Agency is supported by technical experts from **WWF-US**, who provide additional guidance and backstopping across a range of thematic areas. Together, the WWF-GEF Agency and WWF-US bring deep expertise in environmental science, policy, project design, and results-based management, ensuring the Project aligns with GEF priorities and delivers impact on the ground.

The **Project Management Unit (PMU)**, based in Cameroon, is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and implementation of the Project. The team currently comprises of **seven core positions** (previously eight, as now the Gender and Social Development function will be integrated into the Environmental and Social Safeguards Officer role).

Key positions include:

- Project Manager (PM)
- Finance Manager (FM)
- Environmental and Social Safeguards , and Gender and Social Development Officer (ESSGSDO)
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management Officer (MEL)
- Two Landscape Operational Assistants (LOAs)
- Project Administrative Assistant (PAA)

All positions are staffed by professionals contracted through **WWF-Cameroon** (as part of WWF-International), the legal executing entity that provides administrative and contractual support. In addition to the core PMU team, **four technical staff from MINEPDED** contribute to the Project on a part-time basis, ensuring alignment with national environmental policies and priorities.

2.5 Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

The Project brings together a diverse range of stakeholders and beneficiaries, reflecting its multifaceted approach to environmental sustainability and community development. Key public sector stakeholders play an active role in steering and implementing project activities, ensuring alignment with national priorities and policy frameworks. The Project is executed through a collaborative network of 11 partners, comprising both non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government-led initiatives, each contributing technical expertise and on-the-ground capacity. At the core of the Project's impact are its primary beneficiaries – women, youth, and IPLCs – residing across three targeted landscapes in Cameroon. These groups are central to the Project's goals, with interventions designed to enhance their resilience, promote sustainable livelihoods, and strengthen their roles in natural resource governance.

Government Ministries:

The Project benefits from the active involvement of several national ministries and local public authorities, whose roles are essential for coordination, oversight, and the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

- **Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)** – As the GEF Operational Focal Point in Cameroon, MINEPDED plays a central role in the coordination and oversight of the Project. It ensures alignment with national environmental priorities, facilitates inter-ministerial collaboration, and oversees the integration of environmental and social safeguards. MINEPDED also contributes to monitoring and evaluation efforts and supports capacity-building for stakeholders involved in implementation.
- **Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF)** – MINFOF is responsible for the management and protection of forests and wildlife, including the administration of Cameroon's national parks. Through its decentralized structures, MINFOF staff - including park wardens and rangers – are actively involved in implementing conservation activities across the target landscapes. The Ministry also supports forest regeneration, sustainable forestry, and anti-poaching enforcement.
- **Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUR)** – MINTOUR leads the development and regulation of Cameroon's tourism sector. As a partner in this Project, MINTOUR supports the development of ecotourism initiatives in and around Campo Ma'an National Park, working to ensure sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure development, and private sector engagement.
- **Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)** – MINAS plays a key role in promoting the welfare and inclusion of vulnerable populations, including women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Through its participation in this Project, MINAS supports activities aimed at social inclusion, safeguards, and engagement of IPLCs in project decision-making and benefit-sharing.

Local Authorities:

Local-level engagement is critical to the Project's success. Regional and municipal representatives of the above ministries – based in locations such as Yokadouma, Salapoumbé, Mintom, Mouloundou, and Ngoyla – contribute to local coordination, stakeholder consultations, and ongoing monitoring. These decentralized government actors ensure that national policies are implemented effectively on the ground and that local realities are communicated back to central authorities.

In addition, **elected mayors** and **appointed administrators (sous-préfets)** are actively involved in project governance. They participate in stakeholder meetings, support local outreach, and help ensure that project activities respond to community needs and are aligned with broader administrative responsibilities.

Executing Partners:

The Project is being implemented through a diverse group of organizations, each selected based on their established presence in the target landscapes and their proven track record and prior relationships with communities. Currently, the Project has formal agreements with 11 Executing Partners, who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of Project activities. These partners are listed below in alphabetical order:

AAFEBEN

Appui à l'Auto Promotion de la Femme de Boumba et Ngoko (AAFEBEN), based in Bertoua, supports NTFP value chain development in TRIDOM (Ngyola and Mintom) with the goal of promoting sustainable resource management and income generation. It offers capacity building in financial literacy, leadership, and market research, and ensures the implementation of environmental safeguards and Indigenous Peoples Plans. AAFEBEN works across Components 1, 2, and 3.

AWF

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is an international conservation organization focused on protecting wildlife and wild lands across Africa. Within this Project, AWF operates in Campo Ma'an National Park (Components 2), where it contributes to park and business planning, transboundary collaboration, and anti-poaching awareness.

BACUDA

Bagyélis Cultural and Development Association (BACUDA) is based in Kribi (Western Cameroon) and serves as the focal point for implementing the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) in Campo and Akom II (Component 2). It trains communities on conflict resolution, engages local leaders in dispute mediation, and raises awareness of community rights. BACUDA also is a member of RACOPY.

ONACC

Observatoire National sur les Changements Climatiques (ONACC) is a governmental institution created in 2009 under the technical supervision of MINEPDED. Its mandate includes the monitoring and evaluation of the socio-economic and environmental impacts of climate change, the collecting and analyzing climate-related data, producing climate projections, and informing the public about climate change, risks, adaptation and mitigation. It collaborates with PADI-DJA and PNDP in Component 1, working closely with them and the councils and village actors.

PADI-DJA

PADI-DJA (*Programme d'Aménagement et de Développement Intégré* (Dja mining loop) is a Cameroonian government initiative created to manage the social and economic impact of mining activities on local communities. For this Project, PADI-DJA focuses on socio-economic aspects of land use planning. It collaborates with Programme National de Développement

Participatif (PNDP) and local authorities to develop land use plans that reflect community priorities and needs. PADI-DJA is involved in Component 1 and works closely with councils and village actors.

RACOPY

Réseau Recherches Actions Concertées Pygmées (RACOPY) advocates for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Baka and Bagyeli communities in Campo Ma'an, TNS and TRIDOM landscapes. It implements the Grievance Redress Mechanisms, supports the Indigenous Peoples Plan, and promotes forest access through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in Lobéké National Park (LNP) and the TNS landscape (Component 2). RACOPY is also a member of the project steering committee.

ROSE Yokadouma

ROSE (Réseau des ONG locales du Sud est du Cameroun) is a community-based organization in Yokadouma that plays a dual role in this Project as a steering committee member and implementer. It works with local communities to promote legal frameworks, support NTFP transformation, prevent illegal hunting, and build indigenous people's capacity on land and resource rights. ROSE is involved in Components 2 and 3.

Tropical Forest

Tropical Forest is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) supporting sustainable forest management and combating illegal logging. In collaboration with WWF-International and MINFOF, it helps communities in Somalomo (TRIDOM) develop NTFP value chains, access markets, and acquire legal documentation for their community-based organizations. It is involved in Component 3 and participates in the project steering committee.

TUBE AWUE (Ebodje)

TUBE AWUE is a local organization implementing the marine turtle conservation and tourism component in the Campo Ma'an landscape. It works with the Eboutou community to protect marine turtles through eco-guide training, night patrols, hatchery construction, and public awareness campaigns. Their activities fall under Component 4.

UCLA CBI

The Congo Basin Institute (CBI) is a research and education initiative led by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in partnership with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). CBI in partnership with Taylor Guitars, co-owners of Crelicam – an ebony mill in Cameroon – launched The Ebony Project in 2015, focused on reforesting West African ebony and improving livelihoods in Cameroon through community-based reforestation and research. For this Project, CBI is focused on agroforestry, particularly the propagation and planting of fruit and hardwood trees, including but not limited to ebony. It collaborates with

communities, promotes tree nurseries, and introduces propagation techniques such as marcotting and grafting. UCLA contributes to Component 3 of the project.

WWF Cameroon
Based in Yaoundé, WWF Cameroon (an office of WWF-International) is firstly the financial administrator of the Project (executing role). Secondly, WWF Cameroon is supported by the Project to carry out a few specific activities. WWF Cameroon is and works in both the landscapes of Campo Ma'an National Park (CMNP) and Lobéké National Park (LNP). Under this Project, WWF Cameroon contributes to biodiversity monitoring, gorilla habituation, marine turtle protection, anti-poaching efforts, and the One Health program (Components 2 and 4). WWF-International also funds and collaborates with partners, manages satellite and acoustic monitoring, supports indigenous rights, and operates the only wildlife lab in Cameroon.

Community Beneficiaries:

The primary beneficiaries of the Project are the communities living within the three target landscapes: Campo Ma'an, TRIDOM, and TNS. The project places particular emphasis on supporting women, youth, and IPLCs, who often face systemic challenges related to marginalization, limited access to resources, and vulnerability to environmental changes. The Project aims to prioritize these groups across various project activities to ensure inclusive participation and equitable benefit-sharing.

Many community members, including those from these target groups, participate in the project through Community-Based Organizations, which serve as a key mechanism for implementation and capacity building at the local level.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)
CBOs, also referred to as Common Initiative Groups (CIGs), are formally registered groups composed of at least five members, in accordance with regulations set by Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. To be legally recognized according to Cameroon law, a CBO must have a well-structured executive body as well as established statutes and internal regulations that guide its operations.

Executing Partners, with support of this Project, have supported several CBOs to register legally. Membership in these CBOs is limited to individuals who have registered and contributed their membership dues. Each CBO is managed by an executive committee responsible for overseeing both material and financial resources on behalf of the group. A benefit-sharing mechanism is in place to ensure distribution of benefits among members.

These CBOs are actively involved in various Project components, particularly in the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) value chain (Component 3). They participate in the collection and transformation of NTFPs such as *Njangsang* and *Bush Mango*, utilizing equipment

procured with support of the Project. Some CBOs are also engaged in agroforestry activities and in the development of Land Use Plans, particularly in TRIDOM.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)

Among the IPLCs in the Project area are primarily Baka and Bagyeli ethnic groups, who are recognized as Indigenous Peoples in Cameroon. Traditionally nomadic and dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods, these groups rely on hunting and the gathering of wild foods. For many years, however, these groups have begun transitioning to more sedentary lifestyles. Their traditional rights have been increasingly affected by the creation of protected areas, especially in Lobéké NP and Campo Ma'an NP. To address this, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), in 2019 and 2023, have been established, allowing Indigenous Peoples continued access within protected areas as well as in the permanent forest estate in the peripheral zones of those protected areas , for their traditional practices.

Women

Gender roles vary within IPLCs: women are primarily responsible for gathering fruits and food, while men engage mainly in hunting. Women within these communities play a central role, particularly in the collection of forest products. To promote inclusiveness, the Project developed a Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP).

Youth Engagement

Youth (ages 15 – 35[8]) represent an important segment of the Project's beneficiary base and serve as a key source of labor and innovation. They are involved in several components of the Project, including the Gorilla Habituation and Marine Turtle Conservation projects, often serving as trackers or eco-guards. Within CBOs, youth are trained to operate and maintain project-provided machinery and play a leadership role in the management of finances and resources.

From design to implementation, the Project has prioritized the engagement of youth, women, and IPLCs. This inclusive approach aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of Project outcomes by building local ownership and capacity.

[8] Has not been explicitly stated by the Project or GEF-7. Cameroon is a signatory to the African Youth Charter, which defines youth (or "young people") as persons aged 15 to 35 years.

III. Findings

The evaluation team finds the Project to be on a positive trajectory, with tangible progress made toward delivering meaningful benefits to both communities and the environment. These efforts are well aligned with national, local, and international priorities, strategies, and regulatory frameworks, reflecting a strong commitment to integrated and context-sensitive implementation. From the outset, the Project demonstrated a careful and deliberate approach to the establishment of social and environmental safeguards, as well as due diligence in the selection and engagement of Executing Partners – ensuring that implementation began with clear intentions and integrity.

At the same time, some limitations were observed, particularly in relation to the theory of change, results framework, and the M&E system. These elements presented challenges in fully assessing the Project's long-term sustainability and strategic assumptions. Addressing these areas could enhance the ability to demonstrate impact more clearly over time.

Nonetheless, the Project is largely being implemented as planned. Despite some early start-up challenges, the executing entities have demonstrated commendable use of adaptive management approaches, which have contributed to improved performance and responsiveness as the Project has progressed.

The more detailed findings from this MTR are organized according to the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and adaptive management. Additional observations on cross-cutting issues are also included. Both project design and implementation to date are assessed under the appropriate criteria. The first four criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness) were rated according to GEF rating scales (Annex 7).

3.1 Relevance

The Project was designed in close consultation with stakeholders, reflecting national and local priorities. This inclusive approach has ensured that the Project responds to a broad range of stakeholder needs and mandates. However, in seeking to meet the expectations of numerous partners and stakeholders, the Project design is notably ambitious – covering a wide geographic area, engaging multiple Executing Partners, and implementing a broad suite of activities. This has raised challenges around practicality and feasibility, even within the generous six-year implementation timeframe.

A Theory of Change (TOC) was presented in the Project Document (ProDoc), both at the overall and subcomponent levels. However, significant gaps and assumptions limit its usefulness as an implementation, evaluation, and adaptive management tool. While the Results Framework provides more detail through the inclusion of outputs, it similarly rests on

assumptions that the Project's activities will lead to ambitious outcomes, which realistically need a broader suite of strategies (and corresponding activities as well as budget) to achieve them. These expectations appear to exceed the realistic scope and resources of the Project. Although the concept of additionality and plans for scaling were not robustly developed in the ProDoc, the design does acknowledge opportunities to build on existing initiatives in the landscape. These synergies are an important element of relevance, though they stop short of articulating a clear strategy for accelerating impact.

Importantly, stakeholder interviews conveyed overall satisfaction with how the Project aligns with their needs and priorities. The Project design reflects alignment with relevant policies, institutional mandates, and national and international strategies. MINEPDED, in particular, emphasized its strong commitment to the Project, **identifying it as one of the most significant among the current GEF portfolios in Cameroon.**

Overall rating (GEF) – Moderately Satisfactory

3.1.1 Meeting Stakeholder Needs

The Project was guided by a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, with consultations occurring from early design through implementation. The process included formal and informal engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, traditional leaders, human rights organizations, and IPLCs. While a more detailed assessment of the plan's effectiveness is provided later in the report, it is evident that stakeholder needs were indeed embedded into the Project, almost to a fault. Pressures were felt by the Project to meet very many diverse needs. As a result, the Project is spread thin (as further discussed within).

3.1.2 Country Ownership & Alignment with Priorities

The Project demonstrates a strong degree of country ownership. From the outset, it was designed to align with a wide range of policies, strategies, and frameworks at the national and regional levels. This includes alignment with major international agreements and regional initiatives such as the Yaoundé Declaration, Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) Convergence Plan (2015–2025), and the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), among others.

Domestically, the Project is consistent with Cameroon's legal and policy frameworks, including the "Cameroon Vision 2035", the National Program for Environmental Management (PNGE), and various sectoral strategies related to forest, biodiversity, and land use planning. MINEPDED has expressed high-level support for the Project, with the Minister noting personal interest due to its potential for widespread impact across the landscape.

3.1.3 Theory of Change

The ProDoc includes both an overarching Theory of Change (TOC) and component-specific TOCs. While the TOC elements are generally relevant and aligned with the Project's objectives, the overall structure is complex and does not clearly articulate the causal pathways from activities to outputs, outcomes, and ultimately to threat reduction and conservation impact. The evaluation team found it challenging to trace these linkages, particularly between the TOC and the M&E plan. This disconnect was also noted in interviews, where Project staff indicated limited awareness or use of the TOC in guiding implementation.

The ProDoc provides a detailed overview of major threats to the landscape, including unsustainable resource use, poaching, illegal wildlife trade, habitat conversion, and climate change. However, it transitions abruptly into the discussion of "barriers," largely attributed to weak landscape governance, with limited analysis of the root causes. Although contributing factors are referenced under each barrier, they are not clearly mapped, making it difficult to discern causal relationships. Project strategies would benefit from a more structured mapping of governance-related challenges and the development of results chains that articulate the pathway of outcomes leading to threat reduction and improvement of conservation values.

While the connection between barriers and components is evident – often mirrored in language – the link between components and strategies remains unclear. Project staff confirmed that strategies exist within components, but these are not explicitly described. A graphical summary of the TOC from the ProDoc is provided in Figure 4 of the ProDoc as well as Annex 8 of this report for ease of reference. However, its utility is limited; it lists assumptions, barriers, and drivers without visually depicting the relationships among them. As a result, key linkages and assumptions remain opaque, reducing the TOC's value as a tool for planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Each component is accompanied by a TOC, and in most cases, outputs and outcomes listed in the M&E plan are reflected in the TOC. The exception is Outcome 2.3 (related to zoonotic disease surveillance), which is not included under Component 2's TOC.

Despite these gaps, project activities were found to be relevant, and the outputs provide a reasonable projection of what should be achieved if activities are implemented successfully. Outputs and outcomes are generally appropriate for achieving the intended results of each component.

The TOC would benefit from more explicit articulation of the team's assumptions about how expected outcomes will lead to threat reduction and conservation of ecological values. While some relationships can be inferred, a more transparent structure would allow for better evaluation of the effect of adding or removing activities as the Project adapts to changing circumstances. Such a structure would also improve the usefulness of the TOC as a tool to

ensure activities are aligned with the ultimate aims of the project and that the M&E plan is set up to demonstrate effectiveness and impact. Currently, few explicit connections exist between activities and the reduction of threats or enhancement of conservation values. Though the TOC suggests that achieving all components would lead to threat reduction (e.g., as depicted in the TOC graphic), the underlying logic is not clearly laid out.

Recommendations:

- **Improve TOC-M&E Alignment:** In the TOC narrative for each component, clearly reference associated activities, outputs, and outcomes (e.g., using numbering from the M&E plan). This would improve coherence between planning and evaluation tools and help ensure all outcomes – such as Outcome 2.3 – are captured.
- **Adopt Results Chains:** To enhance clarity and functionality, it is recommended that the Project – and future initiatives – support the TOC description with a Results Chain. This diagramming tool helps a project:
    a. Clearly identify expected outcomes and what will be monitored;
    b. Link assumptions to specific outcomes;
    c. Organize outputs and outcomes in logical and chronological order;
    d. Highlight potential risks and unintended consequences;
    e. Map which threats and barriers are addressed by each component; and
    f. Support peer review and adaptive management, including annual work planning.

  Developing Results Chains for the overall TOC and each component would make the TOC more accessible and actionable, while also strengthening alignment with the M&E plan. Most importantly, it would enable the Project team to fully utilize the TOC as a dynamic tool for implementation, learning, and accountability.

3.1.4 Clarity of Objectives and Components

Despite the shortcomings of the TOC, the Project's components and objectives are generally well-articulated. This clarity has allowed the PMU to maintain a clear direction regarding outputs and sub-activities. That said, there remains a question as to whether the current activities are sufficient in scale and scope to achieve the desired outcomes and impacts. This gap underscores the importance of revisiting and possibly refining the strategic logic and activity design under each component.

3.1.5 Practicality and Feasibility

The Project's ambition – in terms of its geographic spread, number of Executing Partners, and breadth of activities – poses challenges to its feasibility. While efforts were made during design and early implementation to reduce the scope (e.g., scaling back Component 3 in the Campo Ma'an landscape), the Project remains ambitious and stretched thin geographically and thematically.

Recommendation:

- **Revisit the strategic approach:** For each component, revisit the strategic approach to ensure that activities are adequately tailored and resourced to achieve outputs, and that assumptions are clearly linked to outcomes and impacts, monitored, practical and feasible.

3.1.6 Additionality & Design for Scale

The ProDoc makes general reference to building on ongoing initiatives but falls short of clearly articulating a strategy for additionality or scaling. The design does not present a compelling vision of how the Project would catalyze long-term transformation or generate impact beyond its immediate activities. Although synergies with existing work are implied, the absence of a defined approach to scaling limits the Project's potential to leverage early successes into broader systemic change.

Despite these design limitations, the Project has delivered clear added value in practice. Several Executing Partners reported that the Project enabled actions and outcomes that would not have occurred otherwise, including community engagement mechanisms and localized problem-solving that directly addressed past project shortcomings. These contributions are discussed in more depth in Section 3.5 (Impacts).

A notable example of value added and learning from past failures comes from ROSE, an Executing Partner working in southeastern Cameroon. ROSE built on lessons learned from a previous GIZ-funded project that failed due to poor loan repayment practices. In response, ROSE developed a new "revolving fund" strategy that avoids traditional loans while still enabling communities – particularly marginalized groups like the Baka – to access immediate financial support. Under this model, community members "sell" NTFPs to their CBO at the current low-end market price, receiving funds upfront. The NTFPs are stored until market prices improve, at which point the CBO sells them and gives the seller the difference between the initial and final sale price. This approach incentivizes collective bargaining, builds group cohesion, and encourages forward planning.

This type of innovative, locally adapted mechanism illustrates the Project's potential for catalytic impact – particularly when partners are empowered to adapt strategies to local realities. While these successes underscore the Project's potential, they also highlight the need for a more intentional framework around additionality and scaling. Strengthening this aspect of Project strategy would help ensure that valuable innovations like ROSE's model can be sustained and replicated across the broader landscape.

Recommendation:

- **Pathway to Scale:** For any follow-on project, greater strategic emphasis should be placed on identifying pathways to scale, including sustainability, replication potential, and catalytic partnerships.

3.1.7 Alignment and Responsiveness to Stakeholder Needs

Community-level interviews indicate a strong appreciation for the Project's activities, particularly in areas where support for NTFP initiatives, training, and equipment has had a direct and positive impact. Overall, the Project is seen as relevant and responsive to local priorities, reflecting a continued alignment with stakeholder needs.

However, communities also raised broader development concerns – such as the lack of access to government-issued identity cards, clean drinking water, and healthcare – which fall outside the Project's core scope. While these issues are not directly addressed by the Project, they shape the broader context in which stakeholders engage with Project activities. In some instances, these needs may indirectly influence outcomes (e.g., the hygienic storage of NTFPs or community participation in land tenure processes). Annex 9 captures feedback from the beneficiaries through FGDs and interviews conducted on behalf of this evaluation. While many of the needs are outside of the scope of this Project, the list can help provide context, while informing Executing Partners and future projects.

While stakeholder needs have remained relatively stable to date – requiring no major programmatic shifts – the Project's strong coordination with government counterparts and commitment to adaptive management position it well to respond should priorities shift during the remaining implementation period.

Recommendations:

- **Assess hygiene:** Assess hygiene conditions for NTFP processing and identify any risks or mitigation measures to ensure product quality and safety.
- **Barriers to land tenure:** Evaluate the relevance of official identification in accessing land tenure processes and explore whether the Project can facilitate linkages with national initiatives to reduce related barriers.

3.2 Coherence

The Project demonstrates a commendable level of coherence with both internal and external frameworks, reflecting strong alignment with existing strategies, programs, and institutional mandates at national, regional, and international levels. It was deliberately designed to build on the lessons learned and foundational work of previous and ongoing initiatives across the Congo Basin landscape, avoiding duplication and reinforcing synergies.

Overall rating (GEF) – Satisfactory

3.2.1 Internal Coherence

From the outset, the Project was conceived to complement and enhance existing government and partner initiatives operating in Cameroon's forest and environment sectors. It builds upon the capacities and thematic competencies of potential Executing Partners, aiming to support activities that align with their ongoing work. The Project design also reflects strong

alignment with key national strategies and policy frameworks – including Cameroon Vision 2035, national forest and biodiversity strategies, and various sectoral programs – ensuring coherence with country-level development priorities.

This Project is one of the "child projects" under the broader GEF-7 **Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)**, and its design aligns closely with the objectives and framework of that program. As such, it contributes to a regional effort to catalyze transformational change in forest conservation and sustainable ecosystem management. The CBSL IP encourages landscape-level approaches and regional collaboration across several countries in the Congo Basin, including the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Republic of Congo. This broader programmatic structure reinforces internal coherence through shared objectives and an emphasis on integrated and participatory management of forest landscapes.

While coordination among Executing Partners has generally supported internal coherence, the Project's complexity and wide geographic scope present challenges. Executing Partners expressed interest in learning from one another – as a form of cross component sharing and are open to meeting more frequently. Further efforts are needed to strengthen coordination mechanisms and clarify roles to avoid fragmentation in implementation.

Recommendation:

- **Strengthen Coordination among Executing Partners:** Strengthen inter-partner coordination through more frequent exchanges and clearer communication channels to ensure coherence and compound benefits across project components and geographies.

3.2.2 External Coherence

The Project was also designed to complement a wide range of **non-GEF programs and initiatives** active in the target landscapes. From the design phase, deliberate efforts were made to align with key national and regional programs, including:

- National Land Use Planning process
- LandCam Project
- MINEPAT-PADI-DJA
- National Program for Participatory Development (Phase 3)
- GIZ ProPFE (*Protection des Forêts et de l'Environnement*)
- WWF-Cameroon's Ngoyla-Mintom Project
- AWF's national conservation program
- FEDEC, KfW "Basket Fund"
- Climate finance programs
- IUCN's anti-poaching and community-based programs
- UNESCO's Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative
- ECOFAC (European Union-funded)

- Sanga Tri-National Foundation (FTNS)
- WWF Cameroon programs (active since the 1990s)
- Ebony Project (led by some of the current Executing Partners)

These synergies provide the opportunity for the Project to enhance its relevance and leverage existing investments, platforms, and field presence. Project documents clearly articulate how this Project fits into the broader programmatic landscape, ensuring complementarity and avoiding redundancy.

Stakeholder interviews confirm that the Project is well-aligned with ongoing efforts and does not duplicate or conflict with other interventions. However, there may still be untapped opportunities to amplify collective impact through more strategic coordination and enhanced knowledge exchange.

Recommendation:

- **Advance collaboration:** Further operationalize collaboration with complementary initiatives – both GEF and non-GEF – through formal coordination platforms, shared reporting where appropriate, and joint learning exercises. Opportunities for knowledge sharing should be actively pursued to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

3.3 Efficiency

The Project has demonstrated steady progress in enhancing implementation efficiency, particularly following initial delays related to partnership agreements and administrative processes. Transitioning from short-term to multi-year agreements with Executing Partners has contributed to greater stability and improved the pace of both activity delivery and fund utilization. Additionally, capacity building of the Executive Partners has been both necessary for Project implementation and beneficial to the long-term sustainability of the partner entities.

Stakeholders widely recognize the Project's responsible use of resources and strong financial management. At the same time, there is broad agreement that the Project's scope – geographically and thematically, and objectives may be too ambitious for the time and resources available. This highlights the importance of aligning strategies and expectations with what is realistically achievable.

The Project also upholds robust technical and financial reporting standards. Independent audits for the first two years confirmed compliance with financial requirements and found no evidence of misuse. Among Executing Partners, some financial reporting protocols are perceived as overly demanding and time-consuming. While the introduction of templates and training has helped improve compliance, the concerns raised merit further consideration to ensure efficiency is not compromised.

Overall, the Project appears to be effectively managed and makes prudent use of available resources, though implementation has progressed more slowly than originally anticipated. While full budget execution by Project end is unlikely, the budget for Component 5 is being rapidly exhausted. Together, these factors further underscore the need to reassess the Project's strategies, priorities, and timelines, as explored in other sections of this report.

Overall rating (GEF) – Moderately Satisfactory

3.3.1 Current Implementation & Financial Status

Implementation of the Project experienced notable delays in its early stages, primarily due to unforeseen challenges in finalizing agreements with Executing Partners as well as the need to provide capacity building and training to the partners. Initial agreements were structured for a one-year duration, which proved administratively inefficient and contributed to slowed activity and disbursement rates. In response, and through collaborative consultation with partners, the Project adopted an adaptive management approach by transitioning to three-year agreements in the subsequent cycle. This shift has resulted in increased operational stability and significantly improved both implementation pace and spending, bringing them closer to original projections.

Another notable improvement in efficiency related to a reduction in the number of Executing Partners. Based on observation of work conducted (or lack thereof) in the field, consultation with stakeholders, and admission by the partners themselves, the Project made the decision to discontinue working with several of the Executing Partners. This reduction in ineffective partners and prevailing focus on partners who are effectively implementing their agreements is a commendable adaptive shift by the Project to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 1. Budgetary Status of the Project, end of fiscal year 3 (ending June 2025)

Component	Total Project Budget (USD[9])	Percent (%) Spend Against Total Budget	Percent of Results Framework Achieved and reported to GEF
Component 1	$ 1,231,635	46 %	88 %
Component 2	$ 2,301,630	32 %	50 %
Component 3	$ 3,411,640	30 %	75 %
Component 4	$ 1,263,435	25 %	100 %
Component 5	$ 853,372	**78 %**	100 %
Project Management Costs	$ 457,745	52 %	n/a
Total	**$ 9,519,757**	**37 %**	

Table 1 above summarizes the financial disbursement status through the end of Fiscal Year 3 (June 2025), disaggregated by project component and project management costs. It is worth

[9] United States Dollar

noting that **Component 5** is currently overspent. According to interviews, this is largely due to the substantial investments made in capacity building and the close monitoring of Executing Partners – activities that fall within the scope of Component 5. Project progress reports further detail the overrun in the budget as due to the fact that many required activities were underbudgeted or not budgeted such as the inception workshop, the regional inception workshop, Steering Committee meetings, and capacity building of partners on financial and technical reporting.

Regarding progress on GEF indicator targets, the Project has made steady headway, reaching 93%, 86%, and 83% of the annual targets in Years 1 through 3, respectively. These figures suggest a strong level of output delivery. However, it is important to note that concerns have been raised about the robustness of the M&E system, as discussed later, especially in Section 3.7 – Adaptive Capacity/M&E System of this report. These concerns should be taken into consideration when interpreting indicator-focused achievements.

Annual Workplan Tracking Summaries show that approximately 61% to 65% of planned activities have been completed each year on average over the first three years. This completion rate is significantly bolstered by the near-complete implementation of Component 5 activities related to monitoring, evaluation, communications, and knowledge management (KM) (see Table 2 for details). Likewise, the Quarterly Financial Reports reflect an underspending of the annual obligated budgets. Thus the completion of workplan activities appears to mirror the underspent obligated funds.

While the Project has made meaningful progress in addressing initial implementation delays – and the shift to longer-term agreements has clearly contributed to improved efficiency – interviews with the PMU financial team and WWF-US suggest that **full budget execution within the six-year timeframe remains unlikely**. At the same time, concerns have been raised regarding sufficient funds for Component 5 activities for the duration of the Project, among other desired undertakings. Given the importance of M&E, capacity building, and communications, ensuring adequate resourcing for Component 5 is essential, particularly as further recommendations related to M&E system improvements are anticipated later in this report.

Table 2. Percentage of Annual Workplan Activities Completed as Per Projected (technically and financially)

Component	Percentage (%) of Workplan Activities Completed		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Component 1	67%	43%	96%
Component 2	64%	68%	43%
Component 3	32%	66%	66%
Component 4	49%	42%	20%
Component 5	93%	99%	100%
Total	**61%**	**63%**	**65%**

Recommendations:

- **Reallocate funds to Component 5:** It is recommended that the Project revisit the scope and funding of Component 5 activities, with a view to reallocating resources from other components where feasible. This will help ensure the continuation of core functions such as monitoring, partner capacity building, and KM throughout the life of the Project. (See subsequent recommendations on refining strategies and activities within components to enhance overall outcome achievement.)
- **GEF Project to better fund M&E activities:** It is recommended that in the future GEF projects allot substantially more financial resources toward both management of the Project as well as toward activities and components which include M&E, KM, and stakeholder engagement.

3.3.2 Co-Financing Status

All GEF projects require co-financing commitments from institutional partners involved in implementation. At the outset, each partner entity provided an estimate of the total co-financing they anticipated contributing over the life of the Project. On an annual basis, partners are expected to submit official letters confirming the actual co-financing amounts attributed to the Project. However, not all partners have consistently submitted this information each year, and two government ministries have not yet reported any co-financing contributions to date.

Delays in finalizing partner agreements, along with changes in some Executing Partners, have understandably contributed to delays in actual co-financing. Given these circumstances, the current co-financing level – representing 41.8% of the overall commitment – can be viewed as a solid indication of partner engagement and financial support at this stage of implementation. Table 3 below provides an overview of the current co-financing status.

Table 3. Co-financing status of the Project, end of fiscal year 3 (ending June 2025)

Co-Financing Commitment at Project Start (USD)	Total Co-Financing to Date – End of Year 3 (USD)	Percentage (%) – End of Year 3
$ 74,301,841.45	$ 31,059,173.28	41.8%

Recommendation:

- **Complete co-financing reporting:** It is recommended that the "Remarks" column in the Co-financing Summary Reports be systematically completed to provide context for any missing or delayed co-financing contributions. This could include explanations for why certain contributions have not yet been reported and any planned follow-up actions. Doing so would enhance transparency, facilitate accountability, and support ongoing dialogue with partners to ensure co-financing commitments are met over the course of the Project.

3.3.3 Resource Use and Sufficiency

Interviews with stakeholders consistently reflected a high level of respect for the Project team, particularly in terms of its sound financial management and prudent use of available resources. The Project is widely viewed as operating efficiently within its means.

However, there is a broad consensus among partners and stakeholders that the Project's design is overly ambitious – both in terms of its intended outcomes and its wide geographic coverage. While the majority of outputs are progressing well and remain largely on track, the current strategies are not fully adequate to deliver the intended outcome-level results, as explored in detail in later sections of this report.

In this context, the sufficiency of resources must be considered in relation to the scale of ambition. Even with efficient use of funds, the scope of the Project may exceed what is realistically achievable within the available time and budget. This signals the need for careful reassessment of strategies and expectations to ensure that efforts are focused, achievable, and aligned with available resources.

3.3.4 Financial Audits

The Project is in compliance with financial reporting and audit requirements. Independent audits conducted by Deloitte for Years 1 and 2 found no indications of waste or misuse of funds. The Year 2 audit included some recommendations for minor improvements related to receipts, invoices, and other documentation practices. In response, the Project is said to have developed an action plan to address these suggestions, and according to interviewees, implementation is underway. Project staff expressed confidence that these efforts will be reflected positively in the upcoming Year 3 audit, scheduled for October 2025.

3.3.5 Requirements of Executing Partners

The Project maintains rigorous technical and financial reporting requirements for its Executing Partners. Initially, meeting these standards posed challenges for several partners. In response, the Project developed user-friendly templates and conducted targeted training to strengthen partners' capacities and ensure compliance. Interviews with both internal and external stakeholders confirmed that expectations are now well understood, and that reporting processes – particularly on the technical side – are functioning smoothly.

However, some grievances were noted. Executing Partners suggested that, while frequent check-ins are appreciated, official monthly reporting could be reduced to quarterly reporting, to be more efficient. In the area of financial reporting, Executing Partners expressed concerns about the administrative burden associated with the current receipt protocols. While these requirements are grounded in the Project's strong commitment to accountability and transparency, they are considered time-consuming and, at times, disproportionate to the value of the expense. For instance, some partners noted that receipts are required for all purchases, including minor costs such as local tolls. This level of documentation was

reported to place a significant strain on staff across all levels, from field teams to management, ultimately reducing operational efficiency.

The PMU clarified that when official receipts or invoices cannot be obtained, Executing Partners are required to provide alternative documentation, including a signed statement from the vendor, a photocopy of the vendor's identification card, and a photograph of the vendor. The evaluation team observed instances of this protocol being implemented during field visits.

It is worth noting that the WWF-US was not fully aware of the extent of these documentation requirements and expressed a willingness to explore potential adjustments. The PMU, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of maintaining the current standards, noting the considerable effort already invested in training partners and the importance of mitigating risks such as fraud or misappropriation of funds – challenges that are particularly pertinent in the local implementation context.

Recommendation:

- **Review technical reporting frequency and financial protocols and relay decisions clearly to partners:** It is recommended that the Project undertake a review of the current technical and financial documentation protocols, balancing risk management with operational efficiency. As part of this process, it would be valuable to engage Executing Partners and communicate transparently about the rationale for either maintaining or adjusting the requirements. Ensuring that partners feel heard, and that their feedback has been formally considered, will help foster a collaborative environment and could serve as a model for inclusive and responsive project management – akin to a GRM.

3.4 Effectiveness

Despite implementation delays, the Project has made notable progress in implementing the activities and outputs it had outlined in Project design. WWF-GEF Agency, WWF-US, and the PMU work well together, despite the GEF budgetary and structural restrictions to how they are able to staff up and collaborate. The PMU is perceived to be well-functioning and a strong leader in the landscape. The Project has demonstrated a capacity to respond to challenges and maintain momentum, particularly over the past year, during which significant progress has been made across components.

Coordination with government stakeholders has been a clear strength of the Project. The Steering Committee meets regularly and provides strategic guidance, with the Executing Agency (MINEPDED) playing an active role both at the national level and through engagement with regional and local representatives. The Project's relationship with its Executing Partners is also generally effective, with partners fulfilling their responsibilities and working toward

shared goals. Some partnerships have evolved or been discontinued where necessary, and the PMU has remained responsive in providing technical support.

Across the five components, the Project is making steady, though uneven, progress toward meeting its outputs and outcomes. Some foundational successes have been achieved, with community engagement having been high. The Project is reporting progress in line with requirements, although questions remain around the quality and clarity of evidence used to demonstrate improved landscape management. Some indicators reached full targets surprisingly early, raising concerns about whether these reflect true improvements on the ground or are simply administrative achievements. Nonetheless, the Project has yielded several positive unintended results, including strengthened gender inclusion, greater community cohesion through NTFP groups, and early signs of behavior change related to forest and wildlife use. These outcomes further reinforce the Project's relevance and potential for long-term impact, provided that implementation continues to strengthen in the second half.

Overall rating (GEF) – Moderately Satisfactory

3.4.1 Administration

The Project operates within a complex management structure that presents both advantages and constraints. Within these parameters, the executing team has demonstrated strong collaboration and overall effectiveness in project delivery.

The project is implemented through the WWF GEF Agency, which operates within WWF-US. At the time of its accreditation as a GEF Agency, self-execution by agencies was permitted; however, subsequent policy revisions no longer allow this approach. Accordingly, the WWF GEF Agency now focuses on oversight, reporting to the GEF Secretariat, and providing technical support – drawing on the broader WWF-US network – rather than directly implementing activities on the ground.

This separation of responsibilities strengthens accountability and governance, yet it also creates certain operational complexities. For example, although WWF-US, WWF International, and the various WWF country offices are legally distinct entities, current GEF interpretations have limited the WWF GEF Agency's ability to develop projects and programs in collaboration with other WWF offices, as such partnerships are considered "self-execution." Earlier GEF policy guidance acknowledged these legal distinctions, while the updated policy does not clearly define the parameters of an Implementing Agency in terms of legal entity and accreditation.

In practice, this constraint limits the WWF GEF Agency's capacity to engage with qualified, legally distinct WWF offices in landscapes where WWF has an established presence and the necessary safeguards, fiduciary systems, and technical expertise. Consequently, WWF-US

must often identify alternative partners and landscapes, even where collaboration with WWF offices would offer stronger implementation capacity and alignment with GEF's objectives.

For this Project, WWF GEF Agency was permitted by the interpretation of GEF policies at the time to collaborate to a limited extent with WWF Cameroon. As part of WWF-International – a legally distinct entity from WWF-US and therefore the WWF GEF Agency, WWF Cameroon currently serves as the host organization for the PMU. In this capacity, WWF Cameroon provides financial and administrative coordination within the country and has played a critical role in navigating operational challenges and engaging with national authorities. However, due to GEF administrative interpretations of execution-role eligibility, WWF Cameroon's role in project execution is severely limited. Notably, WWF Cameroon is also an Executing Partner for specific project components – a role separate from its function as host of the PMU. In the Congo Basin – an environment with elevated fiduciary and safeguards risks and few comparable implementers – would best be served through strong, reliable Executing Partners. Limiting WWF Cameroon's role reduces access to established government relationships, local technical capacity, and community trust that are essential for permits, conflict resolution, adaptive management, and sustained IPLC participation and FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) processes. This decision has resulted in an excessive number of executing partners, slower implementation, higher transaction costs, and increased safeguards exposure.

The PMU itself functions as a semi-autonomous unit composed now of seven full-time technical staff members who manage the day-to-day execution of the Project. The PMU reports regularly to the WWF GEF Agency and is widely regarded as a capable and effective team. Despite limited resources, staff turnover, and early-stage capacity gaps among Executing Partners, the PMU has successfully led project implementation, particularly during the challenging startup period.

The PMU has expressed high satisfaction with the WWF GEF Agency's performance across various stages of the project cycle – including project identification, proposal development, and implementation. They have particularly valued the Agency's oversight, coordination frequency, and the technical support provided. A summary of performance rankings for each executing entity is presented in Table 4. (See Annex 10 for the rating scale.)

Table 4. Rating of Executing Entities

Implementation and Execution Rating Against Responsibilities	*Rating*
WWF GEF Agency implementation (e.g. project identification, concept and detailed proposal preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision, completion and evaluation, etc.).	**Satisfactory**
Executing Agency execution (e.g. Management and administration of project's daily activities, including appropriate use of funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services in line with GEF Agency rules regulations)	**Satisfactory**

Recommendation:

- **GEF considerations for future Projects:** Given the operational limitations imposed by the current GEF policy framework – particularly the administrative interpretations of execution-role eligibility for legally independent organizations and not accredited GEF Agencies – it is recommended that the GEF reconsider this requirement for future projects, especially those implemented in complex or remote field contexts.

  While the separation between oversight and implementation is important for ensuring accountability, in practice, the inability of Agencies like WWF-US to work with legally independent and not accredited organizations of the wider independent WWF network in the project country can hinder effective coordination, adaptive management, and timely technical support. Where in-country presence is essential to project success, GEF may wish to explore more flexible arrangements that still uphold fiduciary standards while enabling Agencies to engage more directly on the ground.

  If policy adjustments cannot be made for this current project, such considerations should be integrated into the design of future projects to enhance implementation efficiency and field-level responsiveness, improve GEF pipeline quality and scale by being able to bring proven approaches and private-sector engagement from the broader WWF network into future designs.

3.4.2 Coordination with Government, Executing Partners & Steering Committee

Coordination among the Executing Agency, government stakeholders, the Steering Committee, and Executing Partners has been a key factor in the satisfactory performance of the Project to date. The mechanisms in place have largely supported effective implementation and timely decision-making, despite some challenges related to contracting and delays.

Steering Committee Functionality and Engagement

The Project Steering Committee has functioned effectively as a strategic oversight body. It has convened annually, as planned, and held one additional extraordinary session to address emerging issues – specifically delays in implementation and due diligence processes related to partner contracting. This responsive action reflects the Committee's commitment to ensuring project momentum and strategic alignment. The Executing Agency (MINEPDED) plays an active leadership role in the Steering Committee, contributing to technical and strategic discussions, and working closely with the PMU to follow up on key decisions. The PMU maintains strong working relationships with Steering Committee members, ensuring that agenda items are well prepared, data is shared in advance, and follow-up actions are monitored. While there is room to enhance how M&E data is integrated into strategic steering discussions, the existing collaboration between the PMU and Committee members has proven effective.

Collaboration with Government at National, Regional, and Local Levels
The Project demonstrates strong collaboration with government stakeholders at all levels. MINEPDED, as Executing Agency, provides ongoing strategic oversight and ensures alignment with national priorities. Government focal points from MINEPDED, MINFOF, MINTOUR, and MINAS actively engage in project implementation – supporting coordination, safeguards, and field-level monitoring.

At the regional and local levels, decentralized services of these ministries are engaged through joint field missions, stakeholder consultations, and ongoing communications with the PMU. Local administrators and elected officials (e.g., sous-préfets, mayors) are also involved in stakeholder dialogues and are regularly informed of project developments, contributing to increased legitimacy and local buy-in.

Coordination with Executing Partners
The PMU maintains regular and collaborative relationships with the Project's Executing Partners. Most partners are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities according to signed agreements, although delays in contracting and due diligence processes – largely outside their control – have caused some setbacks. The PMU has played a critical role in troubleshooting issues and providing both technical and administrative support to ensure partner effectiveness.

Capacity building, particularly related to financial management, safeguards, and reporting requirements, has proven essential. The PMU has provided tailored support in these areas, helping partners meet compliance requirements and improve the quality of implementation. In some cases, partnerships were discontinued due to non-compliance or inability to meet contractual obligations. These decisions were handled transparently and in coordination with the WWF GEF Agency.

Overall, the Project has demonstrated a high level of coordination across its governance structure. The WWF GEF Agency's proactive leadership, the PMU's responsive support, and the involvement of key government institutions have created an enabling environment for implementation. Continued attention to partner capacity needs, M&E integration into Steering Committee discussions, and transparent problem-solving processes will be important to maintain this level of effectiveness through the remainder of the Project cycle.

3.4.3 Achievements of Outcomes and Outputs by Component

The following section analyzes the effectiveness of the Project in achieving its planned outcomes and outputs, organized by each of the five components. While early delays impacted implementation, the Project is now progressing steadily toward its objectives. Each component is assessed for strengths and challenges, with recommendations provided to enhance ongoing efforts.

3.4.3.1 Component 1: Mainstreaming integrated land use planning (LUP) and management

Executing Partners: PADI-DJA/PNDP and ONACC
Location: TRIDOM

Component 1 focuses on supporting two councils within the TRIDOM landscape to map their ecosystem natural capital and develop LUPs through a participatory, multi-stakeholder process. According to interviews and FGDs, both LUPs have been completed. Validation is underway and expected to be finalized within the remaining duration of the Project. The expected outcomes and outputs of this component are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Summary of Component 1 Outcomes and Outputs

Component 1: Mainstreaming integrated land use planning (LUP) and management

- Outcome 1.1 Participatory, informed, and integrated land use planning establishes a framework to plan, monitor and adapt land management across approximately 1,200,000 ha in TRIDOM
  - Output 1.1.1 Mapping and accounting of ecosystem natural capital completed for the Ngoyla (816,087 ha) and Mintom (381,431 ha) council areas
  - Output 1.1.2. Integrated land use plans developed and endorsed for the Ngoyla and Mintom council areas based on a multi-stakeholder process which builds the capacity of IPLCs, CSOs, private sector and governance entities to incorporate ecosystem natural capital accounting and recognize the tenure and access rights of IPLCs

While the development of LUPs is a significant achievement, stakeholders raised concerns during interviews regarding the implementation and long-term use of these plans. There is a risk that the LUPs may not be effectively utilized and could remain shelved without further support or integration into broader planning frameworks. The Project intended for these council-level LUPs to feed into regional and national land use planning frameworks, but the pathway for achieving this remains unclear. As previously recommended, a results chain or theory of change would help clarify the steps needed to reach these broader integration goals.

The Project has planned follow-up engagement with MINEPAT and the respective councils to promote the LUPs and document lessons learned. However, current budget limitations mean that the Project is not in a position to support further development of regional plans or expand LUP development to other councils in TRIDOM, despite evident need.

Interviews with the PMU, Executing Partners, and local beneficiaries affirm that Component 1 has effectively met its planned outputs to date. Stakeholders broadly expressed appreciation for the support provided. While formal validation and implementation are still pending, qualitative evidence suggests the process has already had positive effects. For example, one council representative noted that land allocation decisions are now more deliberate and less arbitrary. Similarly, FGD participants reported that the LUP process helped clarify areas for harvesting NTFPs, increasing confidence in their access rights and usage zones.

According to the Project's M&E framework, Component 1 has two primary indicators (detailed in Table 5):

- Number of councils with completed LUPs – This target has been met (though plans are technically pending formal validation).
- Quality of the LUPs – Performance is slightly below target.

Table 5. GEF Outcome Rating Table for Component 1

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings							
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**	**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Outcome 1.1: Participatory, informed, and integrated LUP establishes a framework to plan, monitor and adapt land management across approximately **1,200,000 ha** of the transboundary TRIDOM landscape[10]					**Moderately satisfactory (GEF)**	Project should explain the scorecard system and provide a short report of the findings after each scorecard is applied. Should include measure of hectares given it is clearly articulated in the outcome.	
# of councils with integrated land use plans (PLADDT) developed with support from the project	0	2	2	100%	**Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; verified in the field	Activity level indicator; lacks measure of effectiveness (if operational)
Quality of PLADDT development and adaptive management process	0	8	20	6	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool	Scorecard system (scorecard was not provided to the evaluation team); PMU noted that the scorecard is in draft form. Thus these scores are from the application of a draft scorecard. Unclear indicator – *what is being measured, what is expected to change, what the rating scale is, etc.*?

It is generally best practice for the quantitative measure stated in an outcome to correspond directly with that of its associated indicator(s). In the case of Outcome 1.1, which specifies a quantitative target of 1,200,000 hectares, it would be reasonable to expect an indicator that tracks and reports the number of hectares impacted within TRIDOM. The 1,200,000 hectares cited in the outcome appear to represent the combined landscape area of the two councils. However, instead of using hectares as a measurement indicator, the Project opted to monitor only the number of councils, omitting a direct area-based indicator. While this approach simplifies reporting, the rationale for this decision was not clearly documented in the M&E Plan, leading to ambiguity during the evaluation process. Future projects should ensure alignment between outcome measures and indicators. In this case, the Outcome could have been reformulated to target two councils, consistent with the selected indicator, or

[10] Given the outcome states number of hectares, it is surprising that there is no indicator for hectares.

alternatively, retained an indicator tracking hectares impacted, even if this measure seemed straightforward.

A further limitation in the M&E Plan for Component 1 is the lack of detailed guidance on how the quality of the Land Use Plans (LUPs) will be assessed. This gap hinders effective evaluation of the second indicator and the reliability of the accompanying scorecard tool, which, according to the PMU, remains in draft form.

To date, the Project has spent only 46% of the total budget allocated for Component 1. Given that the majority of planned activities have been completed, the Project should now assess the feasibility of reallocating unspent funds to other components facing resource shortfalls. Although the remaining budget is not sufficient to support further LUP development, regional planning, or implementation support, there may be opportunities for strategic, lower-cost interventions in the remaining project period. These could include raising awareness of the existing LUPs, periodic follow-up with councils to encourage self-implementation, or sharing success stories to reinforce momentum and ownership. For example, perhaps the Project could support semi-annual meetings of council members to assess the implementation of their LUPs. Strategies should also be in place to meet the second indicator. As there is still proof needed to validate the complete success of this Component, the evaluation team can at minimum confirm it is on a positive trajectory to achieve its outputs.

Recommendations:

- **Reassess budget allocation:** Given the substantial progress made under Component 1 and limited remaining needs, consider repurposing unused funds to address underfunded components more aligned with current implementation priorities.
- **Support broader integration and uptake:** Develop strategies—within the scope of a next Project or in partnership with other stakeholders—for:
  a) advancing regional planning that incorporates council-level LUPs, and
  b) facilitating implementation of the LUPs, either directly or through local partners, to reduce the risk of these plans not being used.
- **Strengthen knowledge sharing and advocacy:** Continue facilitating exchange between councils with and without LUPs, and engage with relevant authorities (e.g., MINEPAT, ONACC) to advocate for the integration of local plans into regional, national, and transboundary frameworks.
- **Revise and clarify Component 1 indicators:** Ensure that indicators in the M&E system are specific, measurable, and aligned with intended outcomes. This includes:
  - Adding a quantitative indicator for area (e.g., hectares) under improved land use planning, in line with the measurable language of Outcome 1.1.
  - Finalizing the scorecard and clearly defining the methodology and criteria used to assess LUP quality. In cases where quality is lacking, further assess how the quality could be improved with the remaining funds or at a minimum how the planning could be improved in the future.

- Ensuring that all Outcome indicators are adequately explained in the M&E Plan and reflected in the reporting tools.

These adjustments will help improve the accuracy and credibility of performance reporting under Component 1 and better reflect the impact of this work on the TRIDOM landscape.

3.4.3.2 Component 2: Improving management effectiveness and governance of high conservation value forests, and targeted interventions to protect their endangered species

Executing Partners: WWF-Cameroon (both landscapes) and AWF (Campo Ma'an only)
Location: TNS & Campo Ma'an

Component 2 aims to improve the management effectiveness and inclusive governance of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké National Parks and their peripheries, while supporting targeted interventions to protect endangered species and mitigate zoonotic disease risks. Overall, progress has been steady and aligns with the Project's intended outcomes, particularly under Outcome 2.1 and Outcome 2.3. The expected outcomes and outputs of this component are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Summary of Component 2 Outcomes and Outputs

Component 2: Improving management effectiveness and governance of high conservation value forests, and targeted interventions to protect their endangered species

- Outcome 2.1: Management effectiveness of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is improved through inclusive governance and management systems
  - Output 2.1.1. Studies, management tools, and regional coordination to strengthen adaptive management systems of CMNP and LNP
  - Output 2.1.2. Trainings, workshops/meetings, equipment, small supplies, and technical assistance to strengthen and/or establish inclusive governance and management systems for CMNP and LNP
- Outcome 2.2: The effectiveness of forest and wildlife management in the peripheries of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is strengthened through increased engagement and capacity, and the establishment and adaptive management of equitable and transparent management agreements between local stakeholders
  - Output 2.2.1. Meetings, communication, equipment, small supplies, field costs and technical assistance to strengthen engagement and coordination between local stakeholders, including IPLCs, on forest and wildlife management and monitoring
- Outcome 2.3: The long-term zoonotic disease surveillance systems in Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks and their peripheries are strengthened to minimize the risks of disease transmission between humans and wildlife and vice versa
  - Output 2.3.1. Zoonotic disease surveillance systems targeting diseases for great apes operational for CMNP and LNP

Management Effectiveness and Inclusive Governance (Outcome 2.1)
The Project has made notable progress in improving park governance and planning, particularly in Lobéké:

- A **feasibility study and stakeholder consultation** confirmed a co-management model as the preferred governance option for National Parks in Cameroon, with a national validation workshop planned. This model has been accepted by MINFOF and is being presented for validation within the national government. The validation has been delayed due to scheduling conflicts but is expected to occur after the presidential elections.
- **Management effectiveness scores (IMET Index)** in Lobéké improved from 63.98 (2022) to 68.21 (2024), though difficult to attribute to the Project given that variations in IMET scores can result from a range of external and internal factors beyond the direct influence of the Project (which may or may not include changes related to activities which are part of the co-financing contributions of Executing Partners for this Project).
- The **revised MOU between MINFOF and ASBABUK** (signed with Project support) now facilitates Indigenous Peoples' access not only to parks but also through logging and sport hunting zones.
- The Project contributed to **transboundary cooperation**, including revisions to the draft agreement between Campo Ma'an and Rio Campo (Equatorial Guinea), guided by COMIFAC. Additional support has been provided to LNP to participate in TNS annual meetings to support management collaboration between the three participating countries.
- **80 ecoguards and IPLC members** in LNP received training on ethical law enforcement and human rights, promoting responsible and community-aligned park protection.

While some results reflect efforts beyond the Project alone (e.g., TNS-wide meetings, regional workshops), the Project has demonstrably contributed to inclusive planning and policy dialogues.

Peripheral Area Management (Outcome 2.2)
Progress under Outcome 2.2 is slower but directionally positive, with several enabling actions completed in the peripheral areas of CMNP and LNP:

- **Popularization of the GRM** in 7 CMNP villages and training of 23 community relays, has enhanced IPLC awareness and access to redress.
- The **SAPELLI tool** was deployed in 31 Baka communities near LNP and used to document customary forest use, supporting IPLC rights. This tool is vital to including these marginalized communities in park management activities. This use of this third party software on Android phone systems supplied by the Project have allowed increased participation of the Baka community members in activities (monitoring and protection) that take place within the park and its periphery.
- Surveillance gear was distributed to COVAREF and COVILAB, enabling **community-led monitoring** of biodiversity and patrolling in buffer zones of LNP.

- The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (**METT**) scores in Boumba Bek, Nki, and Ngoyla increased by **an average of 5%**, though attribution to the Project is indirect, as these improvements reflect broader support.

Zoonotic Disease Surveillance (Outcome 2.3)
The zoonotic disease surveillance systems in both parks are among the strongest areas of Project delivery:

- In **Campo Ma'an**, long-term monitoring missions involving local trackers and a Wildlife Vet team have kept the Akiba gorilla group in good health.
- Disease testing (e.g., Anthrax, Ebola, Mpox) is now routine at the **Campo WildLab**, in partnership with LANAVET and the Robert Koch Institute.
- A **successful Mpox containment case** in the TNS landscape demonstrated effective early warning and response, supported by community reporting and digital tools (SAPELLI).
- Biosafety training, vaccination campaigns for trackers and their families, and cross-sector coordination are contributing to a functional **One Health approach**.

While Component 2 is ambitious and multifaceted – with a broad set of intended outcomes across protected area governance, community engagement, and zoonotic disease surveillance – the current M&E system does not fully capture the scope or effectiveness of achievements. Table 6 provides the current indicators and their status at the time of this report.

Outcome 2.1 – Inclusive Management of CMNP and LNP
The indicator associated with this outcome is insufficient to reflect the range of activities implemented, particularly in the Campo Ma'an landscape, where data remains incomplete. Attribution to the Project is challenging, as results are tracked through a single indicator without disaggregation or context.

Given the Project's investments in training and community outreach (e.g., human rights training, participatory planning), the inclusion of **simple, gender-disaggregated indicators** – such as the number of IPLC members trained or reached through consultations – would better capture these important contributions.

Outcome 2.2 – Forest and Wildlife Management in Peripheral Areas
The indicator suite under this outcome is better developed, yet some inconsistencies limit its usefulness. The first indicator refers to both number and acreage, though no acreage has been reported. These should be separated to avoid confusion.

Another indicator uses a scorecard system, but performance against the target is significantly below expectations. It is unclear whether this reflects underperformance, data collection challenges, or a misalignment between activities and what is being measured.

Table 6. GEF Outcome Rating Table for Component 2

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**		**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Outcome 2.1: Management effectiveness of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is improved through inclusive governance and management systems						**Unable to assess (GEF)**	Incomplete (see next)	
% increase in IMET synthesis indicators	CMNP Mgmt[11]	19.7	25.0	30.0	n/a	**Unable to assess for Campo Ma'an;** **Moderately satisfactory for Lobéké NP**	Incomplete for Campo Ma'an; According to the M&E tracking tool	Indicator difficult to attribute to the Project without further detail
	Planning	64.0	75.0	80.0	n/a			
	Input	20.0	25.0	30.0	n/a			
	Process	48.9	55.0	70.0	n/a			
	Results	62.0	70.0	75.0	n/a			
	Effects & impacts	67.8	71.0	73.0	n/a			
	Lobéké Mgmt[12]	66.5	68.0	70.0	74.7			
	Planning	84.2	86.0	88.0	84.0			
	Input	51.5	55.0	54.0	48.3			
	Process	46.5	55.0	60.0	56.7			
	Results	80.0	82.5	85.0	80.2			
	Effects & impacts	58.1	60.0	62.0	65.3			
Outcome 2.2: The effectiveness of forest and wildlife management in the peripheries of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is strengthened through **increased engagement** and capacity, and the establishment and adaptive management of equitable and transparent management agreements between local stakeholders						**Moderately unsatisfactory (GEF)**	Did not meet all targets. Missing indicator for area. Missing indicators for increased engagement or value addition to the monitoring programs.	
# **(and area covered)** of management agreements	0		4	6	2	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; no reported area covered	*Where is the reporting of "and area covered"?*
Quality of agreements and implementation and monitoring process	n/a		10	10	2	**Highly unsatisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool	Scorecard system; Unclear what is being scored/ measured, what the rating scale is, etc.; Scorecard noted as being in draft form.

[11] Management

[12] Management

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings							
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**	**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
# of participatory wildlife, social impact and threats monitoring systems in peripheral zones/key wildlife corridors around protected areas **established and operating**	0	2	2	1	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool	Tracking whether monitoring system is in place. Lacks indicator for quality of system or value added.
Outcome 2.3: The long-term zoonotic disease surveillance systems in Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks and their peripheries are **strengthened** to minimize the risks of disease transmission between humans and wildlife and vice versa					**Moderately satisfactory (GEF)**	Met target, but unclear descriptions in the tracking tool (e.g., mention of "cumulative"). Lacks measure of value added – appears to track sustaining of system.	
# of long-term zoonotic disease surveillance systems operating **using best practices**	2	2	2	2	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; Unclear if/how measuring use of best practices; Appears to measure that a system remains in place rather than measuring change in behavior/ performance.	Targets are noted as "cumulative" but figures are 2 across every year – likely non-cumulative. In that case, it is counting that 2 systems remain in operation with no change, from baseline.

Outcome 2.3 – Zoonotic Disease Surveillance
This outcome has one primary indicator, which tracks the continued operation of two disease surveillance systems. While system functionality and continuity is an important baseline measure, it does not reflect changes in effectiveness, use of best practices, or outcomes such as reduced disease risk or improved community health awareness.

Given the Project's clear success in conducting health missions, implementing protocols to reduce disease transmission, training and vaccinating trackers, responding to Mpox, and building One Health capacity, there is an opportunity to track **impact-level indicators** – perhaps utilizing data the park is already capturing.

If zoonotic disease detection rates remain too low to serve as reliable measures of change in disease prevalence, the Project can still track the **quality, responsiveness, and preventive impact** of its surveillance systems. In such cases, indicators that maintain outcomes *below a defined threshold* can be highly effective. These recognize that successful surveillance means *detecting* incidents early while *preventing escalation or spread*.

Examples of impact-level indicators include:

- Wildlife disease incidence:
  Indicator: Number of confirmed zoonotic or epizootic disease cases detected in habituated gorilla groups (target: ≤ X per year).
  Explanation: Reflects the combined impact of prevention, monitoring, and biosecurity measures. The target threshold (e.g., ≤ 1 per year) ensures surveillance remains sensitive while aiming for low incidence.
- Zoonotic spillover events:
  Indicator: Number of confirmed or suspected disease transmission events between humans and gorillas (target: 0 per year).
  Explanation: Tracks the effectiveness of field hygiene, vaccination, and distancing protocols designed to minimize cross-species disease transmission.
- Outbreak containment:
  Indicator: Number of wildlife disease outbreaks spreading beyond the initial site or group (target: 0 uncontrolled outbreaks per year).
  Explanation: Measures both surveillance responsiveness and capacity to contain infections quickly once detected.
- Wildlife mortality due to disease:
  Indicator: Number of confirmed gorilla mortalities linked to infectious disease (target: ≤ baseline level).
  Explanation: Helps assess the overall success of prevention and early response mechanisms in maintaining population health.
- Community and field team awareness:
  Indicator: Percentage of trackers or community members correctly applying disease prevention practices (target: ≥ X%).

Explanation: Demonstrates sustained knowledge transfer and behavioral change supporting disease prevention at the human–wildlife interface.

By incorporating such indicators, the Project could more effectively demonstrate its contribution to maintaining healthy gorilla populations, protecting local communities, and strengthening One Health surveillance systems. Threshold-based indicators also reinforce the principle that a *functional surveillance system detects early and prevents escalation* – balancing vigilance with the goal of sustained low disease incidence.

Additional Observation

- Some of the Project's most impactful achievements – such as the operationalization of the GRM – are not tracked through formal indicators, despite being core to inclusive governance and rights-based conservation.

The Project has made slow yet meaningful progress under Component 2, particularly in strengthening disease surveillance systems, promoting inclusive governance, and improving coordination in and around protected areas. However, the monitoring and evaluation system falls short of capturing these achievements – both in terms of attribution and impact.

This disconnect is particularly notable in the context of underutilized resources. As of the midterm review, only 32% of the total budget allocated to Component 2 has been spent. Given this low disbursement rate and the gap between activities and what is currently being measured, there is a strong case for revisiting both the implementation strategies and the M&E framework. Developing clear results chains and making targeted adjustments will help ensure the Project is positioned to create greater impact at scale and more effectively communicate its contributions over the remainder of the implementation period.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen Attribution of IMET Score Changes:** Given that variations in IMET scores can result from a diversity of external and internal factors beyond the direct influence of the Project (including from co-financed activities), it is important to ensure that claims of impact are grounded in clear evidence of attribution. To enhance the credibility and transparency of performance reporting, the Project should:
  - **Differentiate Project-Specific Contributions:** Clearly distinguish activities and results financed or implemented directly by the Project from those supported by co-financing partners or other concurrent initiatives. This distinction should be systematically reflected in all key reporting instruments, particularly in the Annual Project Progress Reports and relevant outcome-level analyses.
  - **Accompany IMET Reporting with Contextual Analysis:** When presenting changes in IMET scores, include a concise narrative outlining (a) the specific Project interventions that may have plausibly influenced the observed changes, and (b)

other contextual or systemic factors – such as staffing changes, policy reforms, or budgetary variations – that may also have contributed.

By documenting both the Project's direct contributions and the broader contextual drivers of change, the reporting will present a more accurate and evidence-based account of the Project's influence on protected area management effectiveness.

- **Develop Clear Results Chains:** Reassess current approaches and create a results chain that depicts causal linkages between monitored results (i.e., outcomes) and unmonitored results (i.e., assumptions) leading to threat reduction and conservation impact. This will improve strategic clarity and make it easier to detect if desired outcomes and impacts can logically be expected based on the current suite of implemented activities.
- **Strengthen M&E System:** Revise outcome indicators to ensure all are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), using metrics that reflect actual Project successes, such as IPLC engagement and grievance resolution. Finalize the scorecard mechanism and clearly document the procedures and results.

3.4.3.3 Component 3: Advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) through non-timber forest product (NTFP) and hardwood value chains

Executing Partners: ROSE (NTFP - TNS) and AAFEBEN (NTFP - TRIDOM) and UCLA CBI (Hardwoods in TRIDOM)
Location: TNS & TRIDOM

Component 3 supports the development of two distinct value chains – NTFPs and hardwoods – with the underlying theory of change that, by increasing IPLCs benefits from these forest-based value chains, their engagement in sustainable forest management (SFM) will also increase.

While this theory of change is sound in principle, the leap from early-stage value chain support to demonstrable forest conservation outcomes is substantial. Nonetheless, the Project has followed the implementation plan closely, and Component 3 stands out as one of the most effective elements of the Project to date, particularly with regard to the NTFP sub-component. The expected outcomes and outputs of this component are presented in Figure 3.

NTFP Value Chain Development

The NTFP activities have exceeded their original outreach targets, reaching more than 30 targeted communities across the TNS and TRIDOM landscapes (though this achievement is not captured in the current M&E system). Originally designed to include all three target landscapes, the Project strategically withdrew from Campo Ma'an landscape early in implementation due to limited community interest and resource constraints.

Figure 3. Summary of Component 3 Outcomes and Outputs

Component 3: Advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) through non-timber forest product (NTFP) and hardwood value chains

- Outcome 3.1: Strengthened and/or established sustainable NTFP value chains that engage IPLCs and the private sector reduce the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and deliver benefits to at least 30 communities (IPLCs) in the Cameroon segments of three transboundary landscapes
  - Output 3.1.1. Landscape-specific strategies for NTFP value chain development that are gender sensitive and take into consideration the enabling conditions for ensuring establishment and sustainability of community-based NTFP initiatives, including through the engagement of the private sector
  - Output 3.1.2. Training, equipment, small supplies, technical assistance, and exchange visits for target IPLCs and local organizations to strengthen and/or establish the sustainable production of NTFPs (based on the Output 3.1.1 strategies)
  - Output 3.1.3. MOUs or other forms of agreements between IPLCs, private sector operators, decentralized local services and other key stakeholders to strengthen NTFPs value chains targeted under Output 3.1.2. and link the use of NTFPs with SFM practices
  - Output 3.1.4. A participatory system to monitor and evaluate the impacts of efforts to develop and establish NTFP value chains is in place and used to share experiences and lessons learned across the transboundary landscapes of the Congo IP
- Outcome 3.2: Public-private partnership (Ebony Project) to create a sustainable and socially-responsible value chain for tropical hardwood species is expanded and delivering tangible benefits, including restoration and income generation, in the TRIDOM landscape
  - Output 3.2.1. Public-private partnership (i.e., Ebony Project) to create a sustainable and socially responsible value chain expanded to 4 new communities (IPLCs) through the establishment and implementation of MOUs between IPLCs, Crelicam, and CBI
  - Output 3.2.2. Applied ecological research and monitoring and evaluation system established to inform Ebony Project design and evaluate the impact of the project on target communities, the timber industry and relevant ecosystems services.
  - Output 3.2.3. Strategic document to inform outreach to other private sector actors to replicate the Ebony Project model and apply its approach to develop value chains

The Executing Partners working on NTFPs have provided CBOs with training, equipment for harvesting and post-harvest handling, storage, and small-scale processing. FGDs with beneficiary communities revealed strong enthusiasm and appreciation for the support. Reported benefits included:

- Higher prices for NTFPs due to improved quality and storage;
- Economies of scale through group-based production and marketing;
- Ability to delay sales for better market prices;
- Improved product diversification through basic processing; and
- Access to a revolving fund to support members.

The Project strategically prioritized working with communities that were already somewhat self-organized. This approach avoided common pitfalls of trying to initiate organizational

capacity from scratch, a process that can consume significant time and resources with limited success. This approach also enabled the Project to proactively engage women and marginalized members of these communities. By building on existing social capital, the Project was able to generate faster, more tangible results to the constituent members – an approach that is both efficient and commendable.

Hardwood Value Chain: The Ebony Project

The hardwood sub-component is being implemented through the Ebony Project – a collaboration between UCLA's Congo Basin Institute (CBI) and Crelicam, a timber mill co-owned by Taylor Guitars. This initiative supports community nurseries, focusing on ebony and other tree species, including fruit and nut trees that can provide income in the medium term. The Project pays communities a stipend for collecting seeds, establishing nurseries, and maintaining the trees over a five-year period. As part of its activities, the Ebony project transitioned its monitoring system to a more rigorous, gender inclusive system. This is noteworthy success to share amongst Executing Partners to learn from example.

While this model ensures short-term community participation, it departs from best practices in value chain development, where stipends are generally discouraged due to sustainability concerns. The long maturation period of ebony (50+ years) makes short-term economic benefits unlikely, and many participants interviewed expressed uncertainty or frustration about the delayed returns, even with the other hardwood (fruit tree) varieties. In some communities, participation has declined significantly – for example, one group reportedly dropped from 50 to 13 members.

In contrast to the NTFP sub-component, the hardwoods initiative has a limited geographic and social footprint, currently involving only three new communities and targeting an ecological impact area of just 10–20 hectares. Given the Project's broader landscape-scale ambitions, the hardwoods work appears misaligned with both the scale and intent of the Project's theory of change. It functions more as a reforestation or ecosystem restoration initiative than a market-based value chain strategy.

Results According to Indicators

Component 3 currently has a single indicator that applies to both outcomes (see Table 7): the number of IPLCs reporting increased monetary and non-monetary benefits. However, the current M&E system assumes that participation equates to benefit – a flawed assumption inconsistent with best practices in monitoring value chain or market systems development. For example, individuals who attended a single training are counted as having received benefits.

Table 7. GEF Outcome Rating Table for Component 3

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**		**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Outcome 3.1: Strengthened and/or established sustainable **NTFP value chains** that engage IPLCs and the private sector reduce the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and deliver benefits to **at least 30 communities** (IPLCs) in the Cameroon segments of three transboundary landscapes						**Moderately satisfactory (GEF)**	While targets are exceeded, assumptions are not in line with actual data collected and analyzed. Missing indicator for number of communities.	
# of IPLCs with increased monetary income and/or non-monetary benefits from development of NTFP value chains	Female	0	200	800	1,385	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; While most figures are exceeded here, youth are not disaggregated. Also, it remains unclear if the Project is still assuming participation = benefit or if additional calculations have been made.	Unclear how Project measures increase in benefits; assumption is participation = benefit. If outcome states aim to impact at least 30 communities , *where is the indicator tracking the number of communities ?*
	Male	0	100	400	200			
	Youth	0	75	300	n/a			
	Total	0	300	1200	1,585			
Outcome 3.2: Public-private partnership (Ebony Project) to create a sustainable and socially-responsible value chain for tropical **hardwood** species is expanded and delivering tangible benefits, including restoration and income generation, in the TRIDOM landscape						**Moderately unsatisfactory (GEF)**	Has not met targets; no monetary benefits reported by beneficiaries yet. Unclear how measuring non-monetary benefits.	
# of IPLCs with increased monetary income and/or non-monetary benefits from development of hardwood	Female	0	70	245	30	**Moderately unsatisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; Has not met targets, Youth not disaggregated, and unclear if the Project is still assuming participation = benefit or if additional calculations have been made.	Unclear how the Project measures increase in benefits; assumptions is participation = benefit.
	Male	0	30	105	20			
	Youth	0	29	100	n/a			
	Total	0	100	350	50			

In practice, the Project is collecting more nuanced and valuable data than is reflected in the M&E framework. During the evaluation, the team was briefly shown spreadsheets comparing prices received by participating versus non-participating communities – some showing nearly double the market value. This data offers compelling evidence of impact but is not currently being leveraged nor documented in the M&E Plan.

While Outcome 3.1 is SMART-aligned ("at least 30 communities"), this measurement is not tracked as an indicator. While not all outcomes need to be measurable, their corresponding indicator (or better, suite of indicators) should adequately measure achievements toward the outcome. The Project would benefit from a careful look at whether these indicators are sufficiently showcasing the successes of the Project, especially when an outcome specifically mentions a quantitative measure.

Additionally, the Project has not tracked youth participation under this component, citing an inability to verify ages. This rationale is inconsistent with other forms of disaggregation (e.g., gender, ethnicity), and the Project should either develop a practical approach or clearly communicate its decision to forgo this reporting requirement.

Component 3 has expended only 30% of its budget to date. While this provides financial room to strengthen impact, the evaluation found indications of dependency on the Project, especially in the NTFP communities. Focus group participants expressed concern that progress may collapse once the Project ends, particularly if market linkages are not fully institutionalized. This underscores the importance of continued training to communities (management and financial) as well as preparing communities to establish direct, resilient buyer-community relationships and reducing the intermediary role of Executing Partners.

Recommendations:

- **Critically assess the future of the hardwoods sub-component:** Given the limited scale of the Ebony Project as it currently operates, the Project should consider either phasing it out (once current commitments conclude) or challenging partners to propose a scalable, high-impact model. This could include linkages with NTFP communities, exploring seedling sales, or a wider market systems approach in conjunction with major buyers of hardwoods (fruits, nuts, wood, etc.).
- **Deepen market systems analysis for NTFPs:** Conduct a broader assessment of the NTFP market system to understand value chain dynamics, market actors, and demand trends. This will support more strategic design for scale and inform engagement with new private sector partners, particularly if hardwood activities are reduced or discontinued.
- **Establish sustainable market linkages:** Transition from the Executing Partners intervening in sales to direct connections between communities and buyers before Project closure. Until communities can independently negotiate and transact, the value chain remains vulnerable and lacks long-term sustainability.
- **Revise and expand indicators for Component 3:**
    - Disaggregate NTFP and hardwood sub-components with distinct indicators that reflect their differing timeframes and theories of change.
    - Include a specific indicator to track the number of communities supported under Outcome 3.1.

- Clarify and refine how "benefits" are defined and measured – going beyond participation counts to include tangible economic or social gains.
- Reintroduce or clarify youth participation tracking, using practical methods for estimation and self-identification as appropriate.

- **Leverage existing data for improved reporting:**
  The Project already collects valuable price and income data. Align the M&E system with these internal tools to improve reporting quality and better reflect the actual impact being achieved on the ground.

3.4.3.4 Component 4: Increasing benefit generation from biodiversity through sustainable tourism development

Executing Partners: TUBE AWUE (turtles) and WWF Cameroon (gorilla)
Location: Campo Ma'an

Component 4 aims to promote sustainable tourism as a mechanism for both conservation and community benefit, focusing on two biodiversity-based tourism products: gorilla viewing and marine turtle nesting. However, this component has faced significant delays and currently shows the **lowest budget execution** of all Project components – just 25% of its allocated budget. Figure 4 presents the outcomes and outputs for this component.

While the long-term potential for tourism in the Campo Ma'an landscape remains promising, the strategies under Component 4 are weakly articulated, implementation is fragmented, and progress to date has been limited in terms of both tangible benefits and systems-level improvements. A single tour operator has been engaged, and some stipends and equipment have been provided to support ongoing monitoring efforts – but these contributions are insufficient to demonstrate significant or sustainable value addition to tourism.

Figure 4. Summary of Component 4 Outcomes and Outputs

Component 4: Mainstreaming integrated land use planning (LUP) and management Increasing benefit generation from biodiversity through sustainable tourism development

- Outcome 4.1: Sustainable tourism value chain that engages IPLCs and the private sector is strengthened, reducing the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and delivering benefits to IPLCs in the Cameroon segment of the CMRC landscape
  - Output 4.1.1. Viewing of habituated gorilla groups and other sustainable tourism products involving IPLCs and the private sector developed in and around CMNP
  - Output 4.1.2. Meetings, trainings, exchange visits and technical assistance for CMNP ecotourism stakeholders to collaboratively manage CMNP ecotourism and establish CMNP as a pilot project for ecotourism development
  - Output 4.1.3. Equitable benefit distribution mechanisms that include IPLCs developed and operational for ecotourism products in CMNP and Ebodjé

Gorilla Tourism

The development of gorilla-based tourism has long been anticipated but remains stalled. As of this evaluation, gorilla tourism is not yet open to the public, and key enabling conditions – particularly a viable financial model – are still unresolved. According to the Conservator, a revenue-sharing model (based on a new ticketing structure) is expected to be finalized by year-end. However, under the current national system, park (tourism) revenues are transferred to the central government with minimal reinvestment at the local level. Until this system is reformed, the financial sustainability of gorilla tourism remains highly uncertain.

In the meantime, the Project is providing stopgap support: equipment, salary supplementation, and limited training for gorilla monitoring teams. While these contributions maintain the viability of the site, they do not represent substantial progress toward the component's stated objectives. Moreover, infrastructure at the site is poor – a key bridge is out, forcing visitors (including the evaluation team) to walk 4.5 km to the station, undermining visitor accessibility and safety.

Turtle Tourism

The marine turtle tourism initiative is more nascent but also potentially promising. The Project is supporting a dynamic local non-governmental organization, TUBE AWUE, to monitor turtle nesting sites along the beach. The organization is well-motivated, has some independent private funding, and is actively developing ideas for ecotourism centered on different stages of the turtle life cycle. There are even ambitions to expand into marine mammal tourism in the future.

However, significant limitations remain. Chief among them is the lack of adequate tourism infrastructure, including lodging, transport, and tour operations. Although one tour operator is developing eco-bungalows and the government is also building a lodge, the current infrastructure is insufficient to support tourism at any meaningful scale yet. Without a broader tourism development strategy and strong private sector engagement, the impact of this sub-component is likely to remain limited in the timeframe of the Project.

Results According to Indicators

Component 4 includes two indicators (Table 8):

- **Number of tourism products developed or strengthened** – The Project reports achieving its target (2 of 2 products), though continued improvements are needed.
- **Number of IPLCs with increased monetary or non-monetary benefits** – This indicator is inherited from Component 3 and suffers from the same methodological flaws. Specifically, the Project equates participation (e.g., attending a training or receiving a stipend) with tangible benefits. This assumption is inconsistent with best practice in M&E of market systems or value chain development. The quality, duration, and relevance of the benefit are not captured.

Table 8. GEF Outcome Rating Table for Component 4

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**		**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Outcome 4.1: Sustainable tourism value chain that engages IPLCs and the **private sector is strengthened**, reducing the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and delivering benefits to IPLCs in the Cameroon segment of the CMRC landscape						**Moderately Satisfactory (GEF)**	While several targets are met, youth are not disaggregated despite only 42 persons impacted. Assumptions of benefits is equated to participation or not indicated otherwise.	
Tourism products: gorilla tracking, treks and turtle viewing in Ebodjé, TBD cultural or natural tourism products in periphery of CMNP Developed (or strengthened): includes products which may still be under development; strengthened can include: product is closer to being offered as a tourism product and accepting visitors, increase in number of visitors, increase in number of IPLCs with perceived benefits, improved application of best practices.	0		2	4	2	**Moderately Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool	Indicator poorly articulated; As these products already existed to some extent, the indicator needs to reflect improved products rather than new. Value added by the project is unclear and difficult to attribute.
# of IPLCs with increased monetary income and/or non-monetary benefits from development of project supported sustainable tourism value chain	Female	0	10	50	9	**Moderately Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; failure to disaggregate by youth. While some figures have exceeded here. Unclear are whether the Project is still assuming participation = benefit.	Unclear how measuring increase in benefits; assumptions is participation = benefit.
	Male	0	10	50	33			
	Youth	0	5	30	n/a			
	Total	0	20	100	42			

Additionally, while the number of beneficiaries remains low (only 42 people), the Project has failed to disaggregate by youth, despite this being a manageable and meaningful demographic category. Moreover, no ecological indicators are currently being reported to GEF, despite the fact that both sub-components are closely tied to biodiversity outcomes (gorilla population monitoring, turtle nest protection). This represents a significant, missed opportunity to demonstrate conservation impact.

The component's weak M&E design and implementation make it difficult to assess component effectiveness, ecological impact or to adaptively manage based on evidence. As such, there is a need for urgent improvement in both the strategic direction and the monitoring framework of this component.

To date, only 25% of the Component 4 budget has been spent. Although the ProDoc outlines the need for feasibility studies, private sector engagement, and the involvement of IPLCs, progress on these fronts has been limited. Without a clear market assessment or articulated results chains, the remaining activities under this component lack strategic coherence and appear to fall outside the core competencies and abilities of the Project and its Executing Partners. Paired with the challenges of tourism revenues remaining in the region, the likelihood of achieving substantial or sustainable impact under the current approach is limited. In the absence of a well-defined strategy and clear pathways to scale, the Project should consider repurposing a portion of the unspent Component 4 funds – at least temporarily – to better-performing or underfunded components, such as Component 5, while revisiting the feasibility and design of its tourism-related interventions.

Recommendations:

- **Reassess the strategic direction of Component 4:** With the lack of readiness for sustainable gorilla tourism, revisit the broader strategy for this component. Use results chains to refine objectives and **assess whether gorilla tourism should remain a core focus or if resources should be redirected** toward other interventions, such as turtle tourism, complementary conservation activities, or biodiversity monitoring. Alternatively, funds could be directed towards assessing whether there are credible and robust ways for a percentage of tourism revenue to support continued gorilla habituation and turtle monitoring activities. This could be supported by an independent consultant with experience in developing tourism products and associated fee structures related to large mammal wildlife tourism, which have potential to stay within the local area.
- **Engage multiple private sector actors:** Avoid over-reliance on a single tour operator. Engage a broader set of market actors – including tourism associations, eco-lodge investors, and regional tour operators – to stimulate competition, diversify offerings, and build a more resilient tourism sector.
- **Conduct a comprehensive tourism market assessment:** In order to identify private sector actors, replace or supplement feasibility studies with a market systems assessment that identifies:
    - Existing and potential demand for tourism to the region
    - Constraints and enabling environment factors
    - Opportunities for value chain development, for future collaboration if not within the scope of this Project
    - Key market actors (private sector, NGOs, tour operators) and their incentives for investing in tourism development in the region
    - Potential partnerships to scale impact
- **Reallocate funds, if necessary:** If no viable tourism strategy emerges in the short term, consider reallocating unspent Component 4 funds (in part or in full) to underfunded components, such as M&E (Component 5), where there is clear demand.

- **Revise and expand indicators for Component 4:**
    - **Strengthen ecotourism and biodiversity monitoring indicators:** Develop distinct outcomes and indicators for gorilla and turtle tourism that capture both conservation and livelihood benefits. Incorporate ecologically relevant metrics (e.g., gorilla groups monitored, nesting success rates, reduction in nest poaching) into the formal M&E system – even if not required under GEF Core Indicators – to ensure alignment with the project's overarching conservation goals. Integrate existing field data from monitoring teams (such as nest counts, sightings, patrol effort, and threat detection) into reporting processes so that biodiversity outcomes are systematically tracked and used to inform adaptive management.
    - **Improve benefit attribution:** Refine the measurement of IPLC benefits. Distinguish between short-term participation (gap salaries) and sustained economic or non-economic benefits. Also consider tracking ongoing income generation, skill development, or changes in attitudes toward conservation linked to tourism efforts.
    - **Include youth disaggregation:** Apply the same standard of demographic disaggregation used for gender to youth. When the number of participants is low (as in this case), self-reported age ranges or estimates are acceptable and easily implemented.

3.4.3.5 Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Knowledge Management (KM), and Regional Coordination

Executing Partners: n/a
Location: n/a
Component 5 encompasses all M&E activities, KM, communications, and coordination with national and international partners. This component represents a substantial body of work that, while critical to the success of the project, has historically been underfunded in GEF-financed initiatives. This project followed that trend, with an under-resourced component 5 budget. Nonetheless, the PMU has made commendable efforts to fulfill obligations under this component and support Executing Partners in meeting compliance requirements despite these constraints.

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that M&E in this project serves two primary functions:

1. **Monitoring Executing Partners** – This includes ensuring activities are implemented as agreed, building partners' capacity in technical and financial management, and improving overall project delivery.
2. **Reporting to the WWF GEF Agency and GEF Secretariat** – This entails ensuring compliance with GEF reporting standards, performance indicators, and documentation requirements.

The specific outputs and outcomes for Component 5 are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Summary of Component 5 Outcomes and Outputs

Component 5: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), knowledge management (KM), and regional coordination

- Outcome 5.1: Program results monitored and lessons learned inform adaptive management and outreach in support of SFM at landscape, national and regional levels
  - Output 5.1.1: Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of the project and across the program
  - Output 5.1.2: Project achievements and results documented, and knowledge management products prepared for replication and scaling up
  - Output 5.1.3: Regional coordination and active participation of key stakeholders in Congo IP

In the initial phases of implementation, significant effort was directed toward working with Executing Partners to prepare and review proposals and conduct due diligence. Initially, one-year agreements were used, which created a recurring administrative burden as each cycle expired. Following stakeholder consultations, the PMU transitioned to three-year agreements, which effectively reduced transaction costs and streamlined partnership management.

To further ease the reporting process, the PMU developed standardized templates and delivered training to Executing Partner staff across multiple levels and locations. These efforts were well received, with partners noting that the templates and capacity-building sessions were both useful and appreciated. Partners expressed interest in continued support in this area moving forward.

The PMU has largely remained compliant with GEF reporting requirements. According to WWF GEF Agency and WWF-US representatives, the PMU responds to information requests in a timely and efficient manner.

Performance against Component 5 indicators is summarized in Table 9 and includes:

- Number of M&E documents/reports produced: 18 of 20 completed by midterm, close to target.
- Number of communication materials produced: 7 completed, exceeding the target of 5, reporting aggregate figures only.
- Number of coordination events attended: 5 of 5 completed.
- "Percentage of GAP target achievements": Listed in the tracking tool, but no explanation or supporting data was provided.

While the project has delivered on many activity-based targets, there are several areas where the M&E system could be strengthened:

- **Indicator quality:** Some indicators measure only the *quantity* of outputs (e.g., number of reports or events), not their *quality*, use, or impact.
- **Misalignment of indicators and reporting:** For example, the first indicator refers to the "number of plans" but is measured by the number of documents published under that plan.

Table 9. GEF Outcome Rating Table for Component 5

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings							
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**	**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	***Other Notes***
Outcome 5.1: Program results monitored and lessons learned inform adaptive management and outreach in support of SFM at landscape, national and regional levels					**Moderately satisfactory (GEF)**	Met or are close to meeting targets; have not disaggregated communications	
# of M&E plan implemented	0	20	43	18	**Moderately satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; Review of sample of progress reports	Appears to be non-cumulative but not explicitly stated; Indicator should be rewritten to state number of final M&E documents submitted rather than # of plans implemented
Percentage of GAP target achievements	Blank in tracking sheet				**Unable to Assess**		
# of communications, awareness raising, and KM materials produced and proportion (%) that target women (and other vulnerable groups)	0	5	11	7	**Moderately Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; Review of sample of articles Plan calls for disaggregation: "% that target women and other vulnerable groups" – this is not reported	
# of bilateral or regional events to coordinate and exchange knowledge on project strategies for transboundary landscapes in which Cameroon is represented as a result of this project	0	5	10	5	**Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool; mention in progress reports	Assumed cumulative but it is not explicitly stated

- **Gender and inclusion tracking:** One indicator references the percentage of publications targeting women and vulnerable groups, but no reporting on this was available. It is unclear whether this links to the ambiguous "Percentage of GAP target achievements" indicator.

The Project Document (ProDoc) called for a revision of the M&E Plan early in implementation. Unfortunately, this was not carried out in a timely or complete manner. The evaluation team received a draft M&E Plan dated January 2025 (mid-Year 3 of implementation), which was largely a Word version of the original Excel M&E tracking tool. It contained no updates, corrections, or added context. As a result, the ProDoc remains the most comprehensive M&E reference for the project.

This is a notable shortcoming. Despite strong efforts and progress across many areas, the lack of a well-developed and updated M&E system limits the Project's ability to measure and demonstrate its successes. This poses a risk to the overall assessment of the Project, particularly against evaluation criteria related to adaptive capacity and learning. Further discussion and recommendations related to M&E and adaptive management are provided in Section 3.7.

In addition to the M&E Plan, the Project has a **Communication and Knowledge Management Plan** (undated). The plan provides a basic framework, primarily focused on raising awareness about the Project. While it identifies potential target audiences, media channels, and contextual barriers, its emphasis is on the number of publications or broadcasts rather than on quality, level of engagement, behavior change or specific messages. The communications approach could be strengthened by developing clear results chains for each Project strategy – defining how communications will contribute to specific objectives beyond general awareness-raising about the Project. This would provide for more focused and efficient communications (especially given the limited budget) and improve utility and cohesion in line with each strategy.

KM is briefly mentioned in the same plan but appears to overlap with M&E, mainly referring to the routine updating of platforms as data is collected. Although M&E and KM are complementary, they serve distinct purposes: M&E tracks and assesses performance, while KM focuses on capturing, organizing, sharing, and applying lessons learned. The plan would benefit from clearer guidance on how information will be organized and managed. Additionally, while it mentions an aggressive action plan with quantitative expectations for the number of materials and publications produced, these do not align with the limited Project indicators of only five materials produced. Furthermore, there is no mention of disaggregating results by gender or ethnicity. Document review also suggests that record organization remains a challenge, with inconsistencies in labeling, filing, and document finalization.

As outlined above, Component 5 encompasses a broad and essential set of activities – monitoring and evaluation, KM, communications, and coordination – that are foundational to effective Project delivery. However, many of these activities were either underbudgeted or not budgeted for at all during project design. To date, 78% of the Component 5 budget has already been spent, with a significant portion of the work still ahead. This raises serious

concerns about the ability to sustain the level of effort required to meet M&E obligations and support adaptive management.

Despite these financial constraints, implementation under Component 5 has been mostly effective, with targets on track and strong support provided to Executing Partners. However, the current funding shortfall threatens the continued success of this work. The project will need to either request additional funds or reallocate underspent funds from other components to reinforce this core area.

Recommendations:

- **Increase budget for Component 5:** Restructure the Project budget to ensure adequate funding for the remainder of the project's M&E, KM, and coordination activities. This revision should account for previously overlooked or underestimated costs, as well as inflation and evolving implementation needs – including an updated M&E plan.
- **Revise the M&E system and indicators:**
    - Update the M&E tracking sheet and plan to ensure indicators clearly reflect what is being measured.
    - If the tracking of publications targeting women and vulnerable groups is no longer feasible, update the indicators accordingly; if it remains a priority, ensure it is tracked consistently.
    - Clarify distinctions between "plans" and "published documents" to align reporting with intended targets.
    - Strengthen the quality of communication and outreach indicators – consider moving beyond output counts to metrics such as distribution channels, publication venues, and audience reach (e.g., readership, online engagement, radio listenership) to better capture the impact of knowledge products.
- **Update the Communication and KM Plan:** With expert guidance, refocus the plan to (a) target communications that directly support specific components and strategies, ideally using results chains, and (b) outline a KM strategy that enhances the organization and packaging of information for easy sharing, in alignment with the communications plan. Clearly differentiate KM from M&E by defining its role in capturing, organizing, and applying lessons learned. Improve the consistency and organization of documentation through a standardized system for labeling, filing, and finalizing records. Simplify the action plan to align with the Project budget, focusing only on essential activities that complement the overall strategy. For future projects, consider adding a dedicated Communications & KM team member to ensure ongoing success in this area.

3.4.4 Achievements of Outcomes and Outputs per GEF Core Indicators

As required of all GEF-financed initiatives, this Project selected a suite of relevant Core Indicators to track progress against global environmental goals. These are summarized in

Table 10, including baselines, midterm and end-of-project targets, and current levels of achievement. A GEF-mandated performance rating was applied based on reported progress.

While the Project has submitted data across the Core Indicators, several methodological concerns limit the ability to confidently assess their accuracy or credibility. The M&E system does not provide clear explanations for how indicator figures – particularly for hectares under improved management or numbers of beneficiaries – have been calculated. In some cases, assumptions are unstated, and it is unclear whether measures were taken to avoid overestimation or double counting (e.g., counting indirect beneficiaries impacted by communal-level LUPs as direct beneficiaries).

The Project appears to be on track – or ahead – in terms of achieving most of its numerical Core Indicator targets. However, the pace at which some results have been reported raises legitimate concerns. For instance, achieving 100% of the target for landscape-level hectares under improved management within the first year of implementation, despite documented delays in activity rollout, calls into question the robustness of the indicator interpretation. It is not evident that the reported figures reflect meaningful and sustained improvements in land or resource management, as defined by GEF standards. In several cases, the bar for "improved management" appears to have been set too low (e.g., a single short training session), without adequate verification of uptake or behavioral change.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen the M&E system for GEF Core Indicators:**
    - Clearly define and document methodologies for each indicator, especially regarding beneficiary counts and hectares under improved management.
    - Include assumptions, data sources, and verification protocols in the M&E Plan and reporting templates.
    - Ensure that “improved management” reflects sustained changes in practice, policy, or institutional capacity – not just isolated activities.
    - Avoid over-reporting by ensuring direct versus indirect impacts are clearly distinguished and beneficiaries are not double-counted.

Table 10. GEF Outcome Rating Table for GEF Core Indicators

Progress Towards Results[13] and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**		**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Project Objective: To strengthen the integrated management of Cameroon's globally important forest landscapes in the Congo Basin to secure its biological integrity and increase economic and livelihood opportunities for forest dependent people								
Core Indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)	n/a		952,573	952,573	935,878	**Moderately Satisfactory**	Figures are according to the M&E tracking tool[14]; Met in year 2 per the tracking tool. Upward trajectory of the METT score (see sub-indicator 1.2) for most protected areas – except for CMNP which has not been reported on.	In accordance with GEF guidelines, even a single Project-supported activity associated with a one-point increase in a METT score is sufficient to count the total hectares of the corresponding protected area toward this indicator. While such reporting meets GEF requirements, without an accompanying narrative it provides limited clarity or justification regarding the extent of the Project's actual contribution to the improvement.
GEF Sub-Indicator 1.2. Terrestrial PA under improved management effectiveness	Lobéké NP	66	No targets set		67.46 (year 3 measure)	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**	Figures are according to the M&E tracking tool; METT score; Inconsistently measured and reported. No targets established. No assessment for CMNP.	Attribution to Project unable to assess. What is measured should be better articulated in M&E Plan and tracking tool.
	BBNP	53.17			55.56 (year 2 measure)			
	NKI NP	52.38			53.97 (year 2 measure)			
	Ngoyla WR	42.28			43.9 (year 2 measure)			
	CMNP	50.79			n/a			

[13] If any changes were made to these results, please indicate when they were made and whether those changes were approved.

[14] Aug 14, 2025, downloaded

Progress Towards Results[13] and Individual Outcome Ratings							
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**	**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)	0	3,076,103	3,076,113	3,076,103	n/a	Is an accurate total of 4.1 and 4.3; However, it is difficult to rate on its own.	**Note: this is a total of sub-indicators 4.1 and 4.3**
Sub-indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity	0	3,076,093	3,076,093	3,076,093	**Moderately Satisfactory**	Figures are according to the M&E tracking tool; In accordance with GEF guidelines, even a single Project-supported activity equated to improved management. As such, indicator was met in year 2 with few activities.	While such reporting meets GEF requirements, without an accompanying narrative it provides limited clarity or justification regarding the extent of the Project's actual contribution to improved management. M&E Plan/Results Framework should clarify how this calculation is made and what qualifies as improved management (as the METT score may not apply to all landscapes included here).
Sub-indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems	0	10	20	10	**Satisfactory**	Figures are according to the M&E tracking tool	Assuming this is related to component 3 – hardwoods.

Progress Towards Results[13] and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Indicator (if applicable)	**Baseline level**		**Midterm Target**	**End of Project Target**	**Current level of achievement**	***Outcome Rating***	***Justification***	**Other Notes**
Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emission mitigated **Sub-indicator 6.1:** Carbon sequestered, or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector	**The data was reported in the tracking tool in a non-standard, inconsistent manner and has therefore not been replicated here.**					**Unable to Assess**	Data is inconsistent in the tracking form, appears to be in draft form, and cannot be accurately reported or evaluated.	
GEF Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	Women	0	7,798	8,866	8,007	**Satisfactory**	According to the M&E tracking tool	Assumes that the number of direct beneficiaries is a total of people who attended direct activities and is not an extrapolation of entire community populations who are indirectly impacted by LUP or the like. This should be verified. Also verify methods to avoid double counting of persons who attend multiple events.
	Men	0	8,448	9,605	9,495			
	Total	0	16,246	18,471	17,502			

3.5 Impact

Although the Project is beginning to generate positive change across several thematic areas, it remains too early to observe clear, measurable impact – particularly on long-term ecological outcomes. Delays in project startup, implementation challenges, and weak impact design have all contributed to this limitation. Most environmental indicators remain difficult to track or attribute directly to Project activities, and the absence of strong linkages to conservation values in the TOC has further obscured ecological and human wellbeing impact pathways.

That said, some promising signs of human and social impact are emerging. Community-level interventions – particularly in LUP, NTFPs, and turtle tourism – have led to greater community awareness, improved governance behaviors, and stronger engagement of IPLCs. In TRIDOM, for example, improvements in land governance and increased confidence among Baka communities show early but meaningful shifts in behavior and empowerment.

The Project also faces substantial challenges that limit its ability to address obstacles or seize scaling opportunities. These include financial inflexibility, capacity constraints, and unclear sustainability pathways for several initiatives, such as the hardwood and tourism components. While the groundwork for scalable and replicable models has been laid in some areas, notably LUP and NTFPs, the Project currently lacks the strategic and financial agility to move beyond isolated success stories and drive broader impact. Strengthening strategic design, revising the M&E system, and building in flexibility – both programmatically and financially – will be critical to unlocking the Project's full impact potential.

3.5.1 Design for Impact and Additionality

The Project was designed to complement ongoing conservation and community development initiatives, with notable contributions such as supporting integrated LUP and fostering partnerships with IPLCs. These efforts added value by supporting local organizations and introducing more participatory approaches, especially at the community level.

However, the Project's Theory of Change lacked clear linkages between its activities and long-term conservation or human well-being impacts. Key conservation values– such as wildlife populations, habitat condition, or ecosystem health – were not explicitly connected to outcomes or monitored through the M&E system. While some of this data feeds into METT/IMET scores of protected areas (including population trends of key species which are monitored and embedded within the IMET for Campo Ma'an, Lobéké, and surrounding areas), there has been no further documentation or reporting by the Project, particularly as part of its M&E system, regarding key conservation values. As a result, it is difficult to assess whether the Project's interventions are contributing to lasting ecological or social change.

While the Project has laid important groundwork, stronger design elements – such as measurable impact pathways, better use of threat and biodiversity data, and clearer scaling strategies – are needed to demonstrate additionality and long-term results.

3.5.2 Positive, Negative, Intended or Unintended Impacts

As with many complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives, the Project has generated a range of impacts – both intended and unintended, which are positive in nature. No significant negative or adverse effects were identified during the evaluation. These outcomes reflect adaptive implementation and the capacity of Executing Partners and communities to innovate and respond to emerging opportunities, even beyond the original Project design. While intended impacts were not always clearly articulated at the design stage, several tangible and unanticipated positive changes have emerged across social, institutional, and ecological dimensions.

Key positive impacts include:

- **Institutional shifts toward gender equity (UCLA CBI):** In response to Project requirements around monitoring, evaluation, and inclusion, Executing Partner UCLA CBI developed a comprehensive Gender Action Plan informed by a context-specific gender analysis. This led to:
    1. Rebalanced team roles to promote gender equality among staff with similar qualifications.
    2. Improved gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting.
    3. Piloting of innovative approaches to increase women's participation in Project activities, now reaching approximately 35%.
- **Enhanced community resilience through NTFP revolving funds:** Guided by the Executing Partners, several, if not all, NTFP groups have developed revolving funds that allow members to sell products to the group during times of need, with the group storing and later reselling for better prices. This system not only improves economic resilience but builds group cohesion and financial sustainability. While still nascent, this mechanism has potential to outlast the Project with further capacity support.
- **Behavioral shifts in land and resource governance:** Communities and traditional leaders have demonstrated greater awareness of land-use planning and responsible resource management. In Mintom, for example, local authorities reported a decline in disorganized land sales following their engagement in land-use planning processes. Increased understanding of access rights to NTFPs has also strengthened collaboration, particularly among Baka communities, who now report enhanced confidence, ethnic identity, and cooperation through collective systems.
- **Reduction in poaching pressure:** Anecdotal evidence suggests that some community members have transitioned from illegal hunting to sustainable NTFP harvesting, indicating a potential reduction in poaching and improved appreciation of the ecological value of intact forests.

- **Strengthened community governance and legal recognition:** Executing Partners have supported CBOs in obtaining formal legal status, improving their ability to engage in contracts, access funding, and participate meaningfully in forest governance.
- **Capacity building and institutional strengthening:** Executing Partners report improved administrative and technical capacity, including in monitoring and reporting. These skills are likely to yield longer-term institutional benefits.
- **Early ecological and socio-cultural outcomes:** Tourism-related activities, such as increased turtle nesting, signal early conservation benefits. Greater inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in conservation governance – illustrated by Baka trackers' use of smartphones in protected areas – also reflects progress toward more equitable participation.

Although no major negative impacts were observed, limitations in the M&E framework constrained the ability to fully assess the depth and breadth of impacts – particularly qualitative dimensions such as empowerment, cultural identity, and behavioral change.

Recommendations:

- **Systematically document and share emerging success stories:** Develop learning briefs, stakeholder exchanges, or contributions to national platforms to highlight promising practices and scalable models from this Project.
- **Strengthen qualitative monitoring:** Integrate participatory and narrative-based methods (e.g., case studies, storytelling) into the M&E framework to better capture nuanced social and behavioral impacts that may not be reflected in quantitative indicators.

3.5.3 Ability to Address Obstacles

The Project faces several significant obstacles that challenge its long-term success and sustainability. While some funds remain unspent, the overall lack of financial flexibility limits the Project's capacity to implement new activities or adapt strategies to effectively overcome these barriers.

The most critical obstacle is financial sustainability. Without sufficient and flexible funding, there is a real risk that key interventions may stall or collapse once external support ends. For example, the implementation of LUPs is lagging because funding is not available to move beyond planning to actual on-the-ground application, leaving these plans largely unused. Governance reforms have also been delayed due to slow restructuring of management agreements, hindering progress in strengthening institutional frameworks.

In the NTFP component 3, concerns exist around the continuity of negotiated pricing arrangements managed by Executing Partners – there is uncertainty about whether communities will maintain fair prices moving forward. Efforts are underway to try to link

community groups to the markets directly, yet certainly at this point more effort is needed to develop an exit strategy and ready communities to continue independently before the Project ends.

Also in component 3, the Ebony project is experiencing a decline in participation in one of the three communities, where participation has dropped from 50 to 13 individuals, largely because trees are not yet producing income. Tourism activities are similarly constrained by government policies for tourism revenue management, resulting in unclear mechanisms for community benefit sharing, and poor infrastructure, such as a key damaged bridge, which limits tourist access.

Given these challenges, the Project is only partially positioned to address its obstacles, and more adaptive, targeted strategies will be necessary to overcome them.

Recommendation:

- **Develop strategies to address obstacles:** Revise project strategies and results chains to directly address these remaining obstacles, incorporating more flexible funding approaches and clear pathways for sustainable implementation and benefit sharing.

3.5.4 Ability to Capitalize on Opportunities

The Project has several promising opportunities, but its ability to translate these into sustained impact is limited by funding constraints and an overly broad scope across partners, geographic areas, and strategic components. This dispersion of effort has resulted in incremental activities rather than meaningful progress toward outcomes. Without revisiting and revising on a smaller set of priority strategies, the Project is unlikely to fully leverage these opportunities.

Key opportunities include the LUP process, which has proven successful and could be replicated, though its scalability remains limited without active implementation and uptake. In governance, potential progress hinges on government action to redefine management structures and agreements, possibly after upcoming elections. The NTFP component has scope to expand into additional communities and diversify into other products, while the Ebony initiative could explore alternative revenue streams like selling seedlings. Tourism products are already developed, but improved access and infrastructure are essential to unlock their full potential.

At present, the Project's capacity for adaptation and flexibility to seize these opportunities appears limited. To better position itself for impact and sustainability, it must proactively revise its strategies, focus on what is realistic and obtainable with the remaining years of the project, and build mechanisms to respond to emerging market and governance conditions.

3.5.5 Potential for Scale & Ability to Capitalize on it

The Project shows reasonable potential to scale or replicate some outcomes, particularly in LUP and NTFPs, where community engagement and processes are already in place. However, limited resources – including funding and manpower – and constrained strategic flexibility hinder the Project's ability to fully capitalize on these opportunities. As a result, the Project is currently spread too thin to effectively scale its impact.

Recommendations:

- **Assess scalability:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of scalability with Executing Partners before the next agreement cycle, differentiating clearly between scaling within existing contexts and replication in new areas. Evaluate the specific opportunities and constraints related to each component to inform realistic scale-up plans. Incorporate considerations of gender, IPLCs, and youth in scalability assessments to promote equitable and inclusive impact.
- **Revise resource allocations:** Explore options to increase flexibility in resource allocation and strategic planning to better support scaling initiatives.

3.6 Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of the Project remains a significant challenge. Although some groundwork has been laid, sustainability and exit strategies were not clearly embedded in the project design, and there is currently no formal plan guiding the transition of responsibilities and benefits post-project. While there appears to be an assumption that local partners and communities will continue key activities, many of these actors still depend heavily on Project funding and support. Without a clear pathway for phased withdrawal and local ownership, there is a risk that critical functions – such as conservation monitoring and value chain development – will not be sustained once external funding ceases.

The continuation of Project benefits varies across components. Some, like the tourism and NTFP initiatives, show potential but are not yet mature enough to operate independently. Market linkages remain underdeveloped, and critical conservation activities are still reliant on Project financing. Structural barriers, such as national policies requiring centralized revenue management, further hinder the viability of local tourism models intended to fund conservation and community benefits. Additionally, broader LUP and governance work faces institutional and policy constraints that limit progress toward sustainability.

Despite these challenges, there are several strengths to build on. The Project has fostered strong relationships with communities and Executing Partners, and there is a shared commitment among stakeholders to continue the work. The project team also demonstrates the technical capacity needed to address sustainability risks – **if given a clearer mandate and the necessary resources**. Moving forward, the Project would benefit from the development of a formal exit strategy, stronger market and institutional linkages, and a

practical risk mitigation plan to strengthen resilience and ensure that results are maintained over time.

3.6.1 Sustainability/Exit Strategy

To date, the project has not articulated a formal sustainability or exit strategy. Planning documents and implementation approaches suggest that long-term sustainability considerations were not fully integrated into the design phase. In particular, there is no clear roadmap for how project activities, responsibilities, or benefits will be maintained once external support ends. While there is hope that tourism revenue will fund gorilla management in the future, the current situation – of revenues returning to central government coffers – remains an inopportune and premature time for launching such tourism endeavors.

It appears that some degree of ongoing involvement by the Executing Partners and local communities was assumed, and there may have been an expectation that organizations working with NTFPs, for example, would continue key support. However, this assumption does not fully account for the financial and institutional realities of some partners, particularly smaller NGOs that require consistent funding to retain staff and operational capacity. Similarly, the continued close involvement with communities suggests a model of prolonged support, rather than a transition toward independent, community-led ownership.

Many stakeholders have expressed interest in a second phase of funding, which reflects a strong commitment to the Project's goals. However, this also indicates a reliance on continued external inputs, rather than a shift toward sustainable, locally driven models. One positive outcome is the strong foundation of trust and collaboration established with communities and local partners. This offers valuable potential for future sustainability efforts, particularly if supported by targeted capacity-building and resource planning.

Recommendation:

- **Develop an exit strategy for sustainability:** As the project moves forward, it would benefit from the development of a clear exit strategy that supports long-term sustainability. This should include practical steps for transitioning responsibilities, strengthening local ownership, and reducing dependency on external funding over time.

3.6.2 Benefits Expected to Continue

The long-term continuation of Project benefits remains uncertain. While some components – such as NTFPs – show promising progress, others face challenges that raise concerns about sustainability. Overall, it is difficult at this stage to assess with confidence whether the Project’s outcomes are on a stable trajectory to be maintained after external support concludes.

Work like developing LUPs and the NTFP initiatives have gained some traction, and the groundwork laid offers a solid starting point. However, these components remain vulnerable to external factors and rely heavily on the ongoing support of Executing Partners and/or government counterparts. For example, in the case of NTFPs, direct commercial linkages with buyers have not yet been fully established as mentioned. Currently, the Executing Partners act as intermediaries in negotiating pricing and facilitating transactions. Should the project end abruptly, these market connections may not be sufficiently developed to stand on their own.

Similarly, the project continues to provide financial support for critical conservation activities, such as gorilla monitoring. These operations are not yet self-sustaining, and key staff salaries are still funded through project resources. While this is seen as bridge funding, long-term sustainability is contingent on future tourism revenues, which remain uncertain.

LUP and park management components face additional constraints, many of which are dependent on broader structural or institutional developments beyond the control of the project. As such, their sustainability is even more difficult to assess at this stage.

Nonetheless, the Project has succeeded in building interest and participation among local communities and stakeholders, which is an important foundation. With the right follow-up, this engagement could support the continuation of benefits over time.

Recommendation:

- **Assess aspects of the Project that lack a pathway to sustainability:** Identify Project components that currently rely on external funding and develop alternative strategies to ensure their sustainability beyond the Project's end. This should include assessing where clear pathways to sustainability are lacking and prioritizing actions to strengthen local ownership, capacity, and long-term resource mobilization.

3.6.3 Capacity to Address Risks to Sustainability of the Project Outcomes

While the overall likelihood of Project outcomes being sustained is not currently rated as high risk, there are still notable concerns that warrant proactive attention. At this stage, the project has not developed a clear strategy or identified funding mechanisms to effectively pivot its activities in response to sustainability challenges. Without more deliberate planning and mitigation efforts, several key outcomes may remain vulnerable beyond the Project's lifespan.

The evaluation team summarized the key risks to the sustainability of the outcomes, including financial, sociopolitical, institutional and environmental. These are provided in Table 11 utilizing GEF rating scales (see Annex 11 for the rating scales).

Table 11. GEF Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes

Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes *Please describe these risks below, taking into account probability and magnitude of their effect/severity:*		
Financial Risks		
Moderately unlikely (MU) - There are significant financial risks to sustainability. The effect on continuation of benefits would be substantial if these risks materialize, and the probability of materialization of these risks is significant. Overall, net benefits of the project are likely to abate. The project has been overly ambitious in its scope and scale. The numbers of activities and area covered means that the funding is spread very thin. If the project is to have sustainable impacts, the financial resources need to be increased and extra time allocated to implementation to ensure that the activities are appropriated by the communities after the project finishes. Most stakeholders expressed a perceived need for a second phase of the project.		
Sociopolitical Risks		
Likely (L) - Because the project is specifically including indigenous peoples and women, there is negligible risk to continuation of benefits.		
Institutional Framework and Governance Risks		
Moderately unlikely (MU) - There are significant risks to sustainability. If the government were to change significantly due to upcoming presidential elections or if there were political instability caused by the elections, then there would be a highly likely demise of the project.		
Environmental Risks		
Likely (L) - There is negligible risk to continuation of benefits. Climate change (including climate variability and extreme weather), land degradation, land use changes, and landscape fragmentation are the primary environmental risks that could cause significant issues, and they will likely not occur to significant levels in the short to medium term.		
Other risks		
n/a		
Overall Rating of Sustainability of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above information, please provide an **overall rating** for the risks to sustainability of project outcomes.	**MU**	The project has thought through many of the potential risks, and there have been many attempts to mitigate them. However, financial and political risks are likely to have a negative impact.

Risks to sustainability are evident across a range of areas, including financial and institutional dimensions. For example, ongoing activities such as protected area management, community engagement, and value chain development remain dependent on Project funding. Without a transition plan that includes diversified funding sources, local capacity-building, and strengthened institutional frameworks, these components may struggle to continue independently.

Sociopolitical and governance-related risks are already constraining the sustainability of Project outcomes. For example, government regulations requiring tourism revenues to be directed to the central government limit the reinvestment of funds at the local level. This directly impedes the sustainable development of the gorilla tourism sector, which depends on retaining a significant portion of revenue to maintain safe and high-quality operations for tourists, park staff, surrounding communities, and wildlife. Without policy reforms that allow

for greater local revenue retention and reinvestment, the long-term viability of this and other Project components remains at risk.

Despite these gaps, the Project team demonstrates strong technical and operational capacity. If equipped with a clear mandate and resources to develop and implement risk mitigation strategies, they are well positioned to strengthen the project's long-term viability.

Recommendation:

- **Refine component strategies, building upon current risk assessments and mitigation plans:** Building on the ProDoc's initial risk analysis for the broader project and the annual risk mitigation planning that the Project undertakes, assess risks *by component* and refine the strategies and mitigation measures to address key vulnerabilities. Through the development of results chains by component (previously recommended) with appropriate identification of risks, the Project would then refine strategies and activities to strengthen outcome sustainability, reduce dependency on external funding, reinforce enabling conditions, and outline contingency measures should core assumptions around sustainability shift.

3.7 Adaptive Capacity/M&E Design & Implementation

Despite the limitations of the M&E system, the Project has demonstrated strong adaptive management, making thoughtful adjustments in response to emerging challenges and stakeholder feedback. The team acted decisively to discontinue underperforming partnerships, shift toward multi-year agreements to improve planning, scale back activities in areas with low engagement, and strengthen partner compliance through training and standardized tools. These actions show a practical and responsive approach to implementation, allowing the Project to stay on course despite setbacks and resource constraints.

However, the M&E system – while grounded in a solid initial framework – has not kept pace with the evolving needs of the Project. It remains narrowly focused on meeting GEF reporting requirements, without capturing important aspects such as threat reduction, ecological impact, safeguards, or cross-cutting issues like ethnicity and youth engagement. The tracking tool in use is incomplete and inconsistently managed, and many indicators reflect activity completion rather than actual outcomes or behavior change. The Project is collecting far more data than it is using, and with a comprehensive revision of the M&E plan, this information could be leveraged to better track results and guide adaptive decisions.

KM has also presented challenges, particularly around document organization and accessibility. The evaluation team may have been given access to only one portion of the database, and a more comprehensive system may exist, but the database provided was difficult to navigate, lacked consolidated documentation, and contained many files still in draft form. Establishing a more structured system for managing and sharing knowledge

would not only improve internal coordination but also support learning, transparency, and long-term sustainability. (See section 3.4.3.5 for earlier review of the Communications & KM Plan.) Together, improved M&E and KM systems would significantly enhance the Project's ability to measure impact, share lessons, and adapt effectively.

3.7.1 Adaptive Capacity

The Project team has demonstrated strong adaptive management capabilities, responding effectively to evolving stakeholder needs, administrative challenges, and varying levels of partner performance. Notable examples include:

- Discontinuing agreements with underperforming Executing Partners;
- Transitioning from single-year to multi-year agreements to improve continuity and planning;
- Scaling back Component 3 activities related to NTFPs in Campo Ma'an due to limited stakeholder interest;
- Enhancing field-level monitoring of Executing Partners to ensure accountability; and
- Developing standardized templates and delivering targeted training to strengthen partner capacity and compliance.

These actions reflect a proactive and responsive management approach, with adjustments clearly aimed at improving implementation effectiveness and project outcomes.

3.7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Implementation

The Project's M&E system was initially outlined in the ProDoc and serves as the foundation for all subsequent monitoring efforts. In many respects, the original plan presented in the ProDoc remains the most detailed and coherent reference available to the evaluation team. However, both the design and implementation of the M&E system have important limitations that affect its effectiveness.

As noted in Section 3.4 (Effectiveness), challenges exist in how indicators – including the GEF Core Indicators – are defined, measured, and reported. Many of these issues stem from a lack of clarity in the original M&E framework, and they have carried through into implementation. This section provides a focused assessment of the M&E system, divided into two parts: **Design** (pre-CEO Endorsement) and **Implementation** (post-endorsement), to more clearly identify where improvements are needed.

While the Project is actively collecting a significant amount of data – some of it beyond the original M&E requirements – it has not yet fully leveraged this information to guide adaptive management. With targeted revisions and improved clarity on how indicators are calculated and used, the M&E system has strong potential to become a more effective management and learning tool.

Overall M&E Rating (GEF) – Moderately Unsatisfactory

3.7.2.1 M&E Design

The M&E system presented in the ProDoc provides a generally adequate foundation and is aligned with both GEF Core Indicators and the intended Project outcomes. The selected GEF indicators are relevant, and outcome-level indicators are somewhat aligned with SMART criteria – being specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. However, critical gaps and assumptions limit the system's overall robustness and practical utility.

Ideally, a well-structured M&E system should include distinct indicators across all levels: output, outcome, and, where feasible and with sufficient time and budgetary abilities – impact. In this case, indicator levels are blended in a way that creates confusion. As previously mentioned, for example, under Outcome 1.1, the intended result is the improved management of 1,200,000 hectares within the TRIDOM landscape. Yet, none of the associated indicators directly measure hectares. Instead, indicators focus on the number of councils engaged and the quality of planning – without referencing TRIDOM-specific data. While Core Indicators 1 and 1.1 address hectares, they are not landscape-specific, nor should they be.

Additionally, one proposed measurement – the quality of land-use plans through a scorecard system – is mentioned in the ProDoc but is not defined in any subsequent plans or documentation. Even if this tool was developed during implementation (the PMU has noted that it is currently in draft form), its absence from the design undermines transparency and accountability in tracking progress.

Other indicators conflate activity and outcome levels, such as tracking the number of beneficiaries, councils, or surveillance systems engaged – while simultaneously stating that they are "developed," "improved," or "employing best practices." The system implicitly assumes that participation equates to benefit, without mechanisms to verify behavioral change or actual impact. For example, the assumption that attending a training will lead to income increases by Year 2 or 3 is unsubstantiated by any described follow-up or validation method.

In discussions with the Project team, it was noted that some calculations were made to assess benefits – such as comparing income data between Project-assisted and non-assisted communities. However, it is unclear whether these calculations account for participant retention or long-term engagement, or if they rely solely on initial participation figures.

Even the interpretation of GEF Core Indicators raises questions. For instance, under Core Indicator 1 ("Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management"), the Project reported 98% completion by Year 3 (in terms of number of hectares under improved management). This appears to be based on the GEF standard in which one staff member of a protected area for instance, participating in one activity, paired with an increase in the METT score qualified as "improved management" for the entire area (hectares) of that protected area. While the Project is adhering to GEF guidelines, it has taken no further steps to track or

report on demonstrable evidence of improved management or to document how these results are attributable to the Project interventions. Without clearer justification (such as accompanying narrative), such rapid achievement reported soon after project launch risks overstating the Project's actual contribution, especially given the underspending and partial implementation during the same period.

Another key omission in the M&E design is the lack of disaggregation by ethnicity. Given the emphasis on engaging IPLCs across multiple components, this represents a missed opportunity for more inclusive and accurate reporting.

In summary, the M&E system as designed provided a reasonable starting point but was hindered by overly broad assumptions, a lack of specificity, and insufficient planning for how indicators would be measured and interpreted. With better-designed indicators – particularly at the output and outcome levels – the Project would be better positioned to demonstrate its progress and impact, much of which appears to be underreported. Recommendations to strengthen the system are presented in the following section on M&E implementation.

RATING (GEF) – Moderately Unsatisfactory

3.7.2.2 M&E Implementation

At present, the Project's M&E system is a direct reflection of the minimum reporting requirements defined by the GEF. While this is a common practice across WWF-GEF Agency-managed projects, it significantly limits the utility of the M&E framework as a true management and learning tool. The current system does not include additional indicators or tracking mechanisms beyond the GEF core requirements, and thus omits critical areas such as budget execution, safeguards monitoring, threat reduction, ecological impact, and cross-cutting issues like youth engagement and ethnicity. While the Project is tracking some of these other aspects (budget, safeguards, etc.), these are not detailed in the M&E Plan (including the updated draft) nor consolidated into a comprehensive system. Thus the M&E reporting remains siloed to GEF only requirements.

The most current draft of the M&E plan (January 2025) is a basic Word version of the Excel-based Tracking Tool. It lacks the level of detail included in the ProDoc – particularly Appendix 3, which remains the most informative version available. The Tracking Tool is poorly organized (e.g., saved under annual work plans rather than M&E folders), key columns such as disaggregated data (e.g., by age) and budget allocations are empty, and several indicators (e.g., Outcome 2.3) differ in baseline values between documents. These inconsistencies complicated the evaluation team's efforts to assess the appropriateness and accuracy of reported results.

Although the Project team appears to be collecting a good amount of data, much of it is not fully aligned with the M&E system. For example, many indicators focus on activity completion

rather than outcome. While Outcome 1.1 tracks the number of councils with integrated land-use plans, there is no monitoring to determine whether the plans are being implemented or whether they are producing intended ecological or social outcomes. Furthermore, although Outcome 2.2 refers to participatory wildlife, social impact, and threat monitoring systems, the evaluation team found no evidence that the Project uses those data to assess broader changes in biodiversity or threats across the landscapes.

Similarly, indicators across several components could benefit from revisions to improve specificity and measurement logic. Indicators for Outcomes 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, and 5.1 are particularly in need of refinement. In some cases, targets appear to have been achieved unrealistically early in the project, raising questions about whether indicators reflect true improvement or simply activity completion. Notably, the current practice of capping indicator achievement at 100% – even when targets are exceeded – fails to reflect the full extent of accomplishments and discourages nuanced reporting. At the same time, if reported at greater than 100%, it risks skewing the percentage overall achievement for each outcome. The M&E system also lacks tracking of certain commitments laid out in the TOC for Component 3, such as increased IPLC engagement in SFM.

Moreover, while the Project frequently references IPLCs, no systematic effort has been made to disaggregate data by ethnicity, making it difficult to evaluate how different groups are impacted. The same applies to youth participation, which is not tracked in any structured way. If the Project is serious about inclusion, the M&E system must include these disaggregations.

The following Table 12 summarizes the rating of the M&E system at the design and implementation stages of this Project, in line with the justifications provided above. Annex 12 provides the rating scale.

In short, the Project is meeting its basic GEF reporting obligations but is not using the M&E system to its full potential. Without meaningful tracking of threats, ecological values, or cross-cutting concerns, the Project cannot demonstrate whether its interventions are having lasting impact. A revision of the M&E plan is not only warranted – it is necessary if the Project is to maximize its contributions and provide an accurate account of its effectiveness.

Rating (GEF) – Moderately Unsatisfactory

Table 12. Rating of M&E Design & Implementation

Assessment of M&E Systems	*Rating*
M&E Design – Was the M&E plan at the CEO endorsement practical and thoughtful? Does the plan align with the project theory of change and GEF M&E requirements? Did the M&E plan include baseline data?[15] Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate SMART indicators to track environmental, gender, and socioeconomic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and budget adequate funds for M&E activities?	**Moderately unsatisfactory:** The M&E plan is weak overall, although it has strengths in some areas.
M&E implementation – Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Where necessary, was the M&E plan revised in a timely manner? Was information on specified indicators gathered systematically and as scheduled? Were relevant GEF core indicators/corporate results indicators and/or tracking tools analyzed and reported as expected? Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyze data? Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the M&E system used during project implementation? Did it facilitate transparency, sharing and adaptive management?	**Moderately unsatisfactory:** M&E plan implementation was weak and/or did not address weaknesses in the original plan.
Overall Rating of M&E	
Using above information as guidance, please provide an overall rating for M&E during project design /implementation.	**Moderately unsatisfactory**

Recommendations:

The evaluation team strongly recommends a comprehensive revision of the M&E plan to address the shortcomings noted above. Specific recommendations include:

- **Revise and expand the M&E plan:** Revise the M&E plan to go beyond GEF requirements and reflect the broader ambitions of the Project, including indicators for ecological impacts, safeguards, and cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, and IPLCs. WWF-US has modeled an alternative approach in Asia, which could be replicated here. Use the ProDoc Appendix 3 as a baseline and build from there.
- **Update the Tracking Tool:** Maintain the tracking tool consistently to reflect actual project implementation. Ensure it is complete, well-labeled, and housed in a clearly identifiable M&E folder. Populate missing fields such as budget tracking and disaggregated data, or make it clear the Project will not be tracking this information.
- **Measure impact on all target beneficiaries:** Include disaggregation by ethnicity (IPLC vs non-IPLC) and by age (youth 18–35) for all relevant indicators to better assess equity and inclusion.
- **Monitor threats and Conservation Targets:** Incorporate data from existing threat and biodiversity monitoring systems (e.g., wildlife and social monitoring under Outcome 2.2) to help track ecological changes and assess project impact.

[15] If there is not a project baseline, the evaluator should seek to estimate the baseline conditions so achievements and results can be properly determined.

- **Document overachievement:** When the Project has exceeded targets, but cannot report greater than 100% be sure the notes and/or accompanying narrative capture the full scope of success and improve learning.
- **Review and revise specific outcome indicators:** Revise indicators, especially 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, and 5.1, to improve clarity, consistency with baseline data, and alignment with project outcomes.
- **M&E capacity building:** Train Project staff and partners to ensure effective and consistent data collection, analysis, and use.

3.7.3 Knowledge Management

KM is essential for effective implementation, adaptive learning, and communication of project results. In this Project, however, KM has been a **notable weakness**. As mentioned earlier in section 3.4.3.5 (Component 5), the Project's Communications and Knowledge Management Plan offers minimal detail on KM methodology, instead conflating KM with M&E by merely updating data as it is collected. The Project would benefit from a more clearly defined KM plan, which might include the following elements:

- Knowledge Capture: Processes for collecting knowledge, such as data, insights, and best practices (e.g., interviews, reports, surveys, or workshops). These may complement M&E data collection but are not necessarily the same.
- Knowledge Sharing: Approaches for disseminating knowledge within the team or organization (e.g., intranet, collaboration tools, newsletters).
- Knowledge Use: How knowledge will be applied to inform decisions, improve processes, and enhance performance.
- Knowledge Retention/Organization: Methods for preserving and organizing valuable knowledge for easy access (e.g., documentation, databases, archives).

Regarding the organization of information, the evaluation team found the current system difficult to navigate, with challenges in accessing finalized and well-organized documents. Many files on the shared drive were incomplete, mislabeled, or in draft form, while others were missing or located in unexpected folders.
Although additional materials were later provided by the PMU, the lack of a centralized, reliable, and up-to-date document repository created inefficiencies and limited transparency. There appears to be no formal system in place for version control or document management.

Recommendations:

- **Establish clear KM Procedures:** Establish clear KM procedures for knowledge capture, sharing, use, and organization including mention of version control, document finalization, and maintenance of a centralized storage of key project documents. Audit and update the shared drive to ensure that all essential documents are clearly labeled and up to date. Integrate KM more explicitly into Component 5 – align KM with the communications plan as well as the M&E and stakeholder engagement plans.

3.8 Cross-Cutting Issues

In addition to evaluating the above-mentioned criteria, the evaluation team also took a close look at cross-cutting issues, specifically Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, Stakeholder Engagement, Environmental and Social Safeguards, and the Grievance Redress Mechanism. While the Project demonstrated a degree of progress in each area, there are notable gaps in measurement, outreach, and systems integration. For instance, youth demographics (ages 18–35) are not systematically tracked across engagements, and data on IPLCs lacks disaggregation by group or region, making it difficult to assess who is participating and benefiting.

Gender Equality stands out as a key success. Women reported increased empowerment and improved ability to make livelihood decisions as a result of their participation in project activities. These gains, however, are not matched in other cross-cutting areas. Issues such as alcohol abuse, intergenerational conflict, and violence against women were identified as potential risks but are not being addressed in a structured or sustained way. While many of these issues are beyond the scope of the Project to address, they are nonetheless issues that have the potential to substantially reduce the positive impacts which the Project could have on certain groups affected and engaged in the Project, including IPLCs and women.The Project understandably currently lacks the specific partnerships, expertise, and funding mechanisms needed to adequately respond to these challenges.

Engagement with IPLCs has had mixed results. While many participants expressed appreciation for opportunities to share their knowledge and improve livelihoods, communities in more remote areas remain under-engaged and often feel excluded from decision-making. Additionally, the GRM, though well-designed on paper, is not functioning as intended due to limited awareness, insufficient outreach to remote areas, and a lack of resources to respond meaningfully to the issues raised. These shortcomings contribute to diminished trust in the system and reduce the Project's ability to address critical social risks.

With limited resources and a broad mandate, addressing these cross-cutting issues remains a challenge. However, through better integration of social safeguards into the project's results framework, seeking out other strategic partnerships with organizations that specialize in community development and protection, and stronger tracking systems, there is significant potential to improve performance in these areas.

3.8.1 Gender Equality & Mainstreaming

Across the project landscapes, women reported feeling more empowered to make decisions and take actions that directly improve their livelihoods – a result attributed in part to the inclusive approaches adopted by the Project. During field visits, women actively participated in discussions and activities, and there were no observable barriers to their engagement in Project-supported interventions.

To promote inclusiveness, the Project developed a Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP). As a result, in Campo Ma'an Landscape, Bagyeli women have been recruited as trackers for the gorilla habituation initiative. In Ebodje, women participate in nighttime patrols as part of the Marine Turtle Conservation Project. These examples underscore the project's commitment to inclusion and gender equity.

However, some inconsistencies remain in how gender-disaggregated data is being collected and monitored. In many cases, the number of women attending activities is not systematically recorded, and it is difficult to assess the actual number of unique women reached. For example, if 20 women attend 10 events, the current monitoring system might report this as 200 women reached, without confirming whether the same individuals attended multiple events. This limits the accuracy of gender-related reporting and undermines efforts to understand the broader impact on women's empowerment.

While concerns related to the GRM's capacity to address serious gender-related issues – such as gender-based violence – are addressed separately, the Project has nonetheless made encouraging progress in advancing gender inclusion, particularly as it relates to women's economic and social participation in project activities.

Recommendations:

- **Avoid double counting participants:** Ensure that each participant signs in individually. For example, include a question such as "Have you participated in a previous activity?" (Yes/No) to reduce the risk of double-counting and better track actual reach.

3.8.2 Stakeholder Engagement

The Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan was well developed, clearly identifying key, primary, and secondary stakeholders. It effectively outlined mechanisms for participation, including reference to other cross-cutting tools such as the GRM, which is evaluated separately. Engagement strategies included regular updates – monthly or quarterly – delivered through local leaders, religious authorities, and direct communication channels such as meetings, surveys, interviews, FGDs, workshops, and phone calls.

Stakeholders have also played an active role in the implementation and monitoring of project activities, typically participating on a monthly basis. This participatory approach has helped to foster a sense of shared ownership and accountability among many community members.

However, notable gaps remain – particularly in reaching stakeholders in remote areas. Indigenous communities living in these more isolated locations were less consistently engaged, resulting in an uneven application of the Project's participatory principles.

Additionally, youth remain underrepresented, and their participation is not being systematically tracked. While the M&E system calls for youth disaggregation, the PMU has not been able to track youth and instead had expressed concerns about tracking youth involvement, citing lack of identification cards (especially among IPLCs) as a barrier. While IPLCs may not know their exact age, many can self-report as being in a range (18-35), especially when given a reference to a historical point in time, such as in Cameroon or global history. This omission of youth from the M&E system weakens the overall inclusivity of the engagement strategy and limits opportunities to amplify the Project's impact among younger generations.

Recommendations:

- **Collect youth demographics:** As part of all community engagements, collect basic demographic information at sign-in, including a checkbox for "What is your age range? (18–35 / 36+)". This will help the Project track youth engagement and assess the diversity of participants over time. While obtaining age information is difficult due to a lack of accurate and/or legal identification, most participants can identify their approximate age, particularly if a historical reference point (e.g., national event or milestone year) is provided to help clarify the cutoff. Learn best practices from other GEF Projects and the many conservation programs globally with similar challenges in reporting youth demographics. Lead by example for Executing Partners to follow.
- **Explore strategies to engage remote populations:** Expand the number of local representatives or facilitators gathering feedback in remote areas, particularly those inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, to ensure their views are more consistently captured.
- **Strengthen Indigenous leadership roles within the Project:** Engage more IPLCs in leadership roles, including through formal advisory or liaison positions, to improve cultural relevance, build trust, and enhance communication with remote and traditionally underrepresented communities.
- **Develop youth engagement strategies:** Consider developing specific engagement strategies for youth, possibly through schools, vocational groups, or youth associations, to improve their participation and ownership in project activities.

3.8.3 Environmental & Social Safeguards

This Project is appropriately classified as **Category B** regarding environmental and social risk, and this classification remains valid. Safeguards were comprehensively reviewed using the information available during this evaluation. While it is not feasible to anticipate every possible unintended impact, the Project has taken appropriate steps to identify and monitor key risks.

One key gap is that safeguard-related issues have not been meaningfully integrated into the Project’s results chain or theory of change. As a result, these elements appear to be treated as parallel or ancillary concerns, rather than integral to the Project’s overall outcomes. Without

this integration, it is difficult to understand how addressing social and environmental safeguards contributes to – or hinders – the Project's broader success.

The following safeguard areas were triggered:

- **Natural Habitats:** The Project directly supports the protection and restoration of species and habitats and strengthens the capacity of communities to sustainably manage these natural resources.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Indigenous communities (e.g., Bagyeli, Bakola, Baka) continue to face systemic barriers to equal participation in decision-making processes.
- **Restriction of Access and Resettlement:** Access limitations in and around protected areas and OECMs may lead to economic displacement, though no major incidents were reported during field visits.
- **Community Health, Safety, and Security:** Potential risks include increased alcohol abuse, intergenerational tensions, and violence against women—particularly as economic activity expands.
- **Cultural Resources:** Sustainable tourism may inadvertently impact cultural heritage or practices, particularly among IPLCs, though no adverse effects were reported to date.

Field visits and stakeholder interviews did not uncover significant negative impacts associated with natural resource protection or sustainable tourism. However, some concerns were raised around the delay in receiving financial benefits from NTFPs – an unfamiliar model that requires a cultural shift in expectations, particularly for IPLC communities.

Accessing and meaningfully engaging remote Indigenous communities remains a challenge. While Indigenous individuals residing in more accessible areas appear to participate in Project activities, those in isolated locations feel less represented in decision-making processes. Greater effort is needed to improve their inclusion and agency.

The most pressing area for improvement is in **community health, safety, and security**. Although the Project has identified potential risks – such as alcohol abuse and gender-based violence – there is currently no comprehensive system (nor financial resources) in place to address them. Staff are not adequately trained, and the Project lacks partnerships with specialized service providers. If these concerns are raised through the GRM, the current system may be ill-equipped to respond effectively.

A recent risk assessment conducted by WWF-US suggests additional emerging risks may be present that further highlights concerns such as the ability to reach and effectively engage with remote communities within the project area. While that assessment falls outside the scope of this evaluation, it is recommended that the terminal evaluation team take those findings into account.

Recommendations:

- **Build capacity with local partners:** Revisit funding and targeted training to BACUDA, and seek out new opportunities to engage with local organizations that may have a willingness to support safeguard-related activities but currently lacks adequate capacity.
- **Expand partnerships with health organizations:** Collaborate with local health or social service providers to proactively address risks related to alcohol abuse and gender-based violence.
- **Engage youth directly:** Facilitate structured engagements with youth across communities to capture their perspectives, and systematically document participation and insights.
- **Strengthen inclusive facilitation practices:** Ensure all Project staff and partners are trained in facilitation techniques that support inclusive dialogue, with specific attention to women, youth, and Indigenous participants.
- **Integrate safeguards into the results chain:** Hire a qualified safeguards specialist to revise the Project's results chain, explicitly linking safeguard risks and mitigation measures to Project success indicators. This will support more holistic planning and monitoring.

3.8.4 Grievance Redress Mechanism

The GRM associated with this Project builds upon a pre-existing structure, developed initially internationally but also notably replicated through earlier work in Mambele around LNP in Cameroon. The mechanism was designed in consultation with Baka and Bantu leaders, civil society organizations (such as RACOPY), the National Commission on Human Rights, and a variety of judicial, traditional, and municipal authorities. Its framework is comprehensive, with a detailed 13-step process outlined in Chapter 13 of the Project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

While the structure is robust on paper, several weaknesses have limited its effectiveness in practice. Most notably, the GRM was not designed with sufficient attention to how remote and marginalized communities – especially Indigenous groups – would access or participate in the system. As a result, awareness and understanding of the GRM remains low in many communities, and few people know how to use it. During site visits, many individuals interviewed had never heard of the mechanism or did not understand how to submit a complaint.

Although no grievances have been submitted directly relating to GEF-funded activities, there have been community concerns raised about ongoing human-wildlife conflicts and human rights issues in project areas. Some of these cases were brought to the GRM, but stakeholders reported that the mechanism often lacked the capacity to respond meaningfully.

Communities expressed frustration with the GRM's perceived ineffectiveness, which has led to a growing sense of distrust and abandonment. At the time of this evaluation, the GRM was not viewed as a reliable or trusted avenue for raising concerns.

WWF, as a major stakeholder and implementing partner, plays an influential role in these landscapes. While not a social service organization, WWF has the credibility and convening power to broker partnerships with relevant actors who can address sensitive social issues raised through the GRM. Without dedicated funding and external expertise, however, the mechanism is unlikely to meet community expectations.

Recommendations:

- **Build capacity of local partners:** Continue to provide targeted training and corresponding financial support to BACUDA and other trusted local organizations in all three landscapes to support GRM-related issues that exceed the technical scope of the Project team.
- **Allocate, identify or advocate for additional funding:** Explore alternative sources of funding, including requesting supplemental GEF resources, to support the effective implementation and operationalization of the GRM in project landscapes. Continue support on regular capacity building to improve expertise of staff and of entities responsible for the functioning of the GRMs in all three landscapes.
- **Consider how to address grievances related to human-wildlife conflict in future projects:** Future projects should prioritize addressing human-wildlife conflict within GRM, as this remains one of the most frequently reported yet unresolved issues. When these grievances go unaddressed, the entire system risks losing credibility, leading to a decline in participation and trust. As addressing such concerns may fall outside the scope or resources of the current Project, it is recommended to assess and integrate lessons learned from other global grievance mechanisms for future initiatives. This will help ensure a more effective and inclusive approach to resolving key community concerns.
- **Position WWF as a connector:** While WWF is not expected to solve complex social issues alone, it could actively partner with specialized organizations and serve as a messenger or convener to help address grievances raised through the GRM.
- **Expand GRM outreach in remote areas:** Increase the number of community-based representatives trained to manage and explain the GRM, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. This includes providing tailored outreach and regular follow-up, which is reportedly planned but not yet fully implemented.

IV. Overall Assessment, Lessons Learned, Recommendations & Conclusion

4.1 Overall Assessment

The Project has rebounded from initial delays and is progressing forward, with meaningful advancements made toward delivering its intended outputs. Strong alignment with national, local, and international strategies has helped to ground implementation in relevant policy frameworks. From the outset, the Project emphasized social and environmental safeguards and engaged Executing Partners through a deliberate and integrity-driven process. Adaptive management has been a key strength, with the PMU demonstrating strong leadership and responsiveness, particularly in overcoming early implementation delays. WWF GEF Agency, with technical support from colleagues at WWF-US, have been essential in guiding the PMU effectively from design through implementation.

Stakeholder engagement has been a consistent priority, with the Project's inclusive design reflecting a broad range of needs and mandates. This has ensured relevance across scales and sectors, supported by a robust Stakeholder Engagement Plan and continuous consultation with diverse actors – including government entities, IPLCs, civil society organizations, and local communities. Coherence with internal and external frameworks has been another strength, as the Project builds on past initiatives and careful coordination. This approach has helped maintain momentum and foster buy-in among stakeholders.

However, the Project's ambitious scope – spanning a wide geographic area, multiple Executing Partners, and a diverse set of activities – has introduced feasibility challenges. While many activities are being implemented as planned, the TOC, results framework, and M&E system present notable limitations. These gaps make it difficult to fully assess long-term sustainability or verify whether certain outputs are translating into meaningful outcomes. Some targets have been met ahead of schedule, raising concerns about the reliability of reported achievements versus actual impact.

Efforts to build the capacity of Executing Partners have been extensive and largely appreciated. Yet, the resource intensity of this support – both in terms of time and budget – warrants a strategic review to ensure continued alignment with evolving priorities. In particular, while foundational outputs such as LUPs and tourism products have been delivered, implementation challenges and systemic barriers continue to limit their effectiveness. To address this, revisiting the TOC and refining associated strategies is recommended, ensuring a more realistic and context-sensitive approach in the second half of the Project.

Overall, while the Project is progressing steadily and demonstrates many positive attributes – including strong leadership, alignment with priorities, and effective stakeholder engagement – it also faces structural challenges that must be addressed to maximize long-term outcomes. Strategic adjustments to design, implementation, and M&E approaches will be essential to strengthen its overall effectiveness and sustainability moving forward.

Table 13 provides a summary of the overall assessments of Project outcomes according to GEF preferred criteria: relevancy, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

Table 13. Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes, per GEF Requirements

Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	*Rating*[16]	*Justification*
Were project outcomes ***Relevant*** when compared to focal area/operational program strategies, country priorities, beneficiary needs, mandates of WWF GEF and partners, and WWF priorities?	Moderately Satisfactory	The Project was developed through inclusive consultations and aligns well with national, local, and institutional priorities, contributing to its strong relevance among stakeholders. However, its broad scope, multiple partners, and ambitious design have challenged its practicality and feasibility. While the Project acknowledges synergies with existing initiatives, gaps in the Theory of Change and results framework limit its effectiveness as a strategic and evaluative tool, and the lack of a clear pathway for scaling further constrains its potential catalytic impact.
Is the project ***Coherent*** or compatible with / supported by other relevant projects and programs in the recipient country or countries? Does the project have alignment among the theory of change, governance structure, activities and M&E system? Is there alignment with GEF policies, guidelines and is there integration of lessons from similar projects?	Satisfactory	The Project exhibits strong coherence, aligning well with national, regional, and international strategies and institutional mandates. Its design intentionally builds on past and ongoing initiatives in the Congo Basin, reinforcing synergies and avoiding duplication.
What is the ***Effectiveness*** of project outcomes (e.g., were ex-ante targets met)? Did the project make the expected contributions to global environmental benefits? Were there unintended consequences of the project that added to or negated project benefits?	Moderately Satisfactory	The Project has made steady, though uneven, progress in delivering planned activities and outputs, with notable improvements in the past year. Strong coordination among the PMU, WWF entities, and government stakeholders—particularly MINEPDED—has supported effective implementation, and partnerships with Executing Partners have generally been productive. While some indicators have been met early, raising questions about the quality of outcome-level evidence, the Project has generated positive unintended results such as enhanced gender inclusion and early shifts in community behavior, suggesting potential for long-term impact as implementation continues to mature.

[16] See Annex 7 for rating scales.

Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	***Rating***[16]	***Justification***
What is the ***Cost-efficiency*** of project outcomes? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compare to that of a similar project?	Moderately Satisfactory	The Project has made steady progress in improving implementation efficiency, particularly after resolving early administrative delays and shifting to multi-year agreements with Executing Partners. It is widely viewed as well-managed, with strong financial oversight and responsible resource use. However, the Project's ambitious scope relative to available time and resources, along with concerns over burdensome financial reporting protocols, suggest a need to realign strategies and timelines to ensure continued effectiveness.
Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the achievement of the Project outcomes. This assessment should analyze both the achievement and shortcomings of these results as stated in the project document.	Moderately Satisfactory	The Project has made meaningful progress toward achieving its intended outcomes, particularly in aligning with national and local priorities, building on past initiatives, and fostering strong collaboration with government and local partners. Its design is relevant and coherent, though its broad scope and ambitious objectives have at times strained feasibility. Efficiency has improved following early administrative delays, with sound financial management in place, though some resource allocation and reporting processes remain cumbersome. Effectiveness is emerging, with strong leadership from the PMU and promising signs of community engagement and behavior change, despite uneven progress across components and concerns about the robustness of some reported results. Together, these achievements and limitations reflect a Project that is primarily on track, though strategic adjustments will be needed to maximize long-term outcomes and ensure sufficient funding across components.

4.2 Lessons Learned by Core Evaluation Criteria

Throughout the evaluation a number of important lessons learned surfaced, many of which are relevant not only to this Project but also to future initiatives, including the next GEF project. These learnings span design, implementation, adaptive management, and stakeholder engagement.

Relevance:

- Early and inclusive stakeholder engagement – from design through implementation – strengthens ownership, improves targeting of activities, and supports uptake, especially with IPLCs.
- A clear and operational TOC can be a powerful implementation and M&E tool; when it lacks clarity, it becomes sidelined.
- Results chains are essential to connect activities to desired impacts and should be developed for each project outcome.
- Active collaboration with national and regional institutions (e.g., Ministries) improves proposal quality and increases long-term ownership of project outcomes.

Efficiency:

- Project startup takes longer than expected; a phased rollout or smaller initial group of executing partners may improve momentum.
- Multi-year partnership agreements are more efficient for all parties and improve planning and delivery of activities.
- Budgeting should factor in macro-economic changes (e.g., inflation, currency devaluation) to avoid under-implementation.

Effectiveness:

- Ongoing capacity-building and structured monitoring of executing partners is crucial. Templates, training, and technical guidance enhance consistency and effectiveness.
- Success in NTFPs hinges not just on harvesting or transformation, but also on financial literacy and group-based approaches to market access.
- LUPs require active support and integration into community decision-making to avoid remaining unused.
- Tourism product development alone is insufficient to reduce threats or secure conservation outcomes – must be paired with broader enabling conditions.

Sustainability:

- Many results remain heavily reliant on external funding. Stronger exit strategies and transition planning are needed to ensure continuity post-project.

Adaptive Management:

- Close field monitoring by the PMU supports real-time troubleshooting and greater coherence across partners and landscapes.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

- M&E systems should measure not only outputs but also outcomes related to ecological and human well-being. SMART indicators, regular field validation, and tracking of community-level changes are essential to capturing impact.
- Key project achievements accompanied with qualitative information and narrative explanations would better reflect positive achievements and impacts of the Project.

Cross-Cutting Themes:

- A GRM is only as effective as the response actions taken. Feedback must be timely and visible.
- Gender-responsive strategies boost participation – particularly in NTFP and livelihood activities – as demonstrated by the higher female participation rates in Project supported communities.
- Indigenous Peoples' meaningful participation requires not just FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) at design, but ongoing engagement, tailored communication, and capacity-building throughout implementation.

4.3 Recommendations

Numerous recommendations were provided throughout the report, each aligned with the analysis presented. These aim to support the Project in making targeted adjustments to strengthen both implementation and the communication of its many achievements.

The following section presents a summary of those recommendations, organized by thematic area for ease of reference. For the complete recommendations and context, please refer to the corresponding sections in the report.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management

Strengthen M&E Systems and Tools:

- Revise the M&E Plan to go beyond GEF Core Indicator requirements, incorporating ecological, social, and safeguard indicators as well as narrative explanations and qualitative information.
- Use **results chains** to link activities, outputs, and outcomes clearly across all components.
- Update the M&E tracking tool with complete, labeled data, including disaggregated indicators and budget tracking. Consider borrowing tracking tools from other WWF projects where more comprehensive tracking and data are being consolidated.
- Revise key outcome indicators (e.g., 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1) for clarity, alignment with baselines, and actual outcomes.

Improve Data Quality and Use:

- Ensure beneficiaries are not double-counted.
- Track and report youth and IPLC participation more effectively, borrowing from industry best practices. Disaggregate by gender, age (youth 18–35), and ethnicity (IPLC vs. non-IPLC).
- Integrate data from partners (e.g., wildlife monitoring) to track threats and biodiversity outcomes.
- Use qualitative data (case studies, storytelling) to capture nuanced impacts like empowerment and identity.

Improve Knowledge Management:

- Establish KM procedures: version control, shared drive organization, and documentation standards.
- Track reach of communication efforts (e.g., listenership, publication reach), not just outputs.
- Systematically document and share success stories for replication and learning.

<u>Strategic and Operational Recommendations</u>

Improve Theory of Change and Strategic Planning:

- Align ToC with the M&E Plan using shared identifiers and references.
- Develop and use **results chains** to support adaptive management, risk mapping, and clearer implementation logic.
- Revisit strategic approaches at the component level to ensure practical, feasible, and well-resourced activities.
- Embed flexibility into project design to allow adaptation to emerging opportunities and shifting contexts.

Pathways to Scale and Replication:

- Identify and evaluate pathways to scale, distinguishing between replication and scaling within existing areas.
- Incorporate considerations for youth, IPLCs, and gender in scaling strategies.
- Engage Executing Partners early in scalability assessments.

Improve GEF-Wide Oversight and Support:

- Reconsider GEF's policy restricting collaboration with WWF country offices as implementing agencies, especially in complex field contexts like Cameroon.
- Allocate more funds for robust M&E, KM, and stakeholder engagement.
- Increase staffing at the WWF GEF Agency level and reduce project oversight burden on individual managers.
- Increase budgets for midterm and terminal evaluations to match scope and effort required.

Sustainability and Exit Strategy

Plan for Long-Term Sustainability:

- Develop an exit strategy to support continued benefits, local ownership, and reduced dependency on external funding.
- Identify components lacking sustainability pathways and develop mitigation strategies.
- Integrate risk identification and mitigation activities into results chains, by component.

Operationalize Coordination for Sustainability:

- Strengthen inter-partner coordination and operational frameworks to ensure cross-component coherence.
- Collaborate with GEF and non-GEF initiatives to share learning and resources.
- Engage private sector actors in value chains to build long-term resilience, based on comprehensive market assessments.

Financial Management and Co-Financing

Review and Improve Financial Protocols:

- Reassess financial documentation and reporting requirements for Executing Partners. Ensure protocols balance fiduciary standards with practical efficiency and are transparently communicated.

Enhance Co-Financing Accountability

- Systematically complete "Remarks" columns in Co-financing Reports to explain delays and outline follow-ups. Develop an action plan for updating and meeting co-financing obligations over the Project lifespan.

Component-Specific Recommendations (Highlights)

Component 1: LUP

- Reallocate unused funds to higher-priority components.
- Assess pathways for broader integration of LUPs at regional and national levels.
- Improve knowledge sharing between councils and periodically follow up with councils on implementation after validation.
- Clarify indicators (e.g., area under improved planning).

Component 2: Governance

- Distinguish Project-funded work in progress reporting.
- Revisit governance and implementation strategies.
- Strengthen SMART indicators (e.g., training, engagement, grievance response).

Component 3: Hardwoods and NTFPs

- Reassess scalability of the Ebony Project; consider alternative market-based models.
- Deepen market analysis for NTFPs; develop direct, sustainable linkages to buyers.
- Refine indicator measurements related to benefits.

Component 4: Tourism

- Reconsider focus on gorilla tourism; explore alternatives like turtle tourism or biodiversity monitoring in the interim.
- Conduct comprehensive tourism market assessments and engage a wider set of private sector actors.
- Revise indicators to reflect biodiversity, livelihood, and conservation outcomes.

Component 5: Coordination, KM, and M&E

- Increase component funding to support continued M&E, capacity building, communications and KM.
- Integrate safeguards and gender/youth/IPLC considerations into the results chains.
- Use existing partner data and improve systematization of project reporting.

Inclusion, Safeguards, and Youth Engagement

Improve Inclusive Practices:

- Develop youth engagement strategies through schools, associations, or vocational groups.
- Ensure inclusive facilitation and leadership opportunities for IPLCs and women.
- Expand GRM funding and outreach in remote areas, including training of community-based representatives.
- Assess strategies for addressing human-wildlife conflict in future programming.

Strengthen Safeguards:

- Engage a safeguards specialist to integrate risks and mitigation into project results chains.
- Track and report on safeguard effectiveness with appropriate indicators.
- Position WWF-US as a connector with organizations able to address complex social issues.

Capacity Building and Partner Support:

- Provide training for staff and partners to ensure quality engagement and M&E of women, youth and IPLCs.
- Build capacity of local partners for safeguards and grievance-related data.
- Use existing local structures to expand in remote areas.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

The MTR set out to assess the Project's progress toward its objectives, outputs, and outcomes; evaluate the extent and sustainability of its impacts; identify design challenges; and draw lessons to enhance overall effectiveness and efficiency. The report meets the requirements of the TOR (see Annex 13 for a complete list of expected report contents). The findings of this evaluation align closely with these objectives, providing a clear picture of both achievements and areas needing improvement.

The Project has made meaningful progress toward its intended goals, demonstrating strong alignment with national and international priorities, and delivering tangible benefits to communities and the environment. Stakeholder engagement and adaptive management have been notable strengths, contributing to the Project's relevance and responsiveness. At the same time, challenges related to the Project's ambitious scope, gaps in the theory of change and monitoring frameworks, and delays in translating some activities into outcomes have been identified.

Overall, the evaluation offers valuable insights and recommendations aimed at strengthening the Project's strategic focus, implementation, and reporting mechanisms. By addressing these areas, the Project can enhance its potential for sustained impact and more effectively realize its objectives in the remaining period.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

The following presents the terms of reference for this assignment, aside from the cover page and annexes.

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

World Wildlife Fund, Inc. (WWF-US) policies and procedures for all GEF financed full-sized projects require a midterm evaluation (MTE). The following terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for the MTE for the project: Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin, hereafter referred to as the "Project." The technical consultant selected to conduct this evaluation will hereafter be referred to as "evaluator."

The Project seeks to strengthen the integrated management of Cameroon's globally important forest landscapes in the Congo Basin to secure its biological integrity and increase economic and livelihood opportunities for forest dependent people. Over a six-year period, the project will address key barriers and tackle the drivers of deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss through the concurrent execution of multiple complementary strategies: (i) progressing informed and inclusive LUP; (ii) improving the effectiveness of management and governance systems for high value conservation forests, and undertaking targeted actions to protect their endangered species; (iii) developing sustainable forest-based value chains that engage the private sector and deliver benefits to IPLCs; and (iv) and promoting the scaling deep, out and up of best practices through knowledge management. Achieving and sustaining the effective participation and empowerment of IPLCs, while respecting human rights and reinforcing their resilience, is core to the project's overall objective.

The Project was organized into the following components:

Component 1: Mainstreaming integrated land use planning (LUP) and management

Outcome 1.1 Participatory, informed, and integrated land use planning establishes a framework to plan, monitor and adapt land management across approximately 1,200,000 ha in TRIDOM

Component 2: Improving management effectiveness and governance of high conservation value forests, and targeted interventions to protect their endangered species

Outcome 2.1: Management effectiveness of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is improved through inclusive governance and management systems

Outcome 2.2: The effectiveness of forest and wildlife management in the peripheries of Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks is strengthened through increased engagement and capacity, and the establishment and adaptive management of equitable and transparent management agreements between local stakeholders

Outcome 2.3: The long-term zoonotic disease surveillance systems in Campo Ma'an and Lobéké national parks and their peripheries are strengthened to minimize the risks of disease transmission between humans and wildlife and vice versa

COMPONENT 3: Advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) through non-timber forest product (NTFP) and hardwood value chains

Outcome 3.1: Strengthened and/or established sustainable NTFP value chains that engage IPLCs and the private sector reduce the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and deliver benefits to at least 30 communities (IPLCs) in the Cameroon segments of three transboundary landscapes

Outcome 3.2: Public-private partnership (Ebony Project) to create a sustainable and socially-responsible value chain for tropical hardwood species is expanded and delivering tangible benefits, including restoration and income generation, in the TRIDOM landscape

COMPONENT 4: Increasing benefit generation from biodiversity through sustainable tourism development

Outcome 4.1: Sustainable tourism value chain that engages IPLCs and the private sector is strengthened, reducing the impacts of unsustainable natural resource use and delivering benefits to IPLCs in the Cameroon segment of the CMRC landscape

COMPONENT 5: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), knowledge management (KM), and regional coordination

Outcome 5.1: Program results monitored and lessons learned inform adaptive management and outreach in support of SFM at landscape, national and regional levels

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

WWF-US is seeking an independent consultant to undertake a Midterm Review of the Project. The scope of the MTR will cover the GEF financed components.

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Assess progress towards project objective, outputs and outcomes;
- Examine the extent, magnitude, sustainability and potential for project impacts to date;
- Identify any project design problems and challenges
- Draw lessons learned that can improve the project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project benefits.

Based on this assessment, it is expected that the evaluator will provide feasible and actionable recommendations that could be applied for the remaining duration of the project.

APPROACH AND METHODS

The evaluation will adhere to the relevant guidance, rules and procedures established by WWF-US[17] and align with guidance from the GEF Terminal Evaluation[18] and Ethical Guidelines.[19] The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is independent, participatory, transparent, and ethical. The evaluator must be unbiased and free of any conflicts of interest with the project. The evaluator is expected to reflect all stakeholder views and follow a participatory and consultative approach. There should be close engagement with government counterparts, the GEF operational focal points in each country, the Executing Agency project management unit (PMU), partners and key stakeholders. Contact information will be provided.

The Evaluation process will include the following, with deliverables marked by "*":

A. Kickoff

B. Desk review consisting of, but not limited to:

- Project Document and CEO Endorsement Letter;
- Relevant safeguards documents;
- Annual Work Plans (AWP) and Budgets;
- Project Progress Reports (PPR) including Results Framework and AWP Tracking;
- GEF Agency reports, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and Supervision Mission Reports (PrISM);
- Relevant financial documents, including financial progress reports; co-financing monitoring tables and co-financing letters;
- Meeting minutes (Project Steering Committee (PSC)) and relevant virtual meetings with the WWF- GEF Agency and support team; and
- Other relevant documents provided by the Executing Agency and partners.

B. Inception meeting and Inception report that outlines evaluation methodology;*

C. Field visits with PMU and project partners, as necessary and feasible;

D. Interviews, discussions and consultations at local levels, national and international levels, including executing partners, GEF Operational Focal Points (OFP), Project Steering Committee (PSC) members and beneficiaries, including project supported IP&LCs groups, Ngoyla/Mintom councils;

E. Presentation* of initial findings to project management team and other partners;

F. Draft report* not to exceed 60 pages (excluding annexes) shared with GEF AMU, PMU and others for review and feedback. A sample outline will be provided; and

G. Final MTE report* package that has incorporated feedback and comments. Data collected should also be submitted to WWF-US at conclusion of exercise.

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[17] For additional information on evaluation methods adopted by WWF, see the WWF Evaluation Guidelines , published on our WWF Program Standards public website.

[18] For additional information on the GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidelines, see the GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidelines , published on the GEF Independent Evaluation Office website.

[19] Please see the GEF Ethical Guidelines as published on GEF website.

CONTENT OF EVALUATION REPORT

The Midterm Evaluation report will include:

- Information on the evaluation process, including when the evaluation took place, sites visited, participants, key questions, summary of methodology and rating rubric, and feedback log showing how comments on draft were incorporated;
- Assessment of Relevance (project design , theory of change);
- Assessment of project Effectiveness and rating of project objective and outcomes (individual and overall);
- Assessment and rating of risks to the Sustainability of project outcomes;
- Assessment and rating of Monitoring and Evaluation design and implementation;
- Assessment of knowledge management approach, including activities and products;
- Assessment of replication and catalytic effects of the project;
- Assessment of Relevance of the project (e.g. with WWF-US and GEF priorities) and Coherence;
- Assessment of stakeholder engagement and gender-responsive measures;
- Assessment of any environmental and social impacts and safeguards used for the project. A review of risk category classification and mitigation measures;
- Assessment of Efficiency, financial management and summary of co-financing delivered;
- Assessment and ratings of Implementation and Execution;
- Summary table of key findings by core criteria[20] and GEF ratings, including justification and/or indicators for their determination;
- Key lessons tied to identified strengths or issues;
- Recommendations that include: practical and short-term corrective actions by evaluation criteria to address issues and findings; and best practices towards achieving project outcomes, and knowledge sharing / replication for other projects of similar scope.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required Qualifications and Experience

- Have 8+ years relevant professional experience (e.g. leading evaluations, designing monitoring and evaluation plans, etc);
- Previous experience with diverse evaluation methodologies (e.g. social surveys, outcome harvesting, etc);
- Excellent written and oral communication in English and French.

Preferred Qualifications and Experience

- Masters Degree in relevant field, such as Monitoring and Evaluation, International Development, Natural Resource Management, etc.;
- Recent experience conducting evaluations (for GEF financed projects is an advantage);
- Technical knowledge in the targeted GEF Operational Focal Area, Indigenous people and local communities, protected area management, integrated land use planning, sustainable forest management, benefit sharing from sustainable tourism;
- Knowledge of GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;

[20] See annex A

- Experience with WWF Project and Program Management Standards, Conservation Standards or use of theory of change for project cycle;
- Experience with social assessments, participatory techniques, and gender mainstreaming;
- Knowledge and experience in implementing or reviewing application of social and environmental safeguards policies in GEF (or similar) projects;
- Regional and national experience an asset.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Bidders are required to submit a quality assurance plan that sets out the systems and processes for ensuring that the evaluation deliverables and all evaluation activities are of a high quality and meet ethical standards from inception to the end of the contract. It is highly recommended to include a senior evaluation consultant to serve as a Quality Assuror to advise on the evaluation process and revise the evaluation deliverables as part of the consultancy, however there may be other mechanisms built into the process as an alternative or addition.

PAYMENT MODALITIES

Payment, expense reimbursement, and other contractual terms and conditions will be outlined in the consultant agreement made between WWF-US and the evaluator. Contracts may be made with an individual or organization. Payments will be made following submitted and approved deliverables and once invoices are sent. Twenty-five percent of the fee will be paid after submission and approval of the Inception Report. Fifty percent of the fee will be paid following submission and approval of the debrief presentation, Draft Report and related documents. The final twenty-five percent will be paid following the submission and approval of the Final Report and related documents. Reimbursement for expenses, if separated from fee, will be paid separately. Evaluator should submit receipts for expenses over $25.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Interested consultants are invited to submit a technical and financial proposal with their *curriculum vitae,* a relevant writing sample and three professional references. Only complete proposals will be accepted. The financial proposal should include fee and reimbursable expenses, if applicable. The total budget shall not exceed USD $35,000. Individual, team or consulting firm proposals are welcome. Women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

Interested consultants are requested to send their proposals to EvaluationsWWFGEF@wwfus.org by May 2nd, 2025. All questions about the requirements or process should be submitted to this e-mail address by April 24, 2025. Responses to frequent and submitted questions will be available until the proposal deadline to all interested consultants in the final annex of this live document: https://worldwildlifefund-my.sharepoint.com/personal/amelia_kissick_wwfus_org/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?share=EcUqwbI6o-FKh5pKVIKUY4sBst3dg4S2cU0_iqfyvyUwrA

The technical proposal and qualifications/experience of the individual or team will account for 90% of the weighted score of the proposal. The technical score will be based on how the proposal reflects an understanding of the work and adherence to the TOR and quality of the proposal (readability, depth/breadth and suitability of the methodology), as well as the degree to which the candidate meets

desired and required qualifications/experience mentioned in the terms of reference above. The financial elements of the proposal will account for 10% of the weighted score of the application.

Once all proposals have been scored by the review committee, a shortlist of proposals will be determined, and the candidates notified. Shortlisted candidates will have their references contacted, proposal reviewed by project stakeholders and will participate in an interview. Shortlisted candidates who are not selected will be provided with information on relative strengths and weaknesses of their proposal, but specific scores and the identity of other candidates will not be shared.

The selection process will be in compliance with WWF-US and GEF requirements. Any questions or concerns about non-compliance or irregularities in the process can be raised through WWF's mechanism for reporting concerns available here: https://wwfus.ethicspoint.com.

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

The following presents the final evaluation matrix for this assignment.

Key Evaluation Questions	Methods of Data Collection
1. What approaches (theory of change, strategies, methods, and processes) has the WWF-GEF Project employed? (**Approach**) - To what extent are a diversity of approaches (strategies, methods, and processes) used by the WWF-GEF Project? - Have modification of approaches from the original Project Document been well documented and justified?	Desk review and staff interviews with validation through Key Informant Interviews (KII) - Project document (ProDoc) - Project Implementation reports of activities completed (events, trainings, etc.) - M&E tracking spreadsheet - Steering Committee reports - Validation with Executing Partners and Steering Committee members
2. To what extent have Project activities been relevant to stakeholder needs? (**Relevance)** - In the design, were Project outcomes relevant when compared to country priorities, beneficiary needs, mandates, etc.? - To what extent were the Project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within its time frame? - Are Project activities in alignment with its theory of change and M&E system? To what extent is the theory of change still relevant? - Do Project activities address stakeholder needs? - Has programming adjusted to changes in circumstances/need?	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII - Project document (ProDoc) - Stakeholder description of developments - Perception of stakeholders and staff - Perception and degree of satisfaction of stakeholders in Project activities meeting their priorities/needs - Perception and degree of satisfaction of stakeholders in the flexibility/adaptability of the programming - Theory of change - M&E plan and tracking spreadsheet
3. To what extent have Project activities been complementary to other GEF, WWF-GEF and partner efforts? (**Coherence)** - Do Project activities fit with other interventions in each country/sector? - To what extent is there a the level of redundance between programs in the same geographic zones? - Additionality: To what extent has the Project added value to existing programs or catalyze new initiatives or populations? To what extent was the additionality of the project clearly identified at design stage? - At the design stage, was the potential for scale and replication clear? - Are WWF-GEF activities complementary to other programs of the same implementing entities? with that of external programs (government or other entities)?	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII - Project document (ProDoc) - Stakeholder description of developments - Perception of stakeholders and staff

Key Evaluation Questions	Methods of Data Collection
4. To what extent have the WWF-GEF Project approaches and methods been effective in terms of achieving Project objectives? **(Effectiveness)** **Administration/Operations:** - How effective has the **WWF-GEF Agency** been in terms of Project identification, concept and detailed proposal preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision, completion and evaluation, etc.)? - How effective has the **PMU (Executing Agency)** been in terms of management and administration of the Project's daily activities, including appropriate use of funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services in line with the GEF Agency rules/regulations? - How well have the **WWF-GEF Agency and the PMU (Executing Agency)** collaborated? (in terms of frequency as well as quality of collaboration) - To what extent is the **management structure** of the Project appropriate? How effective is the distribution of responsibilities and resources? - To what extent has the **Steering Committee** been effective at guiding strategy and support for the Project, held meetings as per schedule, etc.? How well has the Executing Agency worked with Steering Committee Members? - To what extent has the Project collaborated with **Government** at national, regional and local levels? As Government Focal Points, on Steering Committee, etc.? - How well has the Project collaborated with its **Executing Partners** (implementing organizations)? How well are the Executing Partners fulfilling their roles and responsibilities? What challenges are faced? Which partnerships were discontinued and why? What type of technical support is needed from the Executing Agency (if at all) for the partners to fulfill their agreements? - What is WWF's comparative advantage on this Project? - What lessons learned/recommendations could best improve the effectiveness of the Project going forward? **Approaches/Outcomes**: - Have Project approaches achieved its objectives and its Projected outcomes? - Were there unintended consequences of the Project that added to or negated Project benefits? - Were there any delays in implementing the project? If so, for what reasons?	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII - Perception of stakeholders and staff - List of programs' expected and actual outcomes and how they were documented - Timelines and budgets/cost reporting - Perception and degree of satisfaction of stakeholders and staff in frequency of communications, reporting, staff resources - Project Document (ProDoc) - Financial reports

Key Evaluation Questions	Methods of Data Collection

5. To what extent has the Project been efficiently managed with an optimization of resources? (**Efficiency)**
- How well has the WWF-GEF Project delivered results in an economic and timely manner?
- Have resources been used wisely?
- Have collaborating entities provided quality and timely inputs/responses to the Project team?
- To what extent are there discrepancies between planned and actual expenditures?
- Are resources sufficient for achieving Project outcomes?
 	
- To what extent does the project benefit from ***co-financing***?
  - To what extent are there any variations between expected and actual co-financing?
  - What is the impact of co-financing on the Project?
  - What financial controls does the Project have in place to make informed management decisions regarding the budget and flow of funds? Are they appropriate?
	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII
	- Perception of stakeholders and staff
	- Timelines and budgets/cost reporting
	- Project Document (ProDoc)
	- Financial reports

6. To what extent have Project interventions been designed and managed for impact? **(Impact)** - What difference have the Project's approaches made? - What positive, negative, intended or unintended impacts have been made? - What are the main obstacles to be overcome and the main opportunities to be exploited based on current progress towards results? - What is the project's potential to scale up or replicate the project outcomes and impact?	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII - Project Document (ProDoc) - Evidence of data, context analysis, needs analysis - Evidence of an explicit and implicit program logic (expected chain of results) - Perception of stakeholders and staff - Evidence of linkages between program stakeholders and outcomes

7. To what extent are the net benefits of the Project expected to endure? **(Sustainability)**
- Are the benefits of the Project activities expected to continue?
- What is the Project's sustainability strategy? To what extent was the Project's sustainability strategy robust in the planning stages? Did it include a specific exit strategy?
- To what extent are ***Risks to Sustainability of the Project outcomes*** significant and requiring mitigation measures?
  - Which results are at risk of not being achieved and what mitigation actions should be taken?
  - Are there perceived risks in terms of financial, sociopolitical, institutional, governance, environmental or otherwise to the sustainability of the Project outcomes?
  - What are the perceived probabilities (likelihood) of these risks?
  - What is the perceived magnitude of these risks (in terms of scope and severity)?
	Desk review, staff interviews, and KII
	- Perception of stakeholders and staff
	- Forecasting by stakeholders
	- Perception of future capacity gaps
	- Perception of increased institutional/individual capacity
	- Presence of alternative funding sources/organizational models that allow for continuation of Project benefits
	- Project Document (ProDoc)
	- Agreements with Executing Partners

Key Evaluation Questions	Methods of Data Collection
8. To what extent has the Project employed monitoring and evaluation approaches, lessons learned and adaptive management to meet indicator targets and mitigate Project issues (e.g., design flaws, adverse impacts of the Project, etc.)? **(Adaptive Capacity/M&E Design & Implementation)** - To what extent is the M&E plan well-conceived and sufficient to monitor results and track progress toward achieving objectives? - To what extent were the Project assumptions and risks articulated in the Project Document? - How well does the M&E plan align with the Project theory of change and GEF M&E requirements? - Have specify clear targets and appropriate SMART indicators been established? - Have these indicators been used to track environmental, gender, and socioeconomic results? - Has baseline data been appropriately documented? - Does the M&E plan specify: schedule of data collection, responsibilities, and approach? - To what extent is the M&E system operational and effective? Has the M&E system operated according to the M&E plan? Have the M&E activities been carried out in a timely and consistent manner in line with the M&E plan? Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyze the data? - Is the budget adequate for M&E activities? - Has the theory of change and/or results framework been used during implementation as a management and monitoring and evaluation tool? How useful is the information in adaptive management and decision making? Has the theory of change/results framework been revised to improve measurement of progress and performance? - Has the M&E plan been revised and adapted? If so, was it in a timely manner? - Were GEF core/corporate results indicators and tracking tools analyzed and reported as expected? - How has the information from the M&E system been used to inform Project implementation? - Have lessons learned been documented? - Have adverse impacts been mitigated? - To what extent are M&E results utilized in management decisions?	Desk review and staff interviews with validation through KII - Perception of stakeholders and staff - Evidence of integration of adaptive management practices - Evidence of mitigation procedures and/or measures - Project Document (ProDoc) for M&E plan, TOC, etc. - M&E Tracking spreadsheet - Project Implementation Reports - Comparison with GEF indicators

Key Evaluation Questions	Methods of Data Collection
9. How effectively are relevant cross cutting issues integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring and follow up of Project activities? **(Cross Cutting Issues)** - What are the ***environmental and social risks*** that have been identified? And what are the corresponding mitigation measures? - To what extent were externalities (i.e., effects of ***climate change***, global economic crisis, etc.) duly considered in the design? - To what extent have ***safeguards*** been integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring and follow-up of the Project's activities? - Have the safeguards been effectively implemented? - To what extent are measures in place to address safeguards appropriately, adequately and well-formulated? - To what extent is the ***grievance mechanism*** accessible to stakeholders? - To what extent is the environmental and social ***risk category*** of the Project appropriate? Does it adequately represent the current level of risk? Are there additional or unforeseen environmental or social impacts emerging from Project activities? - To what extent has the Project undertaken ***gender*** analyses as well as developed and implemented gender mainstreaming strategies (including indicators and intermediate results)? - To what extent has the Project integrated gender responsive measures in accordance with WWF-US and GEF gender policies? - Is there a ***Stakeholder Engagement Plan*** in place and to what extent has it been followed? - How has the Project consulted with and made use of the skills, experience and knowledge of the appropriate IPLCs, women, government entities, nongovernmental organizations, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities? - How has the Project defined ***beneficiaries*** (criteria developed during Project preparation)? And to what extent do these definitions align with WWF-GEF, GEF and Project requirements? - Do the diversity of approaches address diverse stakeholder needs? - Has there been evidence of any additional adverse or unforeseen environmental or social impacts since Project initiation? And what mitigation measures have or should take place to address these? - What lessons learned could be shared? - To what extent have additional measures been undertaken (such as training/support) to staff to improve the integration of cross-cutting issues into their work?	Desk review and staff interviews with validation through KII - Perception of stakeholders and staff - Evidence of integration of cross-cutting issues - Project Document (ProDoc) - Safeguard plans and related documentation (e.g. new assessments, monitoring/management plans, reports or other supporting documents - M&E plan review for evidence that gender is well integrated into the indicators, data collection methods, and reporting - Review of M&E tracking spreadsheet – disaggregation of data by gender - Review of Stakeholder Engagement Plan, validating through interviews

Annex 3: Documents Consulted

The following documents were consulted for this assignment:

- Project Document (ProDoc) and CEO Endorsement Letter
- Annual Project Progress Reports (PPR)
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Annual workplan tracking sheets
- Steering Committee Meeting summary reports
- Inception workshop documents
- Third Parties List with allocated activities
- Executing Partners Project Proposals
- M&E system:
    - M&E tracking tool
    - Draft updated M&E plan
- Financial documents:
    - GEF Financial Reports
    - Annual audits (year 1 and 2)
    - Co-financing monitoring tables
- Cross-cutting documents:
    - Stakeholder Engagement Plan
    - Gender Action Plan
    - Environmental and Social Management Framework
    - Gender Policy Document of the Republic of Cameroon
    - Social Impact Assessment
    - Indigenous Peoples Plan

Annex 4: Project Map with Geo-Coordinates

Maps of the project intervention area and its targeted landscapes are presented below. The following provides the central geocoordinates for each area:

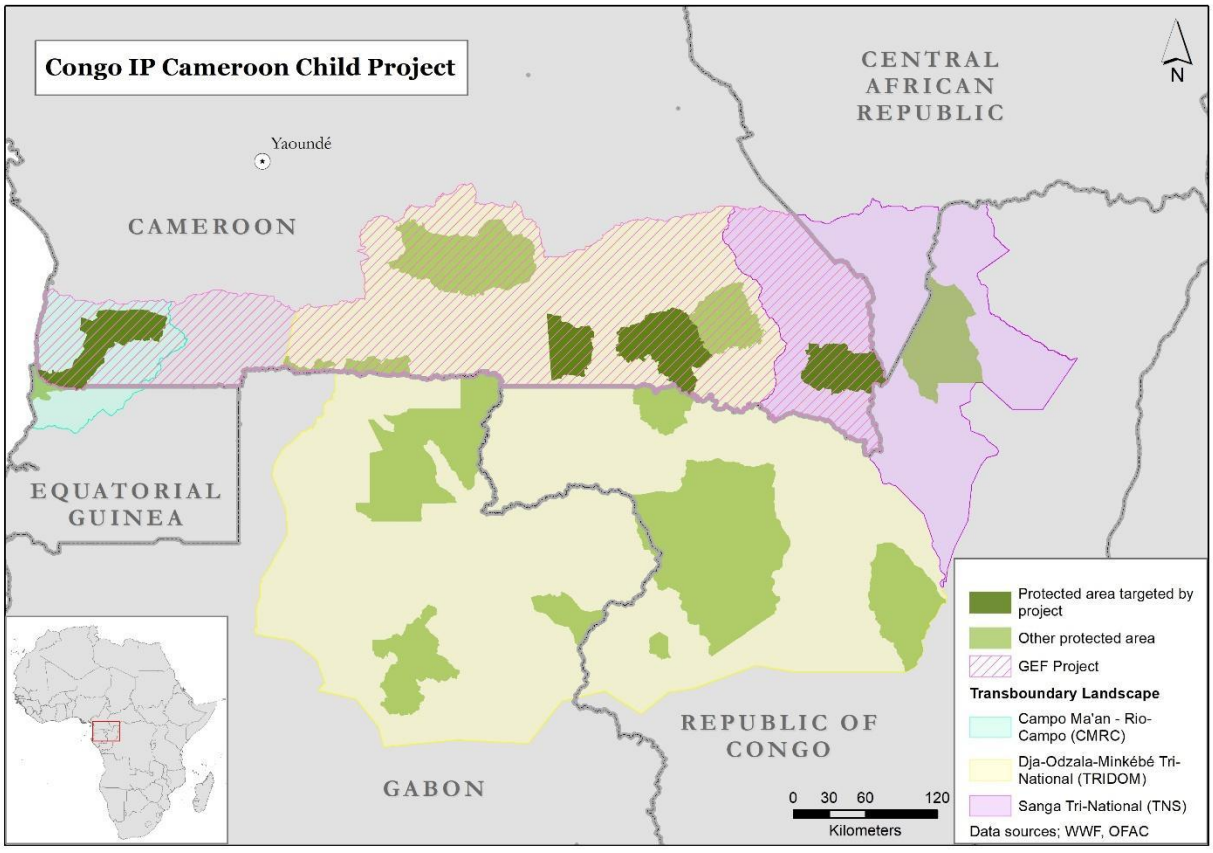
GEF Project Area: 13°17'26.4922"E 2°36'30.6554"N

Cameroon segment of CMRC landscape: 10°19'47.6333"E 2°30'30.5588"N

Cameroon segment of TRIDOM landscape: 13°44'26.9269"E 2°39'30.7037"N

Cameroon segment of TNS landscape: 15°41'28.8103"E 2°40'42.723"N

Figure: Overview of Project Area and three targeted transboundary landscapes



Annex 5: Final Fieldwork Itinerary

The following tables detail the fieldwork schedule.

Date/ Day	Time	Activity	Place
17/08/2025 / Sunday	NA	Consultants arrive in Yaoundé	Yaoundé
18/08/25 - Monday	8:00-9:00 am	-Introduction of the evaluation team to the National Project Director, GEF OFP and PMU staff -Interview of National Project Director	PMU office Yaoundé
	9:00-10:00 am	Introduction of the evaluation team to the WWF Cameroon team and interview of Country Director, Conservation Director and Finance Manager	PMU office Yaoundé
	10:00-12:30 am	Interview of Ministries Focal points -MINEPDED -MINFOF -MINTOUL	PMU office Yaoundé
	13:00-14:30 pm	Interview with AWF team based in Yaoundé (Country Director and Finance manager)	PMU office Yaoundé
	1:00-2:00 pm	Interview RACOPY	
	2:00-3:00 pm	Interview TROPICAL FOREST	
	3:15-430 pm	Interview PADIDJA, PNDP & ONACC	
	4:30-5:30 pm	Interview UCLA CBI	
19/08/2025 - Tuesday	7:30-10:30	MTN and Printing	In Yaoundé
	10:30 am-4:30 pm	Drive to Bertoua	On the Road
	4:30-5:30pm	Meeting and Interview with AAFEBEN	In Bertoua
20/08/2025 /-Wednesday	07:30 am-2:00 pm	Drive Bertoua - Yokadouma	On the Road
	2:30- 4:00 pm	Interview local representatives of MINFOF MINEPDED and MINAS	WWF-Cameroon office Yokadouma
	4:00-5:30 pm	Meeting and Interview with ROSE	WWF-Cameroon office Yokadouma
1/08/2025 - Thursday	7:30-11:30 am	**Vehicle 1** Departure from Yokadouma to Momboue	Road to Momboue
	11:30 am–1:00 pm	Interview with CBO-DEJNAMENO	Road to Momboue
	1:30-2:30 pm	Interview with CBO - COVAREF	Road to Momboue
	4:30-6:30 pm	Interview with CBO - RAFASAL	Road to Momboue

21/08/2025 - Thursday	7:30-11:45 am	**Vehicle 2** Departure from Yokadouma to Salapoumbe	Road to Momboue
	12:00-2:00 pm	Interview with local authorities (Sous-Prefet, Mayors, MINAS-Chef SAS)	Road to Momboue
	4:00-4:30 pm	Interview WWF-Cameroon TNS Program Manager	In Momboue
	4:45-5:30 pm	Interview the Conservator of Lobeke National Park	In Momboue
	5:30-6:30 pm	Road to Dissasou	Road to Momboue
	6:30–7:00 pm	**Vehicle 1** Interview with CBO ASFEDD	Road to Momboue
22/08/2025 - Friday	8:00-9:30 am	**Vehicle 1** Interview with CBO WHCS of Mambele	Road to Momboue
	09:30–10:00 am	Vehicle 1 on road to Momboue	Road to Momboue
	10:00-11:30 am	Interview with CBO MITAKOLEHELE	Road to Momboue
	11:30 am-1:00 pm	Interview with ASBABUK	Road to Momboue
	1:00-1:30 pm	Road to YENGA Centre	Road to Momboue
	1:30-3:00 pm	Interview with CBO UNION FAIT LA FORCE	Road to Momboue
	3:00-5:30 pm	Road back to Mambele	Road to Momboue
	5:30-6:30 pm	Interview Conservator of Lobeke National Park	Momboue
22/08/2025 - Friday	7:00-9:00 am	**Vehicle 2** Travel on Road to Moloundou	Road to Momboue
	09:00-12:00 am	Interview with local authorities (Sous-Prefet, Mayors, MINAS-Chef SAS) Moloundou	Road to Momboue
	11:30-1:00 pm	Interview with CBO AFOPROM	Road to Momboue
	1:00-1:15 pm	Travel on Road to MBANGOY II	Road to Momboue
	1:15-2:30 pm	Interview with CBO GBESSANA YEKO	Road to Momboue
	2:30-3:00 pm	Travel on Road to MBATEKA	Road to Momboue
	3:00-4:30 pm	Interview with CBO ATEM	Road to Momboue
	4:30-5:45 pm	Return to Momboue	Momboue
23/08/25 - Saturday	7 AM -3 pm	Travel to Lomie (travel time 7 hours)	Road to Lomie
24/08/2025 - Sunday	7:30-8:30 am	**Vehicle 1** Travel on Road from Lomie to Nomedjoh	Road to Lomie
	8:30-9:00 am	Interview CBO MABE	Road to Lomie
	09:00-10:30 am	Travel on Road to Nemeyong I Interview CBO REFENEM	Road to Lomie
	10:30 am-12:30 pm	Travel on Road to Abakoum Interview with IPLCs on Hardwood value chain (Ebony project)	Road to Lomie
	12:30-2:30 pm	Travel on Road to Mintoum Interview with IPLCs on Hardwood value chain (Ebony project)	Road to Lomie
	2:30-4:30 pm	Travel on Road to Sembe	Road to Lomie

		Interview with IPLCs on Hardwood value chain (Ebony project)	
	4:30-5:00 pm	Travel on Road Back to Lomié	Lomie
24/08/25 - Sunday	7:30-9:00 am	**Vehicle 2** Travel on Road from Lomie to Zoulabot 1	Road to Lomie
	9:00-10:00 am	Interview with CBO -ESSAYONS VOIR	Road to Lomie
	10:00-11:00 am	Interview with MPOULA MEPED	Road to Lomie
	11:00 am-1:30 pm	Travel on Road to Echiambor Interview with CBO Femme Dynamique	Road to Lomie
	1:30-2:45 pm	Travel on Road to Payo Interview with CBO ABALENI	Road to Lomie
	2:45-4:00 pm	Interview with CBO-Cooperative-COTRAMO	Road to Lomie
	4:00-5:30 pm	Interview with CBO-Cooperative-CVL	Road to Lomie
	5:30-6:30 pm	Return to Lomie	Lomie
25/08/25 - Monday	7:30 -11am	**Vehicle 1** Travel Lomié Ngoyla	Road to Ngoyla
	11:00 am-3:00 pm	Interview with the mayor, some and Municipal bodies in Ngoyla	Road to Ngoyla
	3:00-6:00 pm	Travel to Ntam	Ntam
25/08/25 - Monday	7:30-09:30 am	**Vehicle 2** Travel Lomié Mbalam	Road to Ngoyla
	9:30-11:00 am	Interview with CBO Nganda	Road to Ngoyla
	11:00 am–1:00pm	Travel on Road to Mbalam-Messok Messok Interview with CBO DJAMOAMAS	Road to Ngoyla
	1:00pm – 3:00 pm	Travel on Road to Messok Messok-Dimako NTFP value CBO LEKA	Road to Ngoyla
	3:00-3:30 pm	Travel on Road Dimako-Ngoyla (Consultant 2)	Road to Ngoyla
	3:00-6:00pm	Travel to Ntam	Ntam
26/08/25 - Tuesday	7:30 -11 am	**Vehicle 1** Travel Ntam - Mintom	Mintom
	11:00 am-2:30 pm	Interview with the the mayor and Municipal bodies of Mintom municipality	Mintom
	2:30-4:30 pm	Travel on Road Mintom-Bemba II	Mintom
	4:30-5:30 pm	Interview with CBO Ngassa Mege	Mintom
	5:30-9:30 pm	Road Mintom to Yaounde	Yaoundé
26/08/2025 - Tuesday	7:30 -11am	**Vehicle 2** Travel Ntam - Mintom	
	10:00-11:30 am	Interview with CBO AILE	Mintom
	11:30 am–1:30 pm	Travel on Road Mbout Okong - AKOM Interview with CBO TONI KWEKE	Mintom

	1:30 pm–4:30 pm	Road AKOM - MINTOM Interview with COOP EX PFNL of Mintom	Mintom
	5:30-9:30 pm	Travel from Mintom to Yaoundé	Yaoundé
27/08/25 - Wednesday	NA	In Yaounde	Yaoundé
28/08/2025 - Thursday	7:00 am – 4:30 pm	Travel to Ebodjie	Road to Ebodjie
	4:30-5:30 pm	Meet and Interview TUBE AWU	Ebodjie
28/08/25 - Friday	5:30-7:30 pm	Travel to Campo	Campo
	5:30-8:30 am	Travel to Gorilla Habituation Camp	Forest camp
	8:30-11:30 am	Interview gorilla habituation team and Veterinarian (Zoonotic team)	Forest camp
	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Travel to Campo	Road to Campo
	1:30 – 2:30 pm	Interview CMNP Conservator	Campo
	2:30-3:30 pm	Interview WWF-Campo	Campo
	3:30-4:30 pm	Interview AWF-Campo	Campo
	4:30-6:30 pm	Travel to Kribi	Road to Kribi
29/08/25 – Saturday	8:30 am	Meet and interview BACUDA	Kribi
	9:30 am – 7 pm	Travel to Yaounde	Road to Yaoundé
30/08/25 - Sunday		In Yaounde	Yaoundé
01/09/25 - Monday	9:00 am – 2:00pm	Interview MINEPDED (project focal points	PMU office Yaoundé
	2:00-4:00 pm	Debriefing with MINEPDED and PMU	PMU office Yaoundé
	4:00-5:30 pm	Interview PMU director (Zacharie)	PMU office Yaoundé
02/09/25 - Tuesday	10:30 am- 2:00pm	Meet with Minister MINEPDED	Yaoundé
	6:00 pm	Departure of Team	

Annex 6: List of Persons Interviewed

The following table details the dates, organizations/communities, locations, and types of stakeholders included in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) or focus group discussions (FGDs).

#	Date	ORGANIZATION	Location		
01	11-aug-25	Paya de Marken & Allard Blom	USA	WWF-US	KII
02	15-aug-25	Heike Lingertat	USA	WWF-GEF Agency (WWF-US)	KII
03	18-aug-25	WWF-Cameroon	Yaoundé	Executing Partner	KII
04	18-aug-25	AWF Yde	Yaoundé	Executing Partner	KII
05	18-aug-25	MINEPDED Yde - Amadou Hamadama	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
06	18-aug-25	MINFOF Yde - Focal point GEF	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
07	18-aug-25	MINTOUR Yde	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
08	18-aug-25	PADI-DJA Yde	Yaoundé	Executing Partner	KII
09	18-aug-25	MINAS Yde	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
10	18-aug-25	RACOPY Ydew	Yaoundé	Steering Committee/ Executing Partner	KII
11	18-aug-25	TROPICAL FOREST Yde	Yaoundé	Steering Committee/ Executing Partner	KII
12	18-aug-25	UCLA (Ebony) Yde/ LA Zoom	Yaoundé	Executing Partner	KII
13	19-aug-25	AAFEBEN	Bertoua	Executing Partner	KII
14	20-aug-25	ROSE	Yokadouma	Executing Partner	KII
15	20-aug-25	MINAS, MINFOF, MINAS	Yokadouma	Local Authorities	KII
16	21-aug-25	RAFASAL	Salapoumbe	Beneficiary	FGD
17	21-aug-25	COVAREF	Mambele	Beneficiary	FGD
18	21-aug-25	WCHS	Mambele	Beneficiary	FGD
19	21-aug-25	DJENA MENE (Pense A Demain)	Momboue	Beneficiary	FGD
20	21-aug-25	MINFOF Cons	Moloundou	National Park	KII
21	21-aug-25	WWF-Cam Prog Manager	Mambele	Executing Partner	KII
22	21-aug-25	ASFED	Dissassouoi	Beneficiary	FGD
23	22-aug-25	Amelia Kissick	USA	WWF-US	KII
24	22-aug-25	ASBABUK	Yengue Tengue	Beneficiary	FGD
25	22-aug-25	UNION FAIT LA FORCE	Yenga centre	Beneficiary	FGD
26	22-aug-25	MITAKOLEHELE	YENGA TEGUE	Beneficiary	FGD
27	22-aug-25	Biloa Donatien	Cons. Lobeke	National Park	KII
28	22-aug-25	Sous-Préfet	Moloundou	Local Authorities	KII
29	22-aug-25	Minas	Moloundou	Local Authorities	KII
30	22-aug-25	Mayor	Mambele	Local Authorities	KII
31	22-aug-25	MALAPA	Malapa	Beneficiary	FGD
32	22-aug-25	MBIMBE	Mbimbe	Beneficiary	FGD
33	21-aug-25	Mayor	Salapoumbe	Local Authorities	KII
34	22-aug-25	Mayor	Moloundou	Local Authorities	KII
35	22-aug-25	Minas	Moloundou	Local Authorities	KII
36	22-aug-25	YENGA TENGA	Yenga Tenga	Beneficiary	FGD
37	22-aug-25	MBANGOYE II	Mbangoye II	Beneficiary	FGD
38	24-aug-25	ESSEYONS VOIR	Zoulabot 1	Beneficiary	FGD

39	24-aug-25	MPOULA MEPED	Zoulabot	Beneficiary	FGD
40	24-aug-25	LUMIERE PLUS	Kongo	Beneficiary	FGD
41	24-aug-25	FEMMES DYNAMIQUE	Echiambor	Beneficiary	FGD
42	24-aug-25	ABALENI	Payo Lomie	Beneficiary	FGD
43	24-aug-25	CVL	Lomie	Beneficiary	FGD
44	24-aug-25	SEMBE	Sembe	Beneficiary	FGD
45	24-aug-25	NEMEYEYONG	Nemeyeyong	Beneficiary	FGD
46	24-aug-25	COTRAMO	Lomie	Beneficiary	FGD
47	24-aug-25	ABAKOUM	Abakoum	Beneficiary	FGD
48	24-aug-25	MINTOUM	Mintoum	Beneficiary	FGD
49	25-aug-25	DYAMOAMAS	Messok Messok	Beneficiary	FGD
50	25-aug-25	NGANDA	MBALAM	Beneficiary	FGD
51	25-aug-25	LEKA	Dimako	Beneficiary	FGD
52	25-aug-25	Mayor and other government focal points	Ngoyla	Local Authorities	KII
53	26-aug-25	TONI KWEKE	Akom	Beneficiary	FGD
54	26-aug-25	AIGLE Mbout OKONG	Mintom	Beneficiary	FGD
55	26-aug-25	SCOOP PROCAM	Mintom	Beneficiary	FGD
56	26-aug-25	BEMBA	Bemba II	Beneficiary	FGD
57	26-aug-25	Government Representatives - Director of Tourism, and PLADDT Focal Point	Mintom	Local Authorities	KII
58	26-aug-25	Mayor	Mintom	Local Authorities	KII
59	27-aug-25	Julius Mathenge	Nairobi, Kenya	WWF-US	KII
60	27-aug-25	Armel Ze Bekolo	Yaoundé	PMU	KII
61	28-aug-25	TUBE AWUE Campo	Ebodje	Executing Partner	KII
62	29-aug-25	Charles MEMVI ABESSOLOS	Campo	National Park	KII
63	29-aug-25	Dr Michael Kuwong	Campo	National Park	KII
64	29-aug-25	Guerilla Trackers	Campo	Beneficiaries	FGD
65	29-aug-25	AWF -Campo	Campo	Executing Partner	KII
66	29-aug-25	WWF- Campo (Sombambo)	Campo	Executing Partner	KII
67	30-aug-25	BACUDA	Kribi	Executing Partner	KII
68	01-sep-25	Dr Zacharie Ndongmo Nzooh Project Manager	Yaoundé	PMU	KII
69	01-sep-25	Adama Saidu (MINEPDEDD)	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
70	01-sep-25	Amboise Zoa (MINEPDED – M&E)	Yaoundé	Focal Ministry	KII
71	05-sep-25	Nathalie Simoneau	USA	WWF-US	KII
72	21-aug-25	MINAS	Salapoumbe	Local Authorities	KII

Annex 7: Rating Scale for Outcomes & Performance

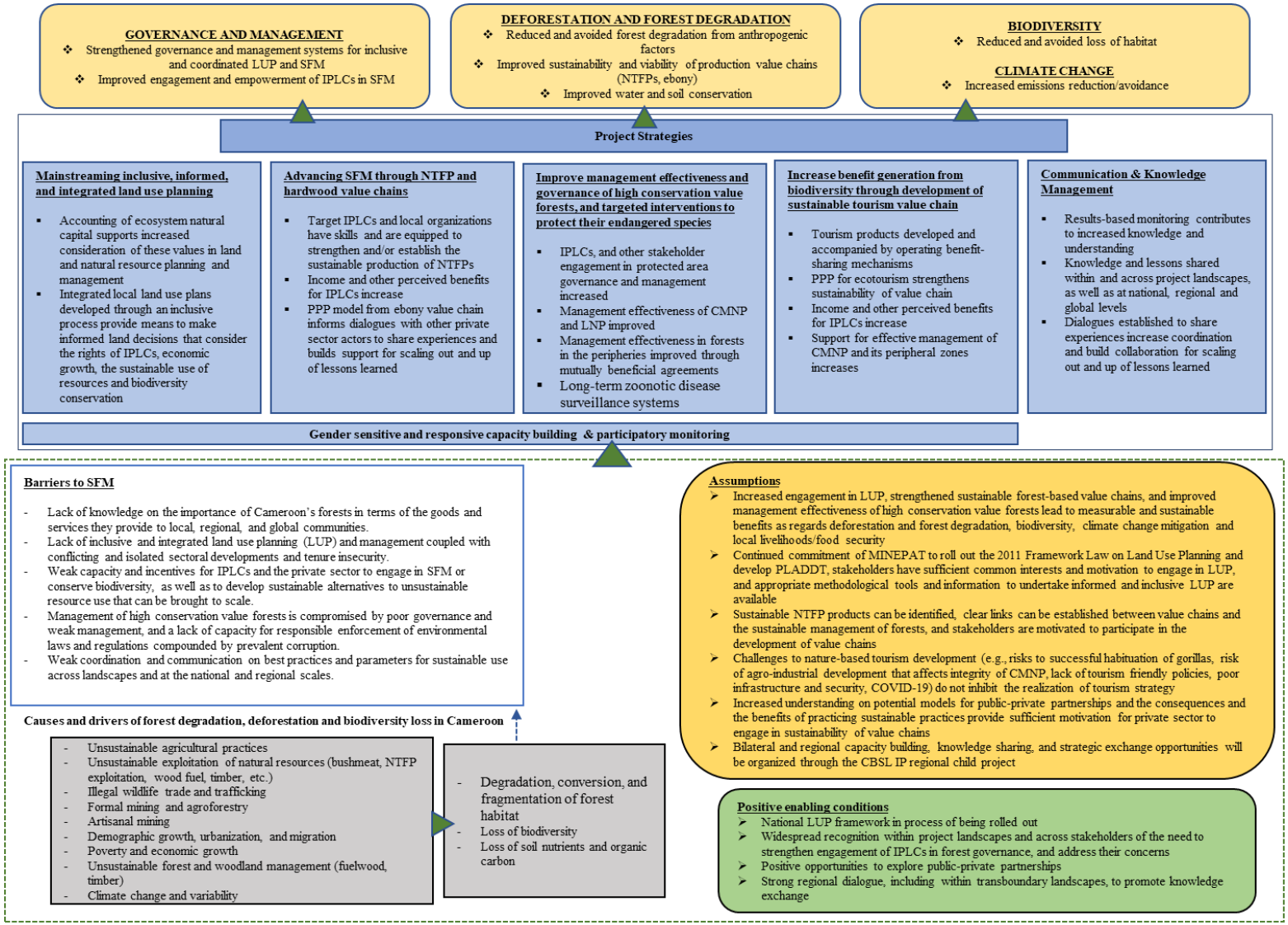
The following scales were used to rate the Project by the evaluation team in terms of performance to date. The scale was applied to rating the outcomes, as required by GEF.

GEF Outcomes Rating Scale:[21]

- **Highly satisfactory (HS)** – The outcomes exceed targets and are highly relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Satisfactory (S)** – The level of outcomes achieved meets targets. The outcomes are relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Moderately satisfactory (MS**) – The level of outcomes achieved was generally close to the targets. The majority of the targets were met or almost met, but some were not. The outcomes are generally relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU**) – Overall, the level of outcomes achieved is lower than the targets, although some outcomes were substantially achieved. The outcomes are generally relevant but not sufficient given the costs or, alternatively, are generally cost-effective but not adequately relevant and coherent.
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** – The expected outcomes were not achieved, or achievement was substantially lower than expected, and/or the achieved outcomes are not relevant or coherent. Alternatively, the outcome was cost-ineffective compared to alternatives.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU**) – A negligible level of outcomes was achieved and/or the project had substantial negative consequences that outweigh its benefits.
- **Unable to assess (UA) –** The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievement.

[21] **GEF guidelines on Outcome rating:** The project outcome rating will be based on the extent to which the expected outcomes were achieved (effectiveness), and the extent to which the project was relevant, coherent, and efficient. Although the evaluators will consider performance on these four criteria, the overall rating need not be a simple average of the criteria because a criterion may be more or less important depending on the type of project and its operational context. A six-point rating scale is used to assess outcome.

Annex 8: Overall Theory of Change, from the ProDoc



Annex 9: Additional Recommendations from Beneficiaries

As part of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process, interview participants were informed that their input was valued and would be reflected in this evaluation. Interviewers encouraged open and honest feedback, and participants agreed that their recommendations could be included in the report.

Relevant and feasible recommendations are incorporated into the main body of the report. However, several suggestions that fall outside the current scope of the project are compiled below. These reflect the voices of beneficiary communities and cooperatives engaged in project activities across the three landscapes. Repeated suggestions have been listed only once for clarity.

Livelihoods & Income Generation

- Increase rolling funds to enable beneficiaries to cover school fees and essential needs.
- Provide manpower or financial support to help participants manage both project activities and their own farms.
- Supply agricultural tools and small machinery to expand cultivated land and improve productivity.
- Provide financial support during early stages of planting when fruit trees are not yet producing income.
- Expand rolling funds to help cover salaries for project staff to ensure sustainability.
- Youth want more funding dedicated to their specific needs.
- Enable community members to stock and commercialize a wider range of NTFPs, beyond those currently supported.

Capacity Building & Training

- Offer training on additional NTFPs and animal husbandry.
- Provide vocational training in value-added processing, such as rattan furniture making.
- Ensure continuous and cyclical training to reinforce learning and monitor progress.
- Capacity reinforcement should be ongoing, not one-time.

Equipment, Tools & Materials

- Provide more protective gear for forest activities (e.g., boots and gloves).
- Distribute T-shirts, vests, and other identifying clothing to cooperative members.
- Provide transformation machines to every community (not to be shared).
- Supply agricultural tools and equipment for improved land cultivation.
- Provide mills and computers to cooperative offices.

- Equip cooperatives with generators and additional computers.
- Add cooking pots to the list of distributed items.
- Provide barrels to hold water for irrigation and domestic use.
- Provide electric stoves to improve product quality and safety.

Infrastructure & Community Services

- Establish community health centers or local pharmacies.
- Install wells or provide access to potable water to improve community health.
- Improve housing conditions for the Baka communities to match those of the Bantu.

Administrative & Institutional Support

- Station an AAFBEN representative within cooperative offices to assist with reporting and administration.

Youth Support

- Motivate and support youth involved in daily watering of plants.
- Dedicate more project resources to youth initiatives and needs.

Legal Identity & Documentation

- Assist with obtaining national identity cards for community members.
- Support the issuance of birth certificates, particularly for the Baka community.

Product Development & Commercialization

- Improve packaging and support for maintaining high-quality production standards.
- Schedule planting activities during appropriate seasons (avoid dry season).

Annex 10: Rating Scale for Implementation and Execution

The following scale was used to rate the Project by the evaluation team in terms of the execution and implementation.

Rating	Implementation (GEF Agency)	Execution (Executing Entity)
Highly Satisfactory	**Performance of the GEF Agency was exemplary.** Project preparation and implementation were robust. The Agency ensured that relevant GEF policies were applied in project preparation and implementation. Project supervision was strong— the Agency identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The Agency ensured that project implementation stayed on track and project activities were completed on time	**Performance of the executing entity was exemplary.** Execution of project activities was timely and of high quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were adhered to. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed, and any corrective actions required were taken promptly. Measures were undertaken to mitigate risks to sustainability, and steps were taken to support follow-up to the project. Project activities were completed on time
Satisfactory	**Performance met expectations and did not have any salient weaknesses.** Project preparation and implementation were robust, and relevant GEF policies were applied. The GEF Agency supervised the project well—it identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The Agency ensured that project implementation was on track	**Performance met expectations and did not have any salient weaknesses.** Execution of project activities was timely and of good quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were adhered to. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed. Measures were undertaken to mitigate risks to sustainability of project outcomes.
Moderately Satisfactory	**Performance had some weaknesses but met expectations overall.** Project preparation and implementation were adequate and relevant GEF policies were applied, although there are some weak areas. Project supervision was adequate—the GEF Agency identified and addressed emerging concerns, although some may have been inadequately addressed. Project implementation had minor delays, and a few activities may have been dropped.	**Performance had some weaknesses but met expectations overall.** Execution of project activities were generally timely but with some instances of delay. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were adhered to, although some minor slip-ups may have been observed. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed, and problems were fixed. There were some areas for improvement in execution

Moderately unsatisfactory	**Performance did not meet expectations, although there were some areas of solid performance.** Project preparation and implementation had weaknesses, although these were not too severe. Project supervision was somewhat weak—although the GEF Agency identified most emerging concerns, many remained unaddressed or inadequately. addressed. Project implementation was delayed, and a few activities were dropped or reduced in scale because of issues that were largely under Agency control.	**Performance did not meet expectations, although there were some areas of solid performance.** Execution of project activities was delayed, and executing entity capabilities observably limited project execution. Several slip-ups in adherence to GEF policies and requirements were observed. Guidance from the GEF Agency was generally followed and problems were fixed, but such actions usually were not timely. There were several areas for improvement in execution.
Unsatisfactory	**Performance did not meet expectations.** Project preparation and implementation were weak. Project supervision was weak—emerging concerns were not identified in time and remained unaddressed or inadequately addressed. Activities were not implemented in time or were not undertaken. Project implementation was delayed, and several activities were dropped or reduced in scale.	**Performance did not meet expectations.** The execution of project activities was delayed, and at least some activities were dropped due to factors largely under the control of the executing entity. Many slip-ups were observed in adherence to GEF policies and requirements. Guidance from the GEF Agency was not put into practice, or was applied with considerable delay.
Highly Unsatisfactory	**Performance had severe shortcomings.** The GEF Agency mismanaged project implementation, and its supervision was poor. Emerging concerns were not identified in time, including those that should have been obvious. Although instances of mismanagement were discovered, corrective actions were not undertaken. Project activities were poorly implemented, and several had to be dropped.	**Performance had severe shortcomings.** There were several instances of mismanagement by the executing entity. Emerging concerns were not addressed in time, including those that should have been obvious. Most activities were very poorly executed and/or experienced delays, and some activities were dropped. GEF policies and requirements were not applied.
Unable to Assess	The available information is not sufficient to allow rating of performance.	The available information is not sufficient to allow rating of performance.

Annex 11: Rating Scale for Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes

The following scale was used to rate the Project by the evaluation team in terms of the risks to sustainability of the Project outcomes. This scale is provided and required by GEF.

Sustainability/ Risk Rating Scale:

- **Highly Likely (HL)** – There is negligible risk to continuation of benefits and based on the progress made so far it is expected that the long-term objectives of the project will be achieved.
- **Likely (L) -** Either there is negligible risk to continuation of benefits or there are some risks, but the magnitude of their effect is too small and/or the probability that they will materialize is too small. Overall, it is likely that the net benefits of the project will continue.
- **Moderately likely (ML)** - There are some risks to sustainability, and they may have some effect on continuation of benefits if they materialize. However, probability of materialization of these risks is low. Net benefits are more likely to continue than abate.
- **Moderately unlikely (MU) -** There are significant risks to sustainability. The effect on continuation of benefits would be substantial if these risks materialize and the probability of materialization of these risks is significant. Overall, net benefits of the project are likely to abate.
- **Unlikely (U)** – Because of the high risks it is unlikely that net benefits of the project will continue to accrue, and the progress made so far is likely to be lost. It is unlikely that the project will achieve its long-term objectives.
- **Highly Unlikely (HU)** – It is expected that the project will not achieve its long-term objectives. Major risks have either already materialized and halted accrual of net benefits or have high probability of materializing soon and will halt accrual of net benefits when they materialize.
- **Unable to assess (UA)** – Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

Annex 12: Rating Scale for M&E System

The following scale was used to rate the Project by the evaluation team in terms of the M&E Design and Implementation.

Rating	M&E Design	M&E Implementation
Highly Satisfactory	**The M&E plan is a good practice and does not have any weaknesses.** Its alignment with the project theory of change is robust. Complete baseline data have been provided. The specified indicators are appropriate, and arrangements for plan implementation are adequate. Overall, the M&E plan exceeds expectations and is exemplary	**M&E plan implementation was excellent.** Weaknesses in the M&E plan, if present, were addressed promptly. M&E activities were conducted in a timely manner, and data from M&E were used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation exceeds expectations and was exemplary
Satisfactory	**The M&E plan is robust and has no or only minor weaknesses.** Its alignment with the project theory of change is robust. Baseline data are provided or their collection is planned at project start. The specified indicators are appropriate, and arrangements for M&E plan implementation are adequate. The plan meets expectations.	**M&E plan implementation was generally robust.** Weaknesses in M&E were addressed in a timely manner. M&E activities were conducted in a timely manner, and data from M&E were used in improving project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation meets expectations
Moderately Satisfactory	**The M&E plan is solid overall.** Its alignment with the project theory of change is solid. The specified indicators are generally appropriate, and arrangements for M&E plan implementation are adequate. There are areas where the M&E plan could be strengthened but, overall, it is adequate.	**M&E plan implementation was generally robust, with some weaknesses.** Weaknesses in M&E were generally addressed although some remained. Some M&E activities were delayed. M&E data were used for reporting but had little use in improving project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation meets expectations with some areas of low performance.

Moderately unsatisfactory	**The M&E plan is weak overall, although it has strengths in some areas.** Its alignment with the project theory of change is somewhat weak. The specified indicators are generally appropriate but additional indicators are required to adequately capture project results, and/or arrangements to gather data on indicators are not adequate. The plan needs several improvements to meet expectations.	**M&E plan implementation was weak and/or did not address weaknesses in the original plan.** Most M&E activities were completed, with some either dropped or delayed. M&E data were not reported in a timely manner, and there is little evidence to suggest that the data were used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation does not meet expectations, although there are some areas of adequate performance.
Unsatisfactory	**The M&E plan has severe shortcomings.** Its alignment with the project theory of change is weak. No baseline data are provided nor is there any indication that these would be collected at project start. Indicators do not adequately address project outcomes and other results; relevant indicators have not been specified for several results. There are gaps in arrangements for M&E plan implementation. Either no budget or an inadequate budget has been provided for M&E.	M&E plan implementation was flawed and/ or did not address severe weaknesses in the **original plan.** Several M&E activities were either dropped or were incomplete. The data collection methodology was not sound. M&E data were not reported in a timely manner, and there is little evidence to suggest that the data were used to improve project implementation. M&E implementation does not meet expectation.
Highly Unsatisfactory	No M&E plan was prepared.	No, or negligible, M&E activity was implemented other than conduct of the project evaluation.
Unable to Assess	Unable to assess because the project documents are not available.	Unable to assess because the terminal evaluation does not cover M&E implementation adequately.

Annex 13: Evaluation Report Requirements

The following table details the requirements of the Final Evaluation Report from the evaluation terms of reference along with their location within this report.

Component of the Evaluation Report According to the Terms of Reference	Location within the Report
Evaluation Process: Information on the evaluation process, including when the evaluation took place, sites visited, participants, key questions, summary of methodology and rating rubric, and feedback log showing how comments on draft were incorporated	Section 1 Feedback log submitted separately.
Assessment of **Relevance** (project design, theory of change)	Section 3.1
Assessment of **Coherence** of the project (e.g. with WWF and GEF priorities) and	Section 3.2
Assessment of **Efficiency**, financial management and summary of co-financing delivered;	Section 3.3
Assessment of project **Effectiveness (in terms of Achieving Results)** and rating of project objective and outcomes (individual and overall)	Section 3.4
Assessment and ratings of Implementation and Execution (**Effectiveness – Administration & Execution)**	Section 3.4
Assessment of replication and catalytic effects of the project (**Impact**)	Section 3.5
Assessment and rating of risks to the **Sustainability** of project outcomes;	Section 3.6
Assessment of **stakeholder engagement** and **gender-responsive measures**;	Section 3.8
Assessment of any **environmental and social impacts** and **safeguards** used for the project.	Section 3.8
Assessment and rating of **Monitoring and Evaluation** design and implementation;	Section 3.7
Assessment of **knowledge management** approach, including activities and products	Section 3.7
A review of **risk category classification** and mitigation measures	Section 3.8
Key lessons tied to identified strengths or issues	Section 4
Summary table of **key findings** by core criteria and GEF ratings, including justification and/or indicators for their determination;	Section 4.1
Recommendations that include: practical and short-term corrective actions by evaluation criteria to address issues and findings; and best practices towards achieving project outcomes, and knowledge sharing / replication for other projects of similar scope.	Section 4.3