PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10298
Project Name:	Integrated Community - Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBACPE /PELATEL
Countr(ies):	Congo
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OVERVIEW 3
A. Description 3
B. Ratings and Disbursements 3
C. Key Dates 3
II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES 4
A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities 4
B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities 5
C. Stakeholder Engagement 5
D. Gender Equality 6
E. Knowledge Management 7
III: MINOR AMENDMENTS 7
IV: GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES 8
V. ANNEX 10

I. Overview

A. Description

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

Country
Congo

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
10298	UNEP

Executing Entity
Ministry of Tourism and the Environment

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	FSP

PIR Submission	Fiscal Year , PIR Number
9/15/2026	FY 2026 , 3rd PIR

Objective
To promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the RoC Lac Télé Landscape.

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress	Development Objective
Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Overall risk
Substantial

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
6,661,050.00	1,390,548.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
7/14/2021	11/22/2022

Implementation Start	First Disbursement
12/1/2022	2/3/2023
Expected MTR	Actual MTR
4/26/2026	
Expected Completion	Actual Completion
10/31/2026	

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Progress: Information on progress towards project outcomes and implementation is provided as follows:

(i) Rating towards outcomes: U (Unsatisfactory).
The Mid-Term Review (MTR), undertaken in June 2026, confirmed that the project had not demonstrated substantial progress towards its overall objective and was not on track to achieve the planned outcomes within the then-current implementation period. No outcome was fully achieved. Progress remained largely at the level of preparatory policy and legal work, training, research, community consultations, pilot co-management measures and livelihood diagnostics. Outcome-level targets relating to adoption and implementation of regulatory frameworks and land-use plans, leveraged investment, producer organizations, certified cocoa and ecotourism operators, private-sector commitments, transboundary structures and the project portal remained unmet. The MTR therefore rated overall project performance and effectiveness Unsatisfactory.

(ii) Rating towards outputs: U (Unsatisfactory).
The MTR found that only one of the 16 planned outputs—Output 1.1.2 on training of government services and local/regional actors—was fully delivered. It independently assessed partial delivery of Output 1.1.1 (15%), Output 1.1.3 (12%), Output 1.1.4 (25%), Output 2.1.1 (30%), Output 2.1.3 (45%), Output 3.1.1 (25%), Output 3.1.2 (33%), Output 3.1.3 (33%), Output 4.1.3 (8%) and Output 5.1.1 (10%); the other outputs were assessed at 0%. These percentages reflect delivery of completed and usable output-level deliverables, rather than a simple average of preparatory activity percentages. Output delivery was constrained by incomplete PMU staffing and limited autonomy, delayed transfers to implementing partners, incomplete contracting, weak coordination, absence of an operational M&E system, insufficient involvement of the Ministry of Forest Economy, and lack of identified implementing partners for five project sites.

(iii) Overall Risk Rating: Substantial (S).
In this section, “S” means Substantial. The MTR rated Context risk Substantial, Innovation risk Moderate, and Execution risk High, resulting in a consolidated overall project risk rating of Substantial. The principal risks concern incomplete PMU staffing and weak delivery capacity; ineffective PSC oversight and absence of the Scientific and Technical Committee; inadequate institutional coordination and insufficient participation of the Ministry of Forest Economy; delayed disbursement and transfers; weak technical, financial, co-financing and audit reporting; inadequate stakeholder participation and inclusion; absence of operational gender, safeguards, M&E and exit-strategy tools; and the severe implementation delay. The MTR proposed major corrective measures, including a 2.5-year no-cost extension subject to approval, completion and strengthening of the PMU, review of the financial implementation arrangement, restructuring of project governance, identification of partners for uncovered sites, stronger engagement of the Ministry of Forest Economy, preparation of operational M&E, Gender Action, ESS Management and Exit Strategy instruments, and closer UNEP

supervision. Since these recommendations extend beyond 30 June 2026, they are recorded as forward corrective actions and are not counted as FY2026 achievements.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

a) Unsuccessful procurement and consultant recruitment
The unsuccessful procurement process under Output 4.1.2 prevented the commencement of Activities 48–50 during the reporting period. Because these activities are sequentially linked, the inability to recruit a suitable consultant for the initial assignment also prevented the subsequent capacity-development and training activities from proceeding. Unsuccessful recruitment also delayed activities under Output 2.1.4.

b) Delayed transfers to implementing partners
Implementation under Output 1.1.4, particularly Activities 16, 18 and 19, was delayed because the advance payment to WCS remained outstanding. This prevented the completion of community-awareness activities and subsequent land-use planning and zoning work. Under Output 3.1.2, the outstanding advance also delayed the equipment and market-access support required to build on the field assessments, producer training and technical assistance already completed.

c) Sequencing and interdependency of activities
Several activities could not proceed until prerequisite governance, analytical or operational steps had been completed. Training under Output 2.1.2 was delayed pending the establishment and effective functioning of community governance mechanisms. Under Output 2.1.3, research and technical work advanced, but dissemination to decision-makers remained pending. Activities under Outputs 2.1.4 and 4.1.2 were similarly delayed because the initial analytical, recruitment, or procurement steps had not been completed.

d) Administrative, contracting and staffing constraints
Administrative and contracting delays continued to affect implementation. Under Output 4.1.3, a consultant was selected, but the contract remained unsigned, preventing the five linked activities from commencing. Institutional approvals and implementing-partner postponements also delayed tourism-related investments under Output 3.1.1, including the establishment and rehabilitation of the proposed tourism information office. The absence of a dedicated Communications Officer constrained implementation under Output 5.1.1.

e) Project management, governance and coordination weaknesses
The MTR identified broader institutional constraints affecting overall delivery, including an incompletely staffed PMU with limited operational autonomy, weak coordination with implementing partners, inadequate involvement of the Ministry of Forest Economy, and the absence of identified implementing partners for five project sites. The Project Steering Committee did not meet during FY2026, and the Scientific and Technical Committee was not operationalized. These weaknesses limited timely decision-making and the resolution of implementation bottlenecks.

f) Weak reporting and monitoring systems
Technical, financial, co-financing and audit reporting remained incomplete or delayed, while the project lacked a fully operational monitoring and evaluation system, Gender Action Plan, safeguards-management instruments and exit strategy. These deficiencies reduced the project’s capacity to track results, manage risks, and take timely corrective action. Together with the constraints described above, they contributed to the severe implementation delay and the Unsatisfactory performance rating confirmed by the MTR.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

The MTR confirmed that project partners undertook consultations and field engagement, but rated stakeholder participation risk as Substantial because implementation was below the expectations of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Rights-holders include Indigenous Peoples and local communities in and around the Lac Télé Community Reserve and Ntokou-Pikounda National Park, particularly customary resource users, fishers, hunters, cocoa producers, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable or marginalized forest-dependent households whose access to land, resources, livelihoods, or cultural practices may be affected. Participatory work included consultations with 1,362 community members (941 men and 421 women) across 27 villages, updating 27 simplified management plans, participatory and geolocated mapping by REPALEAC, co-management processes, ecotourism and livelihood diagnostics, and MTR interviews. Three Indigenous representatives are members of the PSC and participated in the July 2023 and July 2024 meetings; however, no PSC meeting was held during FY2026, and the MTR found that women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and disadvantaged/vulnerable people remained inadequately represented in strategic decision-making.

Benefits remained primarily intermediate by 30 June 2026: access to information, participation in consultations, local management structures, training and selection of 160 cocoa producers for tailored support. Certification, equipment, market access, ecotourism enterprises and sustained income benefits were not yet operational. The MTR also found that engagement by implementing partners was not sufficiently documented, response rates during the review were low, and no structured feedback channel existed to address differentiated stakeholder needs. Corrective actions are to restructure the PSC to include effective representation of rights-holders, women, vulnerable/marginalized groups, and persons with disabilities; establish a functioning stakeholder consultation framework; include UNICONGO as the organized private-sector representative; strengthen REPALEAC; document how stakeholder inputs influence decisions; and maintain an accessible grievance and feedback mechanism with disaggregated participation and resolution data.

D. Gender Equality

The MTR rated responsiveness to human rights and gender equality as Unsatisfactory. Although the project design included a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and a Strategy to Mitigate Gender Imbalances, these provisions were not translated into a specific, budgeted, and operational Gender Action Plan with clear responsibilities, indicators, and systematic monitoring. Data were sporadic and were not consistently disaggregated for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, vulnerable and marginalized groups, or persons with disabilities. Available evidence shows that women represented 58% of the respondents from the 242 households surveyed for the natural-capital and adaptive-management studies. Land-use consultations involved 1,362 participants, including 421 women (30.9%); 63 of the 318 mapped cocoa producers were women (19.8%); and only 18 of the 160 producers selected for tailored support were women (11.3%). These figures demonstrate women's participation but also reveal a marked decline in their representation at the point of access to livelihood support.

Women's economic empowerment through certified cocoa production and ecotourism remained at a preparatory stage. The proposed Women's Forum had not been convened, women's leadership in project management and decision-making structures was not systematically reported, and participation and benefit data for persons with disabilities were unavailable.

The MTR concluded that implementing partners made limited efforts to integrate gender equality and human rights, but these efforts were ad hoc and insufficient. As a priority corrective measure, the project will prepare and operationalize a dedicated and budgeted Gender Action Plan that translates the Strategy to Mitigate Gender Imbalances into measurable actions, targets, indicators, responsibilities and timelines. The plan will cover women, including Indigenous women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and persons with

disabilities. It will establish corrective selection measures to improve women's equitable access to livelihood support, strengthen women's representation and leadership in project governance and decision-making structures, and distinguish participation from actual benefits received. Gender-responsive actions and associated resources will be incorporated into the revised workplan and budget for the remaining implementation period. Progress will be monitored regularly using data disaggregated by sex, age, Indigenous status and disability.

The technical completion date under the original PCA is 30 October 2026. Following the MTR and the Government's decision to restructure the project, a three-year no-cost extension has been proposed. However, the extension and corresponding revised technical completion date have not yet been approved. The Gender Action Plan and related monitoring measures will be aligned with the revised implementation period once the no-cost extension and updated project workplan and budget have been reviewed and approved.

E. Knowledge Management

The MTR found that communication and knowledge management remained ad hoc. Cumulative products comprised 400 copies of the brochure "Peatlands, Communities and Conservation" distributed across nine districts and two workshops in Ouesso and Impfondo, reaching approximately 60 participants. Partners also undertook local awareness and information missions, and preparatory work was initiated for a community radio station. However, the communication strategy in the ProDoc had not been initiated, the project portal was not operational, no differentiated feedback channel had been established, national communication did not make strategic use of modern technologies, and sustainability arrangements for communication channels were absent. These earlier products should not be presented as new FY2026 delivery.

Main learning during the period
The MTR confirmed that awareness can strengthen understanding of the links among peatlands, illegal wildlife trade and community-based natural-resource management, but knowledge is unlikely to translate into changed practices without functioning community organizations, timely financing, operational livelihood options and systematic follow-up. The absence of the STC, a stakeholder consultation framework, and an operational M&E system weakened learning, coordination, and adaptive management. Priority actions are to establish the STC and consultation framework, finalize a costed communication/KM strategy, operationalize the portal and feedback channels, link research and consultations to documented decisions, and track who receives, uses, and benefits from knowledge products.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	

Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Impfondo	1.6259	18.0539	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Training workshops were held in Ouesso and Impfondo, bringing together approximately 60 participants from the project's intervention zones — including the districts of Bouanela, Epéna, Dongou, Liranga, Impfondo, Mossaka, Loukoléla, Ntokou, Pikounda, and Ouesso — along with authorities and representatives from the deconcentrated structures of the Sangha and Likouala departmental administrations.The workshops served to raise awareness and strengthen capacities on:The interconnections between peatland management, illegal wildlife trade, and community-based natural resource management in the Congo Basin.Current challenges and innovative conservation approaches in the region.Cross-border cooperation in natural resource management.Ways in which participants' work and mandates can contribute to sustainable development in the Congo Basin.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Dongou	2.0480	18.0547	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Meeting with the political-administrative authorities (Prefect. Sub-prefects. Departmental Directors. etc.) with the aim of understanding their needs and concerns in order to encourage them to become fully involved in the implementation of the project

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Epena	1.3562	17.4546	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Meeting with the political- administrative authorities (Prefect. Sub-prefects. Departmental Directors. etc.) with the aim of understanding their needs and concerns in order to encourage them to become fully involved in the implementation of the project.Awareness-raising meeting with representatives of local communities and indigenous peoples on topics related to the main challenges related to the sustainable management of natural resources in the Lac Télé landscape in general (overfishing. poaching. illegal trade in wildlife. deforestation)

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Ouesso	1.61666	16.0500	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Training workshops (in Ouesso and Impfondo) bringing together some 60 participants from the project's intervention zone, including the districts of Bouanela, Epéna, Dongou, Liranga, Impfondo, Mossaka, Loukoléla, Ntokou, Pikounda and Ouesso, as well as authorities and representatives from the deconcentrated structures of the Sangha and Likouala departmental administrations, were organized with the aim of raising awareness and training participants in:1. The interconnections between peatland management, illegal wildlife trade and community-based natural resource management in the Congo Basin.2. Current challenges and innovative approaches to conservation in the region.3. Cross-border cooperation efforts in natural resource management.4. Explore how their work or interests can contribute to sustainable development in the Congo Basin.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Mossaka	1.2667	17.5333	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

A workshop aims to educate local stakeholders about the significance of peatland ecosystems and the management of natural resources by the community.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Loukolela	1.6666	17.7333	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

A workshop aims to educate local stakeholders about the significance of peatland ecosystems and the management of natural resources by the community.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Ntokou	0.0263	16.3338	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

A workshop aims to educate local stakeholders about the significance of peatland ecosystems and the management of natural resources by the community.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Pikounda	0.6317	16.6306	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

A workshop aims to educate local stakeholders about the significance of peatland ecosystems and the management of natural resources by the community.

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	10298_PIR_UNEP_2026-September-15